

THE GIFT OF THE  
**EVANGELIST**

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A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF INTERCULTURAL STUDIES  
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## ABSTRACT

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The central research issue of this dissertation is to identify the biblical and cultural marks of the gift of the evangelist in the North American church context. A biblical exegesis of the three direct references to the evangelist in Ephesians 4:11-12, Acts 21:8, and 2 Timothy 4:5, as well as the work of Philip the evangelist described in Acts 8, provide the framework for the comparison of the role and work of the evangelist today.

A review of current missiological literature is made in an attempt to survey whether the gift of the evangelist is referenced or described in any way in the attempt to call and instruct the North American church to return to its missional roots. The literature is compared with the scriptural description of the gift of the evangelist to determine if the lack of growth from new conversions is because of the diminishing presence of this gift in the church at large.

Based upon interviews, focus groups, and the use of a survey of 280 Christian leaders in the North American church from a diversity of denominations and leadership positions, I develop identifying marks of the gift of the evangelist that can be used to grasp how to utilize the gift of the evangelist in a variety of contexts that will result in the church at large becoming effective in evangelism, church planting, and church expansion.

I then take a closer look at how the gift of the evangelist functions in the church I pastor, Bethel World Outreach Center in Nashville, Tennessee. This case study examines how these marks are demonstrated effectively and the results that have been produced as well as the weaknesses where the marks have not been seen. In the end, conclusions and recommendations are made to better identify, train, and utilize the gift of the evangelist in

the North American church, thus creating the missional movement that is described in Scripture.

Mentor: R. Daniel Shaw

319 words

## **DEDICATION**

To the women and men that are called as evangelists.

May this work inspire you to fulfill your calling and provide a blueprint to accomplish the task of effectively and faithfully preaching the gospel.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

To my Dad for encouraging me to pursue this academic study.

To my family for understanding the long hours of study and writing required to accomplish this task.

To my church family, Bethel World Outreach Center and Every Nation Churches, for celebrating my efforts. May I be a better servant to you in the coming days as a result of this study.

To my cohort members and mentors at Fuller for inspiring and challenging me to keep moving forward.

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## CHAPTER 1

### BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

As a doctoral student doing research on the gift of the evangelist, I found myself sitting in a quiet place in the Fuller guest house looking over my research and searching for inspiration. As my mind began to wander, I looked around at the pictures and commentary on the ministry of Charles E. Fuller, the founder of Fuller Seminary. To my amazement, I found the inscription of a photo of Fuller which called him a radio evangelist. In George Marsden's preface to the history of Fuller Seminary, he states, "In 1947, Charles E. Fuller and Harold Ockenga formed an alliance to build a new kind of evangelical seminary. It would be dedicated to training evangelists and church leaders that would be broadly orthodox" (1987:xii). Fuller was an evangelist. The Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals describes the ministry of Charles Fuller this way:

By 1937 he had begun "The Old Fashioned Revival Hour" over the Mutual Broadcasting Network, supported solely by listeners' contributions. By the mid-1940s, Fuller was heard via live broadcast and recorded transcriptions over nearly 600 stations and was heard by an estimated twenty million people each week. He later broadcast on both the CBS and ABC radio networks. In 1947...Fuller created Fuller Theological Seminary (named in honor of his father) in Pasadena. Designed as a training school for evangelists and missionaries, as well as an evangelical response to mainline, liberal seminaries, Fuller Seminary grew to become the largest, non-denominational, Protestant seminary in the world (2008).

The sense of significance that I was studying the very gift that Fuller himself possessed and that led to the birthing of my "alma matre," gave me an even greater sense of confirmation for my study on the gift of the evangelist. It added yet another piece of motivation for the conviction that what I am involved with in this study is something important to God and his purposes; identifying, training, and utilizing the evangelist in the North American church.

### *Is There a Need for Evangelists Today?*

Everyone has heard of the dramatic growth of the church in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. At one of the meetings I held in conjunction with this study in Orlando, a respected evangelist testified that over forty million made commitments to Christ in Africa in the past decade. Scanning the landscape of the North American church, it is obvious that this type of dynamic growth is lacking. Some experts say that church in the North American context is, in fact, in deep crisis.

The church in the United States sits in the doldrums, going nowhere. With more than 80 percent of North American churches stagnant or declining, the church is quickly becoming nonessential to society. With nearly four thousand churches closing their doors permanently each year, a turnaround is imperative. The church in America is in a state of decline (Rainer and Rainer 2008:21).

It was out of the discussions with other leaders and fellow believers, all of whom share the same burden for the church in the West to capture the energy and revival that exists in other nations, that the need for renewed emphasis on the evangelist came into focus. However, to many the very term evangelist has become synonymous with scandal and hypocrisy at worst, or simply a “one-person show” at best. The later perception has fostered a mindset that has left the rest of the church on the sidelines as spectators, rather than trained for action as effective witnesses. For reasons such as these, the ministry of the evangelist has been gradually disappearing from the lineup of those called on to help build effective, missional churches. Churches value pastors as well as other ministries such as worship leaders, children’s pastors, administrators, and teachers that are primarily focused on those that are already believers. The gift of the evangelist has been slowly diminishing from any recognized place in the local church context and is threatening to become, for all practical purposes, extinct.

In 2009, the April 13th cover of *Newsweek* magazine heralded, “The End of Christian America.” There are many statistics floating around that tell a version of the

same story, but the point can be made with authority: the church in America needs to “Wake up! Strengthen those things that remain that are about to die...” (Rev. 3:2). The ministry of the evangelist is one of those things that needs to be strengthened in order to help reverse the negative trends regardless of how large or small those declines are.

There is no doubt that evangelists in the 21st century North American context need to realize we are not living in the days of Charles Fuller and that we must seek the Lord for fresh strategies for the current time. Just as there is the need to learn the language and understand the culture when sending missionaries to a foreign country, there must be a fresh contextualization of the preaching of the gospel in post-modern western culture. My own journey to faith included a rejection of a religious upbringing due to an irrelevant witness. It was in college that I heard the gospel in a fresh way from fellow students around me that gave a compelling, authentic witness. Every generation and person within that generation deserves the opportunity to hear the gospel in “their own language” (Ac. 2:6). My belief that a new generation of evangelists must be raised up to meet the challenge facing the North American church has fueled this study. So the answer to the question, “Is there a need for evangelists today?” is a resounding, yes!

### ***Overview of Personal Ministry Background***

In 1978 I was a student at Mississippi State University pondering what God would have me do with my life. Because my family had come to Christ in the wake of my own salvation, I was gripped with the conviction that if you reached a college student you were not only reaching out to the most open age group but you also had the greatest opportunity to positively affect whole families and ultimately entire cities.

I had received an encouraging word from a minister that I considered prophetic for my life prior to my college graduation, that God was going to use me in an evangelistic role that would make it necessary for me to “always be ready to pack my

bags.” These words were literally lived out as I was on the road as many as 300 days a year. The more I functioned in the gift of evangelist, the stronger the gift seemed to work in my life. I was also able to attract others with the same gift who wanted to be mentored as evangelists. Churches were planted and leaders emerged who began to conduct the same type of evangelistic ministry. Realizing I was an evangelist also produced the confidence to step out into unknown territory and continue to plant churches in new nations.

At the start of the 1990s, I decided that after ten years of itinerant ministry, I needed a greater theological foundation. I enrolled in a Master’s Degree program at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi. Upon graduation in 1993 I resumed full-time traveling ministry and church planting with a desire to see the churches that were being planted become evangelistic/apostolic centers that could reproduce themselves and plant other congregations as well. In 1994 I joined with several key leaders and formed “Every Nation Ministries.”<sup>1</sup> The primary goal of the ministry has been to plant churches in every nation. As of 2009, we have works in nearly sixty nations.

As exciting as the work in other nations had been, it became clear to me that the church-at-large in North America was losing the ability to reach lost people, and that much of what was called “church growth” was in reality “transfer growth” or a migration of Christians from one church to the next. In the year 2000 I began to pastor Bethel World Outreach Center in Nashville, Tennessee, while continuing to serve the larger movement of churches called Every Nation. My desire was and still is to reach the city of Nashville, Tennessee, by planting new congregations throughout the metropolitan area with a focus on mobilizing evangelists that would preach the gospel, and empower others to do the same. Currently we are one church meeting in six locations. Not only is there a desire to see our church expand, but also to see other churches succeed and grow as well.

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<sup>1</sup> Initially it was called Morningstar.

There has certainly been a resounding witness from other Christian leaders as the need for a re-birthing and re-emphasizing of the ministry of the evangelist is mentioned. It is also noteworthy that there are many schools that train people for all types of ministry such as worship, teaching, prophetic ministry, children's ministry, and of course church growth. There are very few schools that are dedicated to training evangelists.

Many church growth strategies seem to paint outreach as merely reaching out to people as potential customers by providing a better church experience than the church down the street, rather than focusing on the biblical mandate to "make disciples" through new converts. Ideally, each local church should be able to function as a training center for evangelists and a resource center to reach their city. Churches should be places where all the vital demographic information for understanding our city could be accessed, as well as the tools and resources for the execution of a realistic church planting and church expansion strategy can be carried out. Every gift is needed and every member must be equipped to turn America around. This dissertation therefore will focus on the gift of the evangelist in the hope of contributing to what could be called "the great American church comeback."

### ***The Purpose***

The purpose of my research is to identify marks of the gift of an evangelist in the Bible and the North American church.

### ***Goal***

The goal of this study is to identify, train, and utilize evangelists in the North American church.



### ***Significance***

This is personally significant because it will allow me as an evangelist to better equip the saints for the work of ministry while continuing to pastor a local congregation. The research will hopefully lead to the development of strategies for deploying evangelists in a way that will facilitate our vision of “reaching our city to touch the world.”<sup>2</sup> These tools will not only facilitate the growth and expansion of our local church but also provide a service for other churches in North America.

### ***Central Research Issue***

The Central Research Issue is to identify the biblical and cultural marks of an evangelist in the North American church.

### ***Research Questions***

The scope of my research will be focused on answering certain questions related to the connection between the evangelist and the church becoming missional.

1. What are the marks of an evangelist as identified and expressed in the Bible?
2. What are the marks of an evangelist as identified and expressed in the literature?
3. What are the marks of an evangelist as identified and expressed by North American church leaders?
4. How is the gift of an evangelist expressed in a case study/Bethel?

My intent in researching these questions is to address these issues and ensure that evangelists can, in fact, have a greater impact in the work of God’s kingdom.

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<sup>2</sup> This is Bethel’s vision statement.

### *Definitions*

**Evangelist:** The ministry gift of an evangelist is given by the Holy Spirit to men and women to preach the gospel to unbelievers and to equip other believers to do the same, while leading the entire community of faith (to which they are connected) to expand their borders as well as plant new churches.

**Role of the evangelist:** Here I am using the role of the evangelist to refer to the place the evangelist has in the local church whether or not he or she is recognized, trained, empowered, and resourced to do the job he/she is called to do as set forth in the above definition of the evangelist.

**Apostle:** An apostle is a person who is first and foremost sent by God to preach the gospel and establish new churches through laying biblical foundations, establishing godly government within that body of believers for its health and protection, and setting forth clear vision and values for effective ministry.

### *Assumptions*

I assume the validity of the ministry gifts of Ephesians 4:11-12<sup>3</sup> and the existence and functioning of all five gifts today, particularly that of the evangelist.

I assume that the recognition of the office of evangelist will have an impact regardless of the type of church government that is present.

I assume the acceptance of the historic Christian faith expressed in the Statement of Faith, the Apostles Creed, and Nicene Creed.

I assume that the churches and leaders I interviewed believe that the Great Commission expressed in Matthew 28:19 is the supreme mission of the church

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<sup>3</sup> Scripture used is from the New International Version, unless otherwise noted.

I assume that the churches and leaders I interviewed are just as concerned about the fulfillment of the Great Commission as I am and are just as desperate for insights to helping them fulfill it as I am.

I assume there is a postmodern culture that is impacting the society and is reflected in the contemporary church.

### ***Delimitations***

I will delimit the study to churches and leaders who accept the current operation of the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12 and the ministry gifts of Ephesians 4:11-12.

I will also delimit the study of the other gifts of apostle, prophet, pastor, and teacher and their impact on the success of the church.

Though the case study is on Bethel World Outreach Center in Nashville, Tennessee, I have interviewed over fifty leaders whom I deem relevant to the emphasis on the role of the evangelist in North America. I have particularly interviewed people with the evangelist gift who also have a missional perspective on church growth and church expansion and have expertise that will shed light on the role the evangelist (see Appendices A and B).

Furthermore, I have focused on churches and leaders that have utilized the evangelist or accept the need for the evangelist in their church growth and church planting strategy.

### ***Theoretical Construct***

My theoretical construct is taken from the ecclesiological view of Ephesians 4:11-17 where the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher are referenced as the gifts that God gave to the church to function until he returns. God has given these five primary gifts to equip the church for the work of the ministry. These gifts are Christ's

expression of himself on the earth. Christ operated in all five of these gifts as the Son of God on earth, therefore he has divested himself in these primary ways so that his ministry will continue through his people, so that the church will grow and mature unto the full stature of the measure of Christ himself. Therefore, to ignore or minimize any aspect of Christ's ministry will be met with adverse consequences.

In the last twenty years the North American church has attempted to rediscover the gifts of apostle and prophet. The impact of these missing gifts on the church is beyond the scope of this study. However, the evangelist, though acknowledged by most as a valid gift, has been practically excluded from the day-to-day life of the North American church. I hope this research will inspire a resurgence of growth that will help ignite a great awakening by mobilizing this vital gift at this critical time in history.

### ***Overview of the Dissertation***

This dissertation is presented in nine chapters with the final one containing conclusions and recommendations. Chapter 1 gives the introduction, background, and significance of the study. Chapter 2 gives the scriptural foundation for the ministry of the evangelist by focusing on the three references to the evangelist in the New Testament. Chapter 3 gives an overview of the gift of the evangelist throughout church history, and closes with a look at the presence of the evangelist in current missiological literature. Chapters 4 and 5 are the methodology and findings from my research. Chapter 6 gives a comparison of the biblical principles with the primary marks of an evangelist in the findings. This is highlighted by a survey of over 280 Christian leaders and their reactions to my findings on what the role of the evangelist should be. Chapter 7 is a case study of my church, Bethel World Outreach Center, demonstrating how we identify, train, and utilize evangelists. Chapter 8 deals with how to identify and utilize the gift of evangelist. Chapter 9 is the Conclusion and Recommendations for the church in North America.



## CHAPTER 2

### THE EVANGELIST IN SCRIPTURE

The logical starting point for understanding the gift of the evangelist is the Scripture. In Chapter 1, I list in my assumptions that the functioning model of church leadership is the one described in Ephesians 4:11-12. Yet in light of the importance of establishing the validity of the need for rediscovering the gift of an evangelist, I will restate the validity of the gift itself.

The evangelist is one the five primary gifts that Christ has given the church. At the same time, Jesus commissioned all believers in Matthew 28:19 to “go and make disciples.” In this chapter I will cover the references to the evangelist in the New Testament and demonstrate the proper functioning of the gift of the evangelist does not negate or minimize the responsibility of every believer to be a witness. In essence all believers do the work of the evangelist, regardless of their particular calling or abilities, but some are called to exercise this gift in a particular way, in a particular time and place. It is these who are called to be evangelists, to exercise the gift that I focus on here. At the end of this chapter, I will present a list of principles that reflect the role of the evangelist from Scripture. I will then use these principles to evaluate the missional literature being written today in terms of its treatment of the evangelist as well as the current practices of the church in North America as it either includes or excludes the ministry of the evangelist.

*Euangelistas* (evangelist) is a rare word except in ecclesiastical literature. In a non-Christian sense it is attested only on a poorly-preserved inscription, from Rhodes, where it means “one who proclaims oracular sayings” (Kittle 1980:697). It occurs only three times in the New Testament (NT): in Acts 21:8 of Philip (see 8:4ff, 12, 35, 40); Ephesians 4:11 of evangelists along with apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers; and 2

Timothy 4:5 of Timothy (see 1 Thess. 3:2; Phil. 2:22). The number of evangelists must have been greater than one might suppose from the number of occurrences in the NT (Phil. 4:3; 2 Cor. 8:18; Col. 1:7; 4:12).

In looking at these three references I believe we will see a full picture of the various facets of the role of the evangelist and the need for all of them to be in operation. In Ephesians 4:11-12 the evangelist is described as an office (not officer) or ministry given by God through his grace to prepare or equip God's people for works of service. So in essence this verse describes the evangelist as one that primarily trains others to evangelize. The evangelist can be either male or female. In Acts 21:8, Philip is called the evangelist and his work as an evangelist is described in Acts 8. By linking these two verses together I will look at the evangelist as groundbreaker and church planter. Finally in 2 Timothy 4:5, Timothy is exhorted to "do the work of the evangelist." Here I believe that the call for every one to be a part of the Great Commission and preach the gospel and make disciples will be the focus. If we are all called to do the work of an evangelist then it is vital to know what that work is.

Once again, the word evangelist, is a transliteration into English of the Greek, *euangelistas* which occurs only three times in the New Testament (Ac. 21:8; Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:5). In this section I will look at each account of evangelist in order to establish principles for job description of the role of the evangelist.

### ***Ephesians 4:11-12***

"It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Eph. 4:11-12). This passage lists the evangelist as one of five gifts that Christ gave to the church when he ascended to heaven. These gifts were to be an expression of Christ's continued ministry to his people through

his followers: “*Tous de Euanngelistas*, and some evangelists. The third gifted person is the evangelist” (Hoehner 2002:542). This phrase “and some” occurs four times in this verse.

The fact that Scripture says *some* points to the fact that there is a distinction between the call to be an evangelist and the command for all to evangelize. In this passage Paul uses the word “some” four times to suggest that not all are given this gift. This reveals the distinction between the person gifted as an evangelist and the call of all believers to evangelize.

The Ephesians context is discussing something different. Although each believer is indwelt with no distinction, the present context is talking about the gifts that are given with distinction. ...In verse 7 he mentions that a gift is given to each, but in verse 11 he refers to the giving of a gifted person (Hoehner 2002:541).

John R.W. Stott agrees that the gift of the evangelist is different from the call for all to evangelize.

After apostles and prophets, Paul mentions evangelists. This noun occurs only three times in the New Testament (here in Acts 21:8 of Philip and in 2 Tim 4:5 of Timothy himself) although of course the verb “to evangelize” is frequently used to describe the spreading of the gospel. Since all Christians are under obligation, when they have an opportunity to bear witness to Christ and his good news, the gift of an “evangelist” (bestowed only upon some) must be something different. It may refer to evangelistic preaching, or making the gospel particularly plain and relevant to unbelievers or helping timorous people to take the plunge of commitment to Christ or of effective personal witnessing. Probably the gift of an evangelist may take may take all these forms and more....There is great need for gifted evangelists today who will pioneer new ways of exercising and developing their gift so as to penetrate the vast unreached segments of society for Christ (Stott 1979:163).

The evangelist is listed after the apostle and prophet. Ephesians 2:20 says the foundation of the church is the apostle and prophet. Therefore, the evangelist is listed after the apostle and prophet, but before the pastor and teacher. This is significant. “In



Eph. 4:11 the evangelists are mentioned only after the apostles...The evangelists continue the work of the Apostles” (Kittel 1980:737).

Just as the list of gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:28 is in a prescribed order, so the list mentioned here by Paul is also in a particular order. The apostle and prophet function to help direct the ministry and follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit into God’s harvest field. The evangelist would come in order of importance after the apostle and prophet but before the pastor and teacher. Practically speaking, if there were no evangelist to win people to Christ, there would be very few people to pastor and teach. They are also gifts from God which should constantly remind the bearer that the abilities they possess are God-given. “Since Christ is the giver of the spiritual gifts and spiritual functions, there is no place for human pride, as if the gifts were self-generated or in some way earned. Similarly there is no place for envy since Christ has gifted all and that in various and different ways” (Vooy's 1991:88).

Therefore, those who have been called by God and endowed with this gift should recognize the awesome privilege of being set apart for this task. The only logical response is to be devoted to a process of training to understand better how to properly function in this calling.

### **The Evangelist as an Office Appointed by God**

[T]he evangelists who succeeded the apostles built up the foundations of the churches which had been laid in all quarters by the apostles, preaching the gospel ‘to those who had not yet heard the word of faith.’ ‘The affairs of our Savior’s teaching and church flourished daily and made steady advances’ (von Harnack 1905:166).

John Calvin in his commentary on Ephesians described the ministries mentioned in Ephesians 4:11.

Next to them (apostles) were the evangelists, who held a kindred office, but of an inferior rank. In this class were Timothy and those like him; for

while Paul associates him with himself, in his salutations, he does not make him a fellow in the apostleship, but proclaims this name as peculiarly as his own. Therefore, the Lord used them as subsidiaries to the apostles, to whom they were next in rank (Calvin 1548/1965:179).

Theologians have stressed these gifts were appointments directly from God. In other words not everyone has been given these particular gifts.

He is the one who appointed. Literally, "...who gave." See 1 Cor. 12:18, 28; Acts 20:28, and the first NOTE on Eph 1:22 for the translation "he appointed." This version is not meant to exclude the gift-giver of the men and titles listed in 4:11. According to verses 7-8 they are "given" as "gifts," but in verse 11 Paul shows that this "gift is distinct from an occasional token of God's and Christ's good will that may be received, consumed, and soon forgotten. By his gift the exalted Christ establishes an order and gives the church a constitution. Gift and institution, or charisma and office, are not mutually exclusive alternatives; they are combined and inseparable. The ministries exerted in the church are, as it were, immediately given from above. Christ gives the church the officers she needs, not vice versa. The church described in Ephesians has a distinctly hierarchical, actually a monarchic structure. Her constitution is distinguished with utmost brevity and clarity from the list of unilaterally dependent or mutually competing church offices to be found in Canon Law or other books of Church Order (Barth 1974:435).

Markus Barth emphasizes that the ministries in Ephesians 4 are clearly gifts given to the church and that these gifts should not be rejected.

The exalted Christ will fill all, and he appoints ministers to the church (4:8-11). That is all! There are no references to bishops, general secretaries, district superintendents and the like, and no utterances on authority of higher ministers over a "minor" clergy or over their ordination. What the Pastoral Epistles say on such issues differ from the crisp contents of Ephesians 4. In Ephesians neither the democratic process of electing officers, nor the aristocratic method of co-option, nor even a ritual of ordination are mentioned. One thing only is clearly stated: Christ himself appoints the special officers. He who despised their ministry would condemn God and reject his gift (Barth 1974:435).

Barth stresses that God, not human beings, appointed these gifts and to reject these "special officers" is to reject Christ himself and his gift. If we reject the office of

pastor because there have been unworthy representations of this gift we would be rejecting a ministry that God gave to the church for a specific purpose. In the same way, if we reject the office of evangelist we are rejecting an officer given by Christ and are in danger of rejecting Christ himself!

### **Prepare (Equip) God's People for Works of Service**

In Ephesians 4:11-12 Paul speaks about those called and given these gifts to prepare and equip God's people to do the works of service. Most in the ministry see their primary role as doing ministry whereas this passage stresses a primary call to empower others to minister as well.

Everyone in the body of Christ is to be equipped. The term "equipping" is a translation of *katartismos*, a medical/technical term referring to mending or repairing. It thus suggests the preparation, training and discipline necessary to equip believers to do the work of ministry. Work, *ergon*, is singular in number, indicating that there is but one work in the body of Christ, although it comes in various forms. This work is one of service, of ministry. When trained, all Christians are ministers. This is not to say that those who have not been especially gifted in this way cannot be trained. After all, the purpose of the gifted ones is to prepare all of God's people for works of service (Eph. 4:12) (Vooys 1991).

This is a radical way for evangelists to think. For the most part the perception has been that the super-hero, great man of God is going to swoop in and do the job for the struggling bedraggled church. While the evangelist will necessarily come into a particular context and use their grace and gift to give a supernatural lift to God's people, the ultimate blessing will come when the people of God are empowered so that when the evangelist leaves, people are able to more effectively evangelize within their own community.

The gifts turn out to be a variety of particular people all of whom have ministries involving some form of proclamation of the Word. There are questions about the syntax of verse 12, but its three prepositional phrases

most likely describing three aspects of the purpose of such gifts,-the equipping of others, service, and the building up of the church (Lincoln 1990:226).

The function of each gift is to prepare God's people for works of service so that the body will be built up. Not only do evangelists preach the gospel, they also equip others to do the same. In light of the fact that the command of Jesus to his followers to make disciples of all nations, it is apparent that he has given a gift to the church to train and empower all believers to fulfill this mandate.

The church's ministry in Ephesians is still mainly charismatic: it is not regulated as it is in the Pastorals. The apostles and the prophets of Eph. 4:11 constitute foundation ministries (as in Eph. 2:20); as for the evangelists, pastors, and teachers, they do not reserve the ministry to themselves but are given to the church by the ascended Lord that they may enable all its members to discharge their respective ministries, each member functioning for the health and growth of the whole body (Bruce 1984:239).

Therefore, one of the clear goals of the evangelist should be to train those that are not so gifted to share their faith. The job description of the evangelist must involve equipping others, therefore it is a priority. "In brief, the point is that the gifted persons in verse 11 serve as the foundational gifts that are used for the immediate purpose of preparing all saints to minister. Thus every believer must do the work of the ministry" (Hoehner 2002:549).

One of the primary concerns of those that want to de-emphasize the role of ministry for the evangelist is that they fear that this will lead to a clergy led ministry rather than the body of Christ being empowered to minister. However, I do not believe it is a situation of either/or, but rather a both/and. The job of the gifted evangelist is to empower others to evangelize.

This does not foster a division between clergy and laity but actually highlights the distinctives of the roles that are necessary for both unity and diversity to be present. The gifted people listed are not to be considered

officers of the church, but rather gifted individuals who are foundational. Apostles and evangelists need to proclaim the message and establish churches. Prophets and pastor-teachers need to inform and instruct believers. But the work of the ministry does not stop there—it continues as these gifted individuals prepare all the saints for the work of ministry, with the ultimate goal of building up the body of Christ (Hoehner 2002:551).

The reference to the evangelist in Ephesians speaks to the unity, stability and the responsibility to equip God’s people for the works of service. In this passage, the unity of the church is also stressed to ensure these offices function properly.

The Unity of the church is true and flourishes when the common origin and function of several ministries are gratefully recognized. Christ himself gives the church a diversity of services. Instead of impersonal services, particular servants are listed. The gift of the exalted Christ to the church consists, according to Ephesians, of persons. Unless the church respects the men and women given her, she does not revere her head, Christ. All the ministers listed are persons who fulfill their service by speaking: they are “Ministers of the Word.” This does not exclude the view that at the time when Ephesians was written other services were carried out upon God’s appointment, in the name and power of Christ, and through inspiration of the Spirit. There were the ministries of the elders, bishops, deacons, miracle-doers, and the agents of mercy. However, in 4:11 unquestionable priority is attributed not only to “apostles and prophets” (cf. 2:20; 3:5) but also to “evangelists” and “teachers,” i.e. to four functions (Barth 1974:436).

Now I will turn to the book of Acts to see the picture of the evangelist as it is presented in the 1st century church.

#### ***Acts 21:8 - Philip the Evangelist***

“Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven” (Ac. 21:8). The clearest example of an evangelist at work is found in the account of Philip who is the only person in Scripture that is directly called an evangelist.

Evangelists are defined...as “those whose special gifts enable them to take the gospel to those outside the church.” Even though the church has been established under the apostles and prophets Christ has given, he still expects it to grow by the efforts of others who are especially gifted, such as “Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven” (Acts 21:8) (Vooys 1991).

Luke mentions Philip as an evangelist and as “one of the seven” (deacons) to distinguish him from Philip the apostle. Philip’s original job was to serve as part of the deaconate and help minister to the needs of the people in the context of the first church. The qualifications for this job were that he be “...known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom” (Ac. 6:3). There was no need for a special spiritual gift to serve in this capacity. Paul discovers Philip after he has already worked with Peter and John in the wake of the revival in Samaria referred to in Acts 8.

The next day they came to Caesarea, a further 80 miles (64 km) south. Here they stayed for some days with Philip who was last heard of in Acts 8:40 as having gone to this town. He is described as the evangelist; a term used which may distinguish him from Philip the apostle. Later tradition however managed to confuse the two men. The title evangelist aptly described him since although he was one of the seven appointed to deal with the poor aid of the church he was an evangelist who probably founded the Church in Caesarea (Marshall 1980:339).

Having first served as a deacon, Philip subsequently demonstrated that the gift of the evangelist was operating in his life. “Acts initially introduces Stephen and Philip as a pair. Both were evangelists who performed signs and wonders” (Gallagher and Hertig 2004:103).

In Acts chapter 8, Philip goes down to Samaria and preached the gospel and gives us the most direct biographical sketch of an evangelist in action. It is vital to establish the link between the mention of Philip as an evangelist in Acts 21:8 with the work he carried out as an evangelist in Acts 8.

In Acts 21:8, evangelist is the designation of Philip whose work in this capacity is presented in Acts 8 with the cognitive verb *euangelizomai* as that of evangelizing or announcing the good news. (4,12,35,40) with the

intent that the hearers believe in Jesus (5,12,35,36). This description of Philip's work together with the inherent significance of the term evangelist shows what the evangelist's task was (Knight 1992:457).

F.F. Bruce and Gordon Fee (1988:399) agree with the proposition that the title given to Philip as evangelist in Acts 21:8 is linked to the work he carried out in Acts 8.

### **Description of Philip's Work**

It was during the persecution occurring in Jerusalem that Philip was scattered along with many others to a city in Samaria (Ac. 8:5). Bruce and Fee explain it was a bold move on the part of Philip to preach Christ to the Samaritans. However, they did share a common hope of a deliverer (Bruce and Fee 1988:164). This was demonstrated in the dialogue between Jesus and the woman from Samaria recorded in John 4. When the subject turned to spiritual things she spoke about a coming Messiah that her people the Samaritans also expected (Jn. 4:25-26).

Philip's ministry was marked by works of exorcism and healing so striking that great numbers believed his message and were filled with rejoicing. As usual, in the book of Acts, the beneficiaries of the works of healing were the paralytics and lame people. As in the ministry of Jesus, Himself and of the apostles so in the ministry of Philip these works of mercy and power were visible signs confirming the message that was proclaimed (Bruce and Fee 1988:165).

Philip was described as someone who went from place to place and preached the Word. The evangelist is seen in action as a catalyst for powerful people movements. While passing through cities and regions he scattered seeds that would eventually take root in new lands such as Africa as in the case of his ministry to the Ethiopian. He proclaimed the Messiah (Ac. 8:5), cast out devils, healed the lame (Ac. 8:7-8), and produced real joy in the city. Themes emerge that are vital in establishing a link between missiology and the gift of the evangelist: the superiority of Christ over magic (Ac. 8:6-13); the glorious work of the Holy Spirit (8:15-20); warnings about money (8:18-20);

baptism accompanied by repentance (8:13, 22); and the power of prayer (8:15, 22, 24). Possibly the most important point in describing the work of the evangelist in Acts 8:6 is that people both saw and heard Christ's message (Gallagher and Hertig 2004:104).

### **Principles Drawn from Philip the Evangelist's Ministry**

The following summary of the key principles seen in the ministry of Philip the evangelist are taken from the references cited.

1. The work of Philip with the assistance of the apostolic team from Jerusalem caused a strong church to be established through the gift of the evangelist and flourish in a new territory.

2. The evangelist obeyed the Lord's command that the gospel would go beyond Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria. Philip ministered cross-culturally underscoring the need to go into all the world as Jesus said.

3. The pattern of the evangelist includes both traveling from place to place as well as settling in a city or region to minister. Philip did not stay long in Samaria but did eventually settle in Caesarea.

4. The evangelist operated in signs and wonders. This is a vital sign of the New Testament evangelist. The evangelist must be bold to declare that Christ not only saves but also heals. This power came from Philip preaching the Word of God. As Martin Luther attested, "And what could or would God's people believe, if there were no Word of God? This is the thing that performs all miracles, effects, sustains, carries out and does everything, exorcises all devils" (Luther and Gritsch 1966:150).

5. The evangelist preached the gospel. Signs and wonders got the peoples' attention, but it was when they "believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Ac. 8:12). There must be a presentation of the *euangelion*, the message of the



death, burial, and resurrection of Christ with a response of repentance and faith by the hearers.

6. The evangelist values the individual as well as the crowds. To have Philip leave a great meeting in Samaria to preach to a single eunuch was not a test of humility but one of strategy. This Ethiopian man represented an entire nation, not just a city. History would record that as a result of this evangelistic act, he took the gospel to Africa. An evangelist is able to speak to one person effectively as well as to crowds.

7. Philip preached Christ and baptized his converts. The essence of the evangelist's message is Christ and him crucified. Philip was able to take the Scripture and communicate the gospel to this man whose heart was searching for truth.

The next passage concerning the evangelist is mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:5 and gives additional light on the functioning of this gift that the picture in Acts seems to omit.

#### ***2 Timothy 4:5***

“Be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Tim. 4:5). A third reference to the evangelist comes from Paul's instructions to Timothy to “do the work of an evangelist.” Again, the word *euangelistas* is used. It seems that although Timothy may have functioned for a season as a community leader in Ephesus, he also functioned in teamwork with Paul as an itinerant evangelist.

Since the itinerant Timothy is called upon to do the work of an “evangelist” (2 Tim. 4:5) with no mention of “shepherd,” and since Luke designates the itinerant Philip in the same way, this term seems therefore also to refer to an itinerant ministry (Fee 1994:707).

Paul wrote letters to the Colossians and referred to himself as an apostle and to Timothy as “our brother” (Col. 1:1). Timothy was assisting Paul in this city not as an apostle or pastor but as a fellow itinerant or an evangelist. The Scripture implies that

Timothy was indeed meek and was reminded, “God did not give us a spirit of timidity” (2 Tim. 1:7). He was given medicinal advice for his “frequent ailments” (1 Tim. 5:23). When Paul wrote to the Corinthians he prompted them to handle Timothy with care and make sure “he has nothing to fear” (1 Cor.16:10).

Paul wants Timothy to continue to evangelize even though he is working in a more settled situation, and not in a new and unevangelized territory as Philip was. The use of the word evangelist (Gk) may indicate that Timothy is the evangelist or missionary for Ephesus and that Paul is encouraging him to continue that work. Or it may indicate that in whatever capacity Timothy serves he must continue doing the work of an evangelist. Cf. Paul’s comments about Timothy’s work in the Gospel in Philippians 2:2 and 1 Thessalonians 3:2) (Knight and Marshall 1992:457).

The call to do the work of the evangelist demands that we understand what that work is. First and foremost that work is to preach the good news. The primary work of the evangelist is to present the gospel and bring people to salvation. As previously mentioned, Ephesians 4:11-12 speaks of equipping believers for the work of ministry which in this case would be evangelism. The evangelist also helps break open new territories and gather new believers to form new churches. The evangelist casts out demons and heals the sick. As in the passage in Acts, these healings attest to the reality of the kingdom and its preeminence over spiritual darkness.

### **Preaching the Gospel**

Timothy is urged to do the work of preaching the gospel, the evangelist’s work (*ergon euangelistou*; see Ac. 21:8, Eph. 4:11). The task of preaching the good news was Paul’s work (2 Tim. 1:8, 2:15; see 1 Cor. 1:17), a task with regard to which he should bear no shame (2 Tim. 1:8) (Collins 2002:272).

Paul referred to himself twice as “a herald, an apostle, and a teacher” (1 Tim. 2:7 and 2 Tim. 1:11). There are several key words and phrases that I will examine that explore the connection between the evangelist and preaching and preachers. To start we

will look at the Word preacher. The Word preacher is *karuusa*. This means a herald that proclaims a message.

The essential point about the report is that it does not originate with them. Behind it stands a higher power. The herald does not express his own views. He is the spokesman for his master...Heralds adopt the mind of those who commission them and act with the pleni-potentiary authority of their masters...It is unusual for a herald to act on his own initiative and without explicit instructions...The good herald does not become involved in lengthy discussions but returns at once when he has delivered his message...In rare cases he may be empowered to decide on his own. But in general he is simply an executive instrument (Kittel 1980:688).

The duty of the preacher to be a faithful witness for the one who sent him or her is highlighted through the use of this word. They are like the angels who announced the good news that a savior was born (Lk. 2:10). It is the imagery of a messenger being sent with a message that gives understanding to the aspect of being “sent” with a message to deliver. “How can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news’” (Rom. 10:15).

Is the preacher an evangelist? It would be safe to say that all evangelists are preachers or heralds, but not all preachers are evangelists. The role of the preacher is critical in understanding the role of the evangelist because the first responsibility of the evangelist is as a preacher and thus he or she must be faithful to deliver the message. Paul says, “God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe” (1 Cor. 1:21).

### **The *Kerygma***

It is important to note that the evangelist’s message is as important as his or her God-given grace to perform the duties of their calling. After all, Paul warns that “even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If

anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!” (Gal. 1:8-9). Paul issued a similar warning to the Corinthian church. “The word *kerygma* (KJV “preaching”) here means not the act of preaching itself, but the content of that proclamation, namely the message of a crucified Messiah” (Fee 1987:73).

In 1 Cor 2:4 *kerygma* is the act of proclaiming. Christian preaching does not persuade the hearers by beautiful or clever words—otherwise it would only be a matter of words. Preaching does move. It takes place in the spirit and power. It is efficacious. In the short Markan ending, however the reference of *kerygma* is to content...The sacred and incorruptible *kerygma* is in some sense a doctrine which treats of eternal salvation. Yet does not exclude the possibility that the message which treats of eternal salvation or proclaims it may also effect it. This is at least the meaning in 1 Cor 1:21; The foolish message of Jesus crucified saves those who believe. At 1 Cor 15:14 the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the content of the *kerygma*...The *kerygma* is the mode in which the divine Logos comes to us. The *kerygma* is entrusted to the Apostle Paul...*Kerygma Iasou Xristo* can only mean the message which Jesus Christ proclaimed (Kittel 1980:716).

### **Women and Non-Professionals as Evangelists**

“The Lord gives the command; the women who proclaim the glad tidings are a great host” (Ps. 68:11 NASV). In this survey of the biblical principles of the evangelist, it is very important to move beyond the limitation of simply assuming that an evangelist is a male who occupies a full-time office. There is a role for women and non-professionals (Lincoln 1990:226).

In referencing the heritage of the role of women in the Old Testament community, “the women proclaim the victory in a song given by God Himself” (Kittel 1980:708). Miriam proclaims Moses’ victory through a song. The good news of the victory of Jesus resurrection is first given to women. The angel at the tomb addressed Mary Magdalene and the “other Mary” regarding their task of being the first to announce the good news about Jesus victory over the grave. “Go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen

from the dead...So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples” (Mt. 28:7-8).

There is no limitation from Scripture as to a woman being an evangelist. Not only is the precedent of the first announcement of the two greatest victories in history, the splitting of the Red Sea by Moses and the Resurrection of Christ, being spoken by women, there are other biblical references. The one example of an entire region believing in Jesus came through a nameless person who has come to be called, “the woman at the well.” This account in John 4 speaks of Jesus ministering to her and she going into the town and telling everyone the good news: “Come and see a man who told me everything thing I ever did. Could it be the Christ? They came out of the town and made their way to him” (Jn. 4:29-30).

Paul wrote to the Romans and mentions Priscilla and Aquila as his “fellow workers” (Rom. 16:3). He also mentions the “church that meets in their house” (1 Cor. 16:19). “When Priscilla and Aquila heard him [Apollos], they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more accurately” (Ac. 18:26). There is no doubt that women are an indispensable aspect of the preaching of the gospel and by understanding the concept of a herald that proclaims or announces a message, that even the most narrow-minded of interpreters would not exclude them from their participation in announcing the gospel to men, women, boys, and girls.

The role of the laity in evangelism is also a vital dimension to be explored. Paul worked at times with his own hands and subsidized his own ministry. The use of Luke the physician, and the witness of those that had been healed or cured by Jesus make up the great faith-building stories of Scripture. Cornelius in Acts 10 gathered his entire household to hear Peter preach. The Philippian jailer did virtually the same thing. Both moments represented significant breakthroughs in the advancement of the gospel. There is no biblical admonition that demands an evangelist be a “full-time minister.” As we

explore the literature and the data collection it will be important to have established the biblical model for this type of evangelist.

### ***Summary of the Biblical Model of the Evangelist***

The intent of this chapter was to see the picture Scripture paints of evangelists and what they are called to do. By looking at who they were and how they operated in the New Testament church we are able to compare the current landscape of evangelism and the evangelist to see the similarities and the disparities.

The scope of the ministry of the evangelist is clearly explained in Scripture as well as the various types of evangelists that were used by God to proclaim his Word both male and female, full time and layperson. The hope of recovering this great gift is heightened by looking at the variety of ways the gift operates as well the diversity of the ones that are endowed with the gift. The three references to the evangelist might be summed up this way. In Ephesians 4:11 the evangelist is pictured as an equipper; in Acts the evangelist is seen as an extender of God's kingdom; and in 2 Timothy all believers are empowered to minister.

The principles we can draw from these three passages, then, incorporate the role of Philip as well as the scriptural principles drawn from the Ephesians and 2 Timothy passages. These in brief are that the evangelist:

1. is a preacher of the gospel;
2. has one of five ministry gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11-12 that equips believers for works of service to the church;
3. was proven as a servant in the church as well as a herald of the gospel in Acts 6;
4. can be women or men as noted in John 4, Matthew 28, and Acts 16 (Priscilla and Aquila);

5. breaks open new territory with the communication of the gospel, Acts 8;
  6. prays for the sick and cast out demons as they preach the gospel, Acts 8;
  7. understands the value of one convert as well as ministering to the crowds, Acts 8;
  8. functions in concert with the other gifts: apostles and pastors, Acts 8; Ephesians 4:11;
  9. is led by the Spirit to and through open doors and open hearts, Acts 8; and
  10. The gift of the evangelist is given to men and women regardless of personality type or personal weakness (for example, Timothy was prone to fear).
- With these principles, drawn from Scripture, clearly in mind, I turn now to contemporary literature for an understanding of the development of this office and its role in the church.

## CHAPTER 3

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE EVANGELIST IN LITERATURE

In New Testament scholarship the evangelist is a topic largely ignored. For every other potential church leadership position mentioned in the Bible volumes upon volumes have been written. Take for instance the New Testament pastor, the word for pastor: *poimenos* (transliteration of Greek); is used in possible reference to a church leadership position only four times, and the amount of scholarship devoted to this area is daunting. Yet for the evangelist, a word that occurs three times in the New Testament, most critical commentaries usually devote less than a page and there is not a single critical book in print dedicated to the cause of establishing what exactly an evangelist is or was (Smets 2004:1-2).

One of the challenges I found in writing this literature review is the limited amount of contemporary literature on the subject of the evangelist. That's not to say that it has not been mentioned, but not in a way that helps clearly identify what an evangelist is and what his/her role is in producing a missional church. This can be easily observed by simply glancing through the index of any book on evangelism, discipleship, and the missional or emerging church for references to the evangelist. Even more glaring in its absence are books with evangelist in the title or subtitle. Much is written on evangelism as it relates to church planting and church expansion or growth. Delving into these works, one does find references to the evangelist, but they are few and far between. And that is a part of the story of why this valuable gift of the Christian faith must be recovered and re-embraced. "Christ has called specific people to fulfill the 'gift of the evangelist' in the church. Evangelists have their unique role to fill in accomplishing world evangelization" (Davis 1997:34).

With this in mind I present a brief historical overview of the ministry of the evangelist in literature. I will conclude with an emphasis on the influential missional literature in the last twelve years and describe and evaluate how the evangelist and his/her role are treated. There have been great awakenings, revivals, and a multitude of ways and



means that God has used to bring this about in the North American context. Evangelists have played a part in this story and will be needed if the church in North America is to regain momentum through a renewed commitment to the preaching of the gospel.

The writer is glad to believe that evangelists are coming back into their own in America. That there is a rising tide of interest in evangelism, there can be no doubt. Christian leaders realize that mounting tides of wickedness must be met by extraordinary means. The times demand God-gifted, Spirit-annointed, full-time specialists in this warfare be against spiritual hosts of darkness (Whitsell 1949:123).

The story of the evangelist begins in Scripture and continues in the writings throughout church history. I will begin looking at the early church.

### ***The Early Church***

The church itself was born through the preaching of the gospel as Jesus commanded his disciples to do. The last mention of the evangelist in Scripture refers to the role of the evangelist in assisting the apostles in the spreading of God's Word in the first century. "The power of the Gospel that turned the world upside down was delivered by a mighty throng of evangelists that were 'impossible for us to enumerate'" (Schiff 2007:169).

The historian Eusebius writes that many disciples in the mid-second century functioned as evangelists:

Then starting out upon long journeys they performed the office of the evangelists, being filled with the desire to preach Christ to those who had not yet heard the word of faith, and to deliver them the divine Gospels. And when they had only laid the foundations of the faith in foreign places, they appointed others as pastors, and entrusted them with the nurture of those that had been recently been brought in, while they themselves went on again to other countries and nations, with the grace the co-operation of God. For a great many wonderful works were done through them by the power of the Spirit, so that at the first hearing whole multitudes of men

eagerly embraced the religion of the Creator of the universe (Schiff 2007:169).

An overview of the vast quantity of theological literature gives the impression that there are primarily two distinct areas of the gospel in which people engage—theologian (thinker/philosopher) or practitioner. The early church, however, made no such distinction between theology and the practical outreach of ministry known as evangelism.

Much evangelism today is brash and unthinking; the intellectuals do not usually engage in it. This is our double loss: the practitioners do not know any theology and the theologians do not know any evangelism. In the early Church it was not so. This book shows how flexible the early evangelists were, getting inside the mindset of the pagans and Jews alike and transposing the gospel into the appropriate key in order to intrigue and engage them (Green 2004:18).

History shows that the gospel made an significant impact during the first 300 years, changing the Roman Empire as well as the entire world. The goal of this chapter is to give a brief overview of the evangelist in literature, and in doing so I will begin with the Reformation.

### *Reformation/Awakening Era*

The 1500s were marked by a radical reformation that should have been called a revolution in light of the dramatic impact on the way church was “done” and the world was changed. Men like Luther and Calvin preached and functioned as evangelists presenting the real gospel in the face of religious darkness and spiritual corruption.

Now, if the apostles, evangelists, and prophets are no longer living, others must have replaced them and will replace them until the end of the world, for the church shall last until the end of the world [Mt.28:20]. Apostles, evangelists, and prophets must therefore remain, no matter what their name, to promote God’s word and work (Pelikan, Oswald, and Lehmann 1999:155-156).

The reformation was not simply a time of correct teaching but of proclamation that Christ is Lord (not the Pope), and salvation is a free gift. The power of the message

of the gospel being presented in this fashion reshaped the landscape of the known world. Calvin, in his Institutes of the Christian Religion, stressed the importance of evangelists:

Evangelists I take to be those who although lower in rank than apostles were next to them in office and functioned next to them in their place. Such were Luke Timothy, Titus and others like them perhaps also the seventy disciples, who Christ appointed in the second place after the apostles [Lke10:1]...Still I do not deny the Lord sometimes at a later period or at least evangelists in their place as has happened in our own day. For there was need of such persons (evangelists) to lead the Church back from the rebellion of Antichrist (Calvin 1548/1965:1957).

References to the evangelist and even the gospel itself were lacking in the historic confessions of the faith. The primary exception was the 2nd Helvetic Confession. It was written in 1564 and mentioned the ministry of the evangelist, linking it to Paul's command to Timothy, "Do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. 4:5).

The writers of the Gospels were considered evangelists, heralds of the gospel of Christ. The witness of these four men--Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John--was clearly related to the work of the evangelist. This underscores the fact that the gospel is at its essence a story, and that the work of the evangelist is first and foremost to tell the story of Christ to all people (2nd Helvetic Confession, Chapter 18, 1564) (Bullinger 2007).

The Westminster Confession of Faith lacked any reference to the gospel itself until it was added in 1903, having been overlooked by the original writers in 1642.

The two chapters...[re. Chapter IX; *Of the Holy Spirit* and Chapter X *Of the Gospel*] did not belong to the Confession of Faith in its original form but were added during the present century in order to give clearer and fuller expression to certain articles of faith which, it was felt, had not been adequately treated. The chapters were...adopted by the Assembly at its meeting in 1903, with the preamble: 'Whereas, it is desirable to express more fully the doctrine of the Church concerning the Holy Spirit, Missions, and the love of God for all men, the following chapters were added to the Confession of Faith.' The chapters were...subsequently adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the US in 1942 (Hendry 1960:117).

### **John Wesley and the Methodists**

In the 18th century, John Wesley launched a movement known as Methodism that still exists today. Though starting in England it flourished in America. When Wesley, an English preacher, became unwelcome in the Church of England because of his unorthodox views, he began to preach to the masses in the fields. He considered himself an evangelist and wrote about his role in preaching the gospel.

But you “know no call I have to preach up and down; to play the part of an itinerant Evangelist.” Perhaps you do not. But I do: I know God hath required this at my hands. To me, his blessing my work is an abundant proof; although such a proof as often makes me tremble. But “is there not pride or vanity in my heart?” There is; yet this is not my motive to preaching. I know and feel that the spring of this is a deep conviction, that it is the will of God, and that were I to refrain, I should never hear that word, “Well done, good and faithful servant;” but, “Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth” (Wesley 2000:645).

Wesley described the work of the evangelist from Scripture, not just from his own experience, and in this message referenced the example of Philip that is similar to the one discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

The evangelist, who was one of the seven deacons-An evangelist is a preacher of the gospel to those who had never heard it, as Philip had done to the Samaritans, to the Ethiopian eunuch, and to all the towns from Azotus to Cesarea, Ac 8:5, 26, 40. It is not unlikely he spent the following years preaching in Tyre and Sidon, and the other heathen cities in the neighborhood of Galilee, his house being at Caesarea, a convenient situation for that purpose. And same prophets, and some evangelists-A prophet testifies of things to come; an evangelist of things past: and that chiefly by preaching the gospel before or after any of the apostles. All these were extraordinary officers (Wesley n.d.).

The impact of the Wesleyan movement is noted by contemporary missional writer Alan Hirsch. “...[I]n 1776 fewer than 2 percent of Americans were Methodists. By 1850, the movement claimed the allegiance of 34 percent of the population. How did they do it?” (Hirsch 2006:20). Whenever there is this kind of explosive growth, there is much

interest as to the causes that produced such a manifestation of God's grace. The ministry of the evangelist was the driving force behind the prolific growth of Methodism in North America.

Many learned men have shown at large that our Lord himself, and all his Apostles, built the Christian Church as nearly as possible on the plan of the Jewish. So the great High Priest of our profession sent Apostles and Evangelists to proclaim glad tidings to all the world; and then Pastors, Preachers, and Teachers, to build up in the faith the congregations that should be founded. But I do not find that ever the office of an Evangelist was the same with that of a Pastor, frequently called a Bishop. He presided over the flock, and administered the sacraments: The former assisted him, and preached the word, either in one or more congregations. I cannot prove from any part of the New Testament, or from any author of the three first centuries, that the office of an Evangelist gave any man a right to act as a Pastor or Bishop. I believe these offices were, considered as quite distinct from each other till the time of Constantine (Wesley 1872).

### **19th to Early 20th Century**

The period in America known as the Second Great Awakening during the 1800s was a huge force in the shaping of the religious culture. It was there that Charles Finney became known as an evangelist and shook America with the gospel (Rosell and Dupuis 1989/2002:74, 268, 340).

Finney, who referred to himself as an evangelist, spoke of the vital relationship between pastor and evangelist and the blessing that would come when they worked together in unity. "I have observed that uniformly where pastors have gone into revival work with honest earnestness and have cordially and without jealousy cooperated with an evangelist, the revival has greatly strengthened his hands and increased in his congregation" (Rosell and Dupuis 1989/2002:447).

The period of the 1800s produced evangelists such as Dwight L. Moody who continued to fan the fires of revival and awakening in America. Moody was an evangelist

who utilized many strategies to draw young men and women to hear the gospel. “He was primarily an evangelist and preaching was his way of dialoguing with sinners” (Bell 1997:9). His efforts were astounding in terms of the results of his personal ministry, and also his ability to call other evangelists into the ministry and thus replicate himself in others.

Moody returned to America as the world’s most famous evangelist. By the end of his life he had preached to more than 100 million people. But Moody had another passion too. He sought to discover and develop the next generation of Christian leaders and evangelists (Allison and Anderson 2004:63).

Again an evangelist, by fully preaching the gospel, was able to not only see masses converted, but also saw social transformation by enabling the gospel to impact the entire person, spirit, soul, and body. Thus, not only is evangelism an indispensable part of social transformation, but social transformation without the gospel only results in superficial change.

### **Charles H. Spurgeon**

One of the most inspiring writers and church leaders that utilized the evangelist gifting was Charles Haddon Spurgeon. He not only pastored a mega-church of 20,000 members in London from 1867-1892, he was a prolific church planter and strategist. “By 1879, 102 new churches had been founded by students of the Pastor’s College. When Spurgeon died in 1892, over 200 churches, with buildings erected, had been planted in and around London (Earls 1989:192).

Spurgeon started a college to train pastors for the new churches, but referred to them as evangelists to underscore the importance of their primary responsibility. “He taught them that “soul-winning is the chief business of the Christian minister; indeed, it should be the main pursuit of every true believer.” The objective of the Pastor’s College

was the preaching of the gospel, and men were trained to accomplish this specific purpose.

In 1881 the Evangelists' Association owned and operated 603 preaching stations each Sunday. Another 728 preaching stations were either borrowed or rented, but still manned by preachers of the Tabernacle Evangelist's Association. There were also 131 open-air meetings conducted by the men. The preachers in both organizations gave their time without any remuneration and many times helped pay the rent for the halls used (Earls 1989:196).

As the evangelists preached in these various locations, they would gather a nucleus of new converts and Spurgeon would send a pastor to shepherd the new flock. "When he knew of a neighborhood without a Baptist church he would choose a suitable student and send him out to start a church. Spurgeon maintained a continued surveillance of prime areas for church planting" (Earls 1989:131). He kept evangelism at the forefront of the mind of every pastoral candidate. "He and his men consistently maintained evangelistic labors wherever they went. They went to where the people were.... If a nucleus, regardless of size, responded, they sought to establish a congregation and permanent church ministry" (1989:141).

Spurgeon had discovered that many ministerial schools in his day proved ineffective. Donald McGavran, a modern church growth leader, saw many of today's seminaries in a similar light. He stated "Seminaries believe they are training ministers, not evangelists" (1988:10), and believed that a "maintenance mentality" dominates most seminary faculties (1988:3).

### **Student Volunteer Movement**

The Student Volunteer Movement was instrumental in sending thousands of young people into the mission field. The instrument that God used to ignite this historic move of God's Spirit and God's people was John R. Mott. When looking for a catalyst for

igniting evangelism and stimulating a missional mindset in his people, the evangelist is the tool God uses. While being introduced at a large rally, Mott took the moment that was intended to honor him to deliver one of the shortest messages in history in honor the gift that God had given him. “After the prolonged applause had died down, he slowly rose to his feet and simply said in a ringing voice, ‘Let it always be said that John R. Mott was an evangelist!’ Then he sat down” (Graham 1984:131).

In the address delivered before the fourth international convention of the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM), the need to train up new converts to be evangelists was stressed. “We are able to win them (the natives); and from this body we train up a company of native evangelists to go out among their own people and preach the gospel more effectively than we can ever do it ourselves” (SVM 1902:284). This principle of identifying and training men and women to be evangelists is an indispensable trait in producing a missional congregation in any country or context.

### **The Evangelist in 20th Century Literature**

In the 20th century the quest to evangelize the world by the year 2000 became a focused goal. The “science” of church growth was developed and the appearance of mass-media communications gave the prospect of evangelizing the whole world a realistic chance. The expression of the gift of the evangelist reached iconic proportions with the ministry of Billy Graham. Overall, evangelization became more of a priority than the gift of the evangelist.

#### ***Roland Allen***

Missionary pioneer Roland Allen stated,

We have not yet succeeded in so planting it in any heathen land that it has become indigenous. Everywhere our missions are dependent. They look to



us for leaders, for instructors, for rulers.... Our missions are in different countries amongst people of the most diverse characteristics, but all bear a most astonishing resemblance one to another. We have approached them as superior beings, moved by charity to impart our wealth to destitute and perishing souls (Allen 1962:141).

The primary reason for his observation was the tendency of most mission organizations to keep indigenous Christians dependent on the foreign missionary rather than empower them to lead.

Want of faith has made us fear and distrust native independence. We have imagined ourselves to be, and we have acted so as to become, indispensable. In everything we have taught our converts to turn to us, to accept our guidance. We have asked nothing from them but obedience. We have educated our converts to put us in the place of Christ (Allen 1962:141)

Allen's highlighting of Paul's methods was important (1963:14-15, 17). He pointed out that the most vital aspect of Paul's work was that he trained leaders (1963:93).

While not specifically mentioning the evangelist, Allen describes the ministry of the evangelist and the task of following the leading of the Spirit to direct the steps and strategy of the evangelistic enterprise. He focuses on dealing with the church's failure on many fronts and sets the stage to go further in diagnosing the problems and suggesting remedies. Allen's work is critically important for all who are evangelists to read.

It is in the *Spontaneous Expansion of the Church* that Allen touches on the role of the evangelist to ignite a movement and then move out of the way (Allen 1963:34). He clearly calls the church to return to the spirit and method of the New Testament (1963:30-31).

### ***Billy Graham***

The term "evangelist" has its most positive association and defining figure in Billy Graham. He has been called, even by his critics, "America's greatest evangelist" (Long 2008:cover). The 20th century was marked by the dynamic witness of

this man. In his own words he gave a straightforward definition of the evangelist and the reality that it is a gift from God.

In the Bible an evangelist is a person sent by God to announce the Gospel, the Good News; he or she has a spiritual gift that has never been withdrawn from the Church. Methods differ, but the central truth remains: an evangelist is a person who has been called by God to declare the Good News to those who have not accepted it, with the goal of challenging them to turn to Christ in repentance and faith and to follow him in obedience to His will. The evangelist is not called to everything in the Church or in the world that God wants done. On the contrary, the calling of the evangelist is very specific (Graham 1997:xvii).

A contemporary of Graham's in the Pentecostal ranks was evangelist Oral Roberts. Graham's evangelism was marked by fervent preaching and an invitation for salvation. Roberts offered salvation in the same fashion, but also offered prayer for the sick to draw the unconverted to faith.

Since the focus of this paper is on the evangelist it would be impossible not to discuss the aforementioned individuals. There were other evangelists of note as well, such as Aimee Simple McPherson, T.L. Osborn, and numerous others that preached the gospel to the masses. As noted Chapter 1, Charles E. Fuller was himself an evangelist and preached to millions by means of radio. As the ministries of many of the more well-known evangelists are clearly understood in terms their style and content, I will not further discuss the literature related to them.

### ***Church Growth Movement***

It was, perhaps, the shadow that these "larger than life" personalities cast on the North American religious landscape that led to a sense of the need to remind the church that every member counts, and that winning the lost to Christ is not the job of a few but of all believers. The result was a movement that began to emphasize the growth of the

church through a deliberate process of training and equipping people to understand the natural and supernatural causes of the church growing in size and influence.

Donald McGavran is considered the father of the Church Growth Movement. His description of people movements rather than a mission station paradigm has made an impact on the thinking of a generation of missiologists and church planters. In defining a people movement and its impact he states, “We call this process a ‘People Movement.’ ‘People’ is a more universal word than ‘tribe,’ ‘caste,’ or ‘clan.’ It is more exact than ‘group.’ It fits everywhere, therefore in this book we shall speak of People Movements to Christ” (2005:13).

McGavran further describes such movements as a “chain reaction.” However he fails to mention the catalyst behind them. While he describes their existence, he does not go deeply enough to explore any of the agents of causality in these movements..

As God brought out an entire people [the Israelites] then, so He wills to bring out entire peoples now – out of their darkness into His wonderful light, out of the worship of ideas and gods of their own manufacture, into the worship of the God of righteousness and love (2005:156).

It was God’s plan to use a specific leader to bring his chosen people out of bondage and into the Promised Land. That leader was key to the movement. It is vital to understand the type of leader God uses today so that the church can access the specific gifts that are needed at this critical time in history. Simply working harder is not the answer for church growth. McGavran is insightful in calling us to a greater vision than a “mission station” approach. Ryan Bolger’s comment made when critiquing this chapter was most apt: “A movement might start with a single leader but will remain slow-going until anonymous people evangelize in their family units.” McGavran notes,

George Fox, at the beginning of that great People Movement which soon brought one in a hundred of the population of England into the Society of Friends, had a vision in which he saw “an innumerable company, as many

as motes in the sun, which shall come to the One Shepherd and the One Fold (2005:157).

Here, in McGavran's own words, is a hint of how a people movement can be traced back to a catalyst, an evangelist that God used to ignite the movement.

***R. Daniel Shaw and Charles E. Van Engen***

The critical aspect of communication and contextualization of the gospel is addressed by the team of anthropologist R. Daniel Shaw and theologian Charles E. Van Engen. Both have extensive work in mission, Shaw in Papua New Guinea as a Bible translator and Van Engen in Mexico as a church planter and Bible School teacher/administrator. The vital aspect of understanding whether communication has taken place is a clear concern in this work (Shaw and Van Engen 2003:96-97). They present a model called spiraling where the interaction between the divine and human is always in tension (2003:81-82). They advocate a humility in the missionary approach where we as communicators identify with those to whom we are ministering (2003:206-207). We must always seek to interpret the biblical texts in light of cultural context as well (2003:213). Shaw and Van Engen call for the local congregations to be intentional in their missionary thrust and strategy (2003:218).

Van Engen, writing about Arthur F. Glasser, states that Glasser saw the futility in trying to minimize the gospel in favor of social action:

One weakness of this view is that too often it loses sight of the lostness of human beings without Christ and the urgency of evangelism. Arthur Glasser pointed out in 1983 that “[The] church has never been so harassed and troubled by voices calling for the reduction or abandonment of [evangelism] – and for the reconceptualization of its message and mission in terms of social justice, international peace, racial integration, and the elimination of poverty... (Van Engen, Gilliland, and Pierson 1993:156).

Van Engen also wrote about McGavran and his impact on the Church Growth Movement. *The Bridges of God* became the most read missionary book in 1956, and the

church growth movement was “impelled by its ideas to gather momentum.” (Van Engen 1991:11-12). Van Engen goes further and explains the positives of the Church Growth Movement and even refers to the evangelist in doing so.

Church Growth theory is not a lot of wishful thinking. It is not a passivist position which lets God do it and abdicates all responsibility. To the contrary. Much of what McGavran has said about mission practices has been proven true...Too often the evangelist was “fishing” on the wrong side of the boat and needed someone to come and tell him to fish on the other side. Far too often it HAS been a matter of slothfulness or wrong strategy which has caused a tremendous loss of opportunity for numerical growth. At other times the church simply has not been willing to pay the price for numerical growth...In this McGavran and his associates have been pretty much on target. They have brought the Church’s life and mission to the bar of pragmatism and asked, “Has it produced?” (Van Engen 1981:510-511).

A vital aspect of Van Engen’s contribution is his dissertation on the ecclesiology of church growth. In evaluating the desire for growth he addresses the balance between numerical growth and growth based on true conversion. He concludes by introducing a new word into the debate, “yearning” for numerical growth.

As a means of pointing to this essential aspect of the Church’s nature, it is important to suggest a “new word” which will portray the movement, the feeling, the expectation, the fulfilled incompleteness of this life–force. It is portrayed in Scripture as the tree planted by rivers of water, whose branches reach up ever higher, ever wider, ever greener, ever more fruitful. It is happy and satisfied because of having its roots deep in good moist soil. Yet it is not quite finished, not at all static, while it yet strives to achieve greater breadth and height and deepness of root. For the want of a better term, we would suggest the “new word” called “Yearning for Numerical Growth” as a means of pointing to the life–principle of which we have been speaking (Van Engen 1981:494).

The concern again is that there is little if no in-depth description of the evangelist as a serious part of the strategy for the church to be missional. There are constant references to missionaries, but an avoidance of the more specific biblical titles, apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher.

### ***New Apostolic Churches***

Over the last two decades churches have sprung up that embrace the reality of the five-fold ministry and the present day functioning of the ministries mentioned in Ephesians 4:11-12. C. Peter Wagner stands out as a clear leader in defining this movement, which he calls, “the most radical way of doing Church since the Protestant Reformation” (2000:18). The emphasis on an apostolic ministry in North America digressed from an emphasis on evangelism and turned into a message that encouraged churches to have proper government and covering. While this is an important aspect of an apostle’s work (as set forth in my definition) sadly, little emphasis has been made on reaching lost people, lost cities, and lost nations. In other words the referencing of the gift of the evangelist has been lacking in this area as well.

Che Ahn, a pastor in Pasadena, is probably the most authoritative voice for the evangelist and evangelism in the New Apostolic Churches today. Most of his writings not only highlight the current role of the evangelist in the North American church, but he constantly references evangelists from past generations such as Moody, McPherson, Finney, and of course Billy Graham (2006:10, 30, 113, 130-132 ).

### **The Evangelist in Contemporary Literature**

Over the first decade of the 21st century, a term has emerged that describes churches that are attempting to restructure themselves to be *missional*, that is, to make mission who they are rather than just another department in the church. In Table 1, I provide an overview of how the evangelist is treated in contemporary missional literature.

In doing so, I have drawn upon Ed Stetzer’s insightful concept of the Missional Family Tree (MFT) (Stetzer 2009).<sup>1</sup>

**TABLE 1**  
**THE EVANGELIST IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE**

<b>Book Title (* Designates Part of Stetzer’s Missional Family Tree)</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Evangelist Referenced</b>	<b>Role of Evangelist Described</b>	<b>Evangelist Training Described</b>
<i>The Missional Church*</i> (1998)	Darrell Guder	yes	no	no
<i>Uprising*</i> (2003)	Erwin McManus	no	no	no
<i>A Generous Orthodoxy</i> (2004)	Brian McLaren	no	no	no
<i>Shaped By God’s Heart*</i> (2004)	Milfred Minetrea	no	no	no
<i>Emerging Churches</i> (2005)	Eddie Gibbs & Ryan Bolger	yes	yes	no
<i>Organic Church*</i> (2005)	Neil Cole	yes	yes	no
<i>Breaking the Missional Code*</i> (2006)	Ed Stetzer & David Putnum	no	no	no
<i>An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches</i> (2006)	Ray Anderson	no	no	no
<i>Exiles*</i> (2006)	Michael Frost	yes	yes	no
<i>The Forgotten Ways*</i> (2006)	Alan Hirsch	yes	yes	no
<i>The Missional Leader*</i> (2006)	Alan Roxburgh & Fred Ramunuk	no	no	no
<i>Simple Church</i> (2006)	Thom Rainer & Eric Geiger	no	no	no
<i>The Ministry of the Missional Church</i> (2007)	Craig van Gelder	no	no	no
<i>The Missional Church in Context</i> (2007)	Craig van Gelder, ed.	no	no	no
<i>Compelled by Love*</i> (2008)	Ed Stetzer & Philip Nation	no	no	no

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<sup>1</sup> Stetzer, the President of LifeWay Research, is considered a leading missiologist in the North American context. His book, *Breaking the Missional Code* (Stetzer and Putnam 2006), was a best seller and is referenced by pastors and leaders across denominational lines. Stetzer traces the influential books on the missional church, starting with Guder’s book (1998) by that same name, and describes these in terms of a “Missional Family Tree” of books. I have analyzed these books that have been viewed as influential on the subject to see how the evangelist is referenced and described.

<b>Book Title (* Designates Part of Stetzer's Missional Family Tree)</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Evangelist Referenced</b>	<b>Role of Evangelist Described</b>	<b>Evangelist Training Described</b>
<i>Essential Church?</i> (2008)	Thom Rainer & Sam Rainer	yes	no	no
<i>Search and Rescue*</i> (2008)	Neil Cole	no	no	no
<i>Unique Church*</i> (2008)	Will Mancini	yes	yes	no
<i>Introducing the Missional Church</i> (2009)	Alan Roxburgh & A. Scott Boren	no	no	no
<i>Missional Renaissance</i> (2009)	Reggie McNeal	no	no	no
<i>So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life in the Church</i> (2009)	Leonard Sweet	yes	no	no
<i>Off Road Disciplines*</i> (2006)	Earl Creps	no	no	no

As Darrell Guder states, “Ours is a context and a time that requires leaders who lead from the front, showing the way toward the recovery of a missional church” (1998:183). The call for the church to be missional is as important a development as there has been in the past generation. The term itself has helped to redefine missions as not something we do, but who we are as the church. The missional model takes ministry out of the hands of the professional and gives everyone the responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission. It also challenges us to rethink everything we do in light of the *missio Dei*. Though Guder does not emphasize the evangelist, he does mention it.

Ephesians 4:11-13 indicates that certain ministries in the form of individuals (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers) are given to the Church by Christ in order that the Church fulfill her present task and in the end fulfill the task set for her. These ministries of leadership are given to enable the Church to carry out its fundamentally missiological purpose in the world: to announce and demonstrate the new creation in Jesus Christ (Guder 1998:184-185).

Guder verifies the necessity of the leadership of individuals gifted by God to help the church become missional. Yet, later as he talks more specifically about the evangelist, he speaks of the necessity of the evangelization of the church (1998:213). How odd to take the primary gift that is created to reach the world and speak of that gift evangelizing



the church. It seems that at best he is calling for the church to become equipped to reach the world though that statement must be inferred. He does ask a question toward the end of the book that confirms my journey and the questions I am asking in this research. “Our current models of the evangelist generally include images of itinerant ministry and mass rally events. But what if we begin to think of the evangelist as having a particular leadership in the local congregation?” (1998:215).

This highlights the current reality of that the evangelist is missing from the ongoing day to day functioning of a local body of believers. Guder’s subsequent work, *The Continual Conversion of the Church*, presents more detail on the importance of the role of the evangelist in making a community missional.

Mission is to be a continual process of translation and witness whereby the evangelist and mission community will discover again and again they will be confronted by the Gospel and as it is translated, heard and responded to and will thus experience ongoing conversion while serving as a witness. (Guder 2000:73)

Guder later expounded on the need for the evangelist to not try to translate his or her practices directly into other cultures but to look for ways to transmit the goal of a circumcised heart. It was his way of saying that evangelists must contextualize their message (2000:83). This was certainly a more positive mentioning of the evangelist than Lesslie Newbigin gave in *The Open Secret*. His references to the evangelist were more negative, calling for the evangelist to not turn the gospel into a “moral crusade” for his/her own particular ethical standard (1995:138).<sup>2</sup>

Ed Stetzer and David Putnam wrote about breaking the missional code in a book that has become one of the most practical and defining books on the subject, especially from the standpoint of younger leaders who are yearning for real growth. Stetzer points

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<sup>2</sup> Newbigin also seemed to minimize the need to emphasize church growth, referring to the “strident cries” of evangelists for the church to multiply believers as not being the New Testament pattern of teaching (1995:126). He does point the evangelist back to Scripture to constantly correct their practices and presentation of the gospel (1995:146).

out a critical missing piece in terms of the need for sowing and not just reaping the harvest:

Breaking the unbroken code requires that we prepare the fields for harvest. There are two types of fields when it comes to planting the gospel. There are harvest fields and there are sowing fields. There are still many harvest fields throughout the world. But more and more there are sowing fields. Sowing fields may often require years of hard work before we see any fruit. Often, we gauge our success by the harvest. In many cases, we will need to redefine success and impact (Stetzer and Putnam 2006:235).

Despite the many helpful aspects of the book, there is little reference to the evangelist. In his one reference to the evangelist Stetzer makes a point that some of the best evangelists<sup>3</sup> need evangelizing first, referring to the woman at the well in John 4 who is ministered to by Jesus and brings an entire region to faith. There is truly more power in one genuine convert to have an impact than the ninety-nine who need no repentance (Lk. 15:7) but sit and simply soak up more teaching.

In my view, one of the most revealing statements of Stetzer's work came from his interviews with leaders who felt the need for direct intentional evangelism.

In the interview, I was asked a number of questions like "What evangelism program do you use?" "How do you train your people to do evangelism?" "How could we serve your needs for evangelistic training?" A few years back in a different context, I would have answered all of these questions with some kind of affirmative answer, but my response was, "We don't have any of these things, and I don't know that you can help us right now." As a matter of fact, we have resisted any formal types of evangelism training. We have spoken very little in public about direct evangelism. We seldom if ever do any kind of servant evangelism. We have done some, and we talk about it on occasion. But we always go back to, "if it's not broken, don't fix it" (Stetzer and Putnam 2006:103).

Stetzer is thoroughly evangelical and has a concern for lost people as well as starting churches. He is becoming the heir to Wagner in terms of a solid voice for

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<sup>3</sup> He was using the term more as witness rather than as the ministry of the evangelist which is the concern of this study.

evangelism and church planting and continue to bring emphasis to the preaching of the gospel and the role of the evangelist in the local church. In the end, the direct proclamation of the gospel must be presented for men and women to be saved.

Alan Hirsch (2006) makes one of the most succinct statements about the evangelist in relation to the other gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:11. He said, “Without an evangelistic ministry there is no basis for pastoral ministry. There is no one to pastor. The evangelist brings people into relationship to Jesus Christ with the gospel. In doing this it initiates the pastoral function” (Hirsch 2006:158). In my opinion Hirsch’s emphasis on team ministry and a cooperation between gifts brings a healthy balance that demonstrates the evangelist as important for the other gifts to be manifest. If left to themselves, all the evangelists would emphasize is the need for souls to be saved to the exclusion of the importance of the other gifts such as pastoring or teaching (2006:167).

Alan Roxburgh and Fred Rumanuk make this point in the foreword of *The Missional Leader*: “We are trained in a wrong model that focuses on pastoring and teaching. As a consequence we neglect the three other areas of ministry listed first in Ephesians 4, all of which are of crucial importance in the missional church: the gifts of the apostle, prophet, and evangelist” (Roxburgh and Rumanuk 2006:viii). Ironically, the term evangelist is never mentioned again in the book. Instead the term “missional leader” is used.<sup>4</sup>

Will Mancini is also mentioned in the Missional Family Tree. He calls himself a “clarity evangelist” in his biography. While the book offers a clarion call for the discipleship process, it presents an unclear description of the evangelist. In a footnote Mancini references his acceptance of Hirsch’s position of the reality of the five ministry gifts being valid for today.<sup>5</sup> He also states his agreement with Hirsch that everyone in the

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to point out that the term missional has far more baggage than the word evangelist in terms of a world-wide context.

<sup>5</sup> Hirsch abbreviates these ministries with the acrostic APEPT.

church has one of the five giftings mentioned in Ephesians 4:11. Although in my view this is a highly questionable interpretation, Mancini offers a definition of an evangelist as one who recruits, invites, and champions the vision outwardly (2008:174). He seems to take the term evangelist and turn it into more of a personality trait or an individual that is simply someone promoting a cause—any cause, not specifically the gospel. This seems to be confirmed in his biography, in which he calls himself a “clarity evangelist.”

Neil Cole notes, “Many of the churches in the United States focus on teaching, and if they add anything else it is an attempt to build stronger relationships. One reason churches are not multiplying is the absence of the outreach chromosome” (2005:120).

Milfred Minatrea is cited in the MFT and strongly speaks out about apostolic living by a missional<sup>6</sup> community. He also makes a good distinction between evangelism and evangelization (2004:23). There are so many great things mentioned about world evangelism and every believer being a witness, but not one reference to the evangelist.

### **Emerging Church**

The Emerging Church movement has expressed the concerns that ministry must be completely re-envisioned in order to reach the next generation. In their groundbreaking study, Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger describe a wide spectrum of emergent churches and their styles and methods of ministry.

Emerging leaders represent a spectrum of thought on the topic of evangelizing, but no matter whether they are to the right or to the left, they all regard evangelism in terms of an open-ended conversation and an embodied way of life as distinct from a result-gearred confrontation. This stance reflects their own negative experiences and also a keen sensitivity toward the kind of people among whom they minister (2005:80).

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<sup>6</sup> The term missional describes a church, ministry, group, individual, or enterprise that is dedicated in its vision and values to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and demonstrate its truth and mercy in both Word and deed.

Overall, they portray the emergent vision of evangelism as a conversation not confrontation, a community service message versus a community response to the divine call to repentance.

Emerging churches also have a strong desire to distance themselves from the prevailing models of evangelism, which they regard as intrusive and manipulative. They seek to work alongside from a position of respect and concern for the whole person. Evangelization is not a hit-and-run activity but one that entails a long-term commitment. They stop to consider what constitutes good news from God to a person in his or her total life situation (Gibbs and Bolger 2005:153).

No writer has been associated with the Emerging Movement more than Brian McLaren. He speaks boldly of the need for the church to be missional. “It also gets rid of terms like *missionary* and *mission field*, since now every Christian is a missionary and every place is a mission field” (2004:119). Yet his call for something new to emerge is confusing and could very well be leading the church in the opposite direction from the path to being truly missional. What is “emerging” according to McLaren is not new style, but new content. No longer only two choices, but a third option which leaves open ended the question of whether Jesus Christ is the only true Savior. “This is how I feel when I’m offered a choice between the roads of exclusivism (only confessing Christians go to heaven), universalism (everyone goes to heaven), and inclusivism (Christians go to heaven, plus at least some others)” (McLaren 2004:123).

The real question for this extreme aspect of emerging church is whether Christ is the only way to heaven. If he is, then the subtle, no hurry approach must be reexamined. Thankfully there are a vast number of leaders that are considered emerging or emergent who are faithfully preaching the gospel and actually identifying and training evangelists. In the summary compiled from Stetzer’s “Missional Family Tree,” Gibbs and Bolger’s book on emerging churches was one of the books that referenced the evangelist, described their role, and offered a glimpse into how they are trained (2005:88, 186, 200).

May the words of the great evangelist Billy Graham be heeded as we look to the next decade of challenge before the North American church:

Evangelists are not just to tell people about the Bible, but also to proclaim it and communicate its message of salvation (2 Timothy 4: 2-5). Very little originality is permitted a Western Union messenger. His sole obligation is to carry the message he receives from the office to the person to whom it is addressed. He may not like to carry that message—it may contain bad news or distressing news for the person to whom he delivers it. But he dare not stop on the way, open the envelope, and change the wording of the telegram. His duty is to take the message (Graham 1984:35-360).

### *Summary*

In reviewing the references to the evangelist in literature I have concluded that there is a diminished presence in the contemporary literature. The evangelist is mentioned, but not in a way that makes it easy to identify and train men and women to perform the work of the evangelist effectively. The bulk of contemporary literature is calling for a new reformation to take place, one where the church becomes a missional entity, emerging from old paradigms and encouraging people to obey the final words of Christ, and be sent into the world—to be apostolic.

The point of the term missional has come to mean that it is the people of God that become the “corporate evangelist.” The great need is for God’s people to all be mobilized for witness. However, in looking at Scripture it is apparent that the evangelist is a major gift given by God to help the church become that very missional people. Having presented the scriptural model of the evangelist and looked at the contemporary literature regarding the evangelist, I turn now to presenting my research with a focus on interviewing evangelists in order to understand the patterns and principles of how evangelists should be identified, trained and utilized as my goal statement affirms.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **METHODOLOGY**

A primary goal of this study is to compare the biblical description of the gift of the evangelist with how the gift is described by contemporary evangelists. Just as human DNA contains “markers” that indicate inherited traits or potential genetic proclivities where disease is concerned, as I gathered the data I looked for the markers that imprint the evangelist when that gift is evident. These marks will become the focus of my findings as well as putting forth conclusions that will result in a renewed emphasis and effectiveness in the ability of the church to become the missional force it was designed to be. In order to gather data there were two primary methods utilized: focus groups and active interviews.

#### ***Initial Investigation***

The research took the form of initial investigation on the relevance of the role of the evangelist as being essential in effective church planting. This began at a conference in Orlando, Florida, in November 2007. There were fifty evangelists who attended the two-day summit. As the moderator, I asked several questions of the group and took journal notes as well as recorded their responses. The questions posed to this group were:

1. What are the challenges to the practical relationship between the evangelist and the local church?
2. Do you feel the gift of the evangelist is understood and honored in the American church?
3. Is evangelism in America on the decline?

4. How can we make the necessary changes and recover the momentum for genuine church growth through new conversions to Christ and not just transfer growth?

The discussion became very heated and emotional as the various evangelists described their frustrations with the American church and their desire to go to other nations where their ministry would be received. My role as the moderator was to continue to allow everyone to speak openly and candidly while guiding the discussion to some practical remedies and suggestions from the group.

Over the two days the atmosphere was like a town hall meeting in a political campaign. There were various leaders who brought balance as pastors of churches and not itinerate speakers. In fact, the ministers who did not pastor churches were the most vocal, emotional, and at times cynical about the prospects of change in the way that evangelists are perceived and received. Many evangelists had simply formed their own ministries outside the local church.

There were also many discussions and interviews that took place outside of the regular meeting times. It was during this time that many were more open to share their true feelings rather than do it in front of the group. I simply asked them the same questions and gave them a second chance to tell me how they perceived the state of evangelism and the evangelist in the American church.

One of the highlights of the time in Orlando was the input from evangelist Reinhart Bonnke. He was born in Germany, but has spent the bulk of his years ministering in Africa. He spoke of the power of the gospel to change hearts regardless of the obstacles of any culture. J. Lee Grady wrote a review of the Orlando meeting for *Charisma* magazine (see Appendix C).

Being a pastor and an evangelist, I spent time as mediator, counselor, and apologist for the pastors in front of these evangelists. They appreciated that while being a Senior Pastor of a church, I called myself an evangelist as well. The fact that I had



traveled as an evangelist for twenty years enabled these evangelists to treat me as one of them, while my years at Bethel gave me credibility with other pastors.

### ***Processing the Findings of This Group***

The effect of this original time of research enabled me to ensure that the questions I was asking were relevant and urgent in the minds of these prominent evangelists. In similar fashion there was the sense that minimally churches and pastors did not understand the gift of the evangelist and at worst were jealous and suspicious of them. As I proceeded with research over the next year, the Orlando Conference served as a reference point.

**TABLE 2**

### **CONFERENCES VITAL TO THE RESEARCH**

<b>Conference Location</b>	<b>Date</b>
Orlando, FL	Nov 2007
Nashville, TN	July 2008
Manila, The Philippines	July 2009

### ***Active Interviews***

The bulk of my research was done through active interviews (Holstein and Gubrium 1995; Spradley 1979). The interviews reflected questions that conceptually covered the research questions in this dissertation. The recordings were transcribed based on response to a consent form. Building on the questions from the Orlando conference, I also asked:

1. How do you identify and train evangelists?

2. How do you utilize the evangelist in your ministry?

3. Why is the evangelist not used in your context?

From these questions, I developed an interview guide for multiple interviewees (see Appendix B). Using the same questions enabled me to achieve consistency. These written guides allowed me to attain reliable, comparable qualitative data (Holstein and Gubrium 1995:9).

Those that I interviewed were chosen on the basis of the following criterion. First of all, I wanted to interview evangelists who were proven in their evangelistic ministry. Second, I interviewed pastors and leaders with a wide range of experience in engaging the church in North America. These were people with credibility to speak in terms of the effectiveness of ministry strategies. These included: Jack Hayford, President of the Four Square Denomination; C. Peter Wagner, a missiologist and author; Ed Stetzer, director of LifeWay Research; and Steve Strang of *Charisma* and *Ministry Today* magazines. For a complete list see Appendix A.

### ***Analysis of the Data***

I used a modified form of grounded theory as my method of analysis. The grounded theory method incorporates a set of techniques for “(1) identifying categories and concepts that emerge from the text, and (2) linking the concepts into substantive and formal theories” (Bernard 2006:462-463). I identified reoccurring themes in the texts and collected the interviews and then coded them. I did as H. Russell Bernard says, to become “grounded in the data and allow understanding to emerge from close study of the texts” (2006:493).

From these transcripts and notes taken during interviews, I was able to identify categories and themes that emerged. These categories are listed in Chapter 5. The biblical principles that emerged from my theological understanding of Scripture is what I use to

compare with my research findings. To verify this data from the initial interviews I developed a survey of twenty questions, including what I had designated as the top ten marks of an evangelist (see Appendix D). Using *Googledoc* I distributed this survey online to various church and ministry leaders and tabulated 250 responses.

### ***Case Study***

A case study of Bethel World Outreach Center in Nashville, Tennessee (the church I lead), gave me opportunity to demonstrate the relevance of the marks developed from the interviews and survey as well as show how the biblical model works (Yin 2003). Bethel is a multi-site,<sup>1</sup> multi-ethnic congregation that has grown locally, nationally, and internationally through the motivation of the gift of the evangelist. There are eight evangelists connected to Bethel that have had an impact in planting and growing seven locations in the greater Nashville area, as well as planting churches in three American cities (New York, Phoenix, and Orlando) and ten nations (Singapore, India, Indonesia, Samoa, Canada, Jamaica, Australia, Tonga, Russia, and New Zealand). I interviewed these evangelists to gain their perspective on both the marks of the evangelist and how they implement the gift.

In the past decade, the intentional identification, training, and deployment of the gift of evangelist has resulted in new converts, and new congregations being planted. As a community of believers, we hope to serve as a model that will allow the results we have seen to be replicated regardless if the denomination or ecclesiological structure in which they are employed.

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<sup>1</sup> A multi-site church refers to the strategy of one church meeting in multiple locations in the same city or region.

### *Summary*

The gathering of data through the various methods described will result in a thorough understanding of how the gift of the evangelist works in a variety of contexts. The research methods provided a closer look at the both the proper functioning of this gift as well as some of the dysfunctions and misunderstandings surrounding it as well. The scope of this study will allow for conclusions to be drawn and recommendations to be made that will allow those with this gift to grasp their role in the church and to begin to operate more effectively.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE EVANGELIST IN NORTH AMERICAN CULTURE

The scope of my research includes a wide variety of evangelists, pastors and leaders who have the reputation of impacting the ministry of the evangelist. It was a transforming experience for me to learn to ask good questions and listen deeply for patterns and principles that serve as marks of the gift of the evangelist.

#### *The Evangelist Today*

Larry Kreider began Dove Christian Fellowship in the early 1980s and it has grown into a respected network of churches in twenty-five countries. Kreider feels that the lack of evangelism in America is directly linked to the lack of evangelists that are recognized and functioning in the church at large. He shares that, “I’m very concerned about the lack of evangelism in our movement. And I think it is tied to the lack of qualified, anointed, ‘5-fold ministry’ evangelists for equipping the body of Christ” (Kreider interview).

Kreider described how his movement began with a great emphasis on the ministry of the evangelist but has waned in its evangelistic impact as the ministry of the evangelist has been de-emphasized.

Many of our churches are not seeing people come to Christ in the way that we used to see, which is really disturbing to me. And I think for me personally because there’s such a focus on evangelism, I had that, the men on our team had that, but then we began to get in apostolic government, etc., etc....I think we focused so much on that that we lost some of the focus on evangelism (Kreider interview).

According to Ed Stetzer, the majority of church growth in the top 100 fastest growing and 100 largest churches, is “moving the deck chairs around.” In other words,

churches are simply growing through the movement of those who are already believers. In a majority of my interviews the same thing was echoed, growth is not coming from evangelism. Stetzer noted that an article he'd read recently stated that the North American church is dying, and said, "I think that may be a good assessment of the situation" (Stetzer interview).

Dale Evrist, a pastor in Nashville of New Song Christian Fellowship and a recognized leader within the denomination of the Four Square Church stated, "Our denomination does not recognize, raise up and release the ministry of the evangelist. That is why our number of conversions is shrinking year after year" (Evrist interview, journal notes).

Darrell Rice of the Church of God denomination, who has been at the forefront of their denominations church planting endeavors, stated that they are sorely lacking in the recognition of the evangelist. The evangelist is more of a revivalist, which in essence focuses their gift on stirring the church not reaching the lost. "We have been on a plateau and not grown in over twenty years. In fact five percent of our churches have produced ninety-five percent of our denominations growth" (Rice interview, journal notes).

Given these statements by key evangelists and leaders in the North American church, it is clear that the ministry of the evangelist is visibly absent from most contemporary church settings. Those I interviewed acknowledged that there was little interest or sense of need for this gift. There are many opportunities for jobs in a church, but few evangelists are hired or recognized pursue their calling. It is this crisis that fueled my research to discover the marks of the gift of the evangelist. May we rediscovered it in time to help turn the tide and help bring North America back to God.

### **What the Evangelist Is Today**

Some of the leaders I interviewed express the sense that the diminishing of evangelism and thus the significance of the evangelist are due to an overemphasis on other issues. As important as social justice issues are, they can not and should not replace the preaching of the gospel.

Evangelism used to be the final goal of outreach. Now, social transformation is the final goal. Theoretically, that does not eliminate evangelism; that makes evangelism even more important to accomplish that social transformation. But some people are concentrating on the social transformation and, as a result, they're putting less energy into evangelism, which is counterproductive (Wagner interview).

As North American beliefs soften and the sense of judgment and hell are lost, the urgency to see people saved is also lost. When that happens the evangelist is seen as a dinosaur from a bygone era. Though some of those who function as evangelist might come across as dinosaurs for being out of touch with the culture, the gift itself is not obsolete any more than the pastoral gift. Most of those interviewed felt that as the church at large loses her sense of biblical authority, the need for evangelism is also being lost

### **Postmodernity Has Lessened the Urgency for Biblical Conversion**

Postmodernity and its deconstruction of meta-narratives has had a dramatic impact on the North American church and the sense of urgency to reach the lost. Postmodernity has left the culture without a universal set of rules that all agree on. Thus, everyone has the right to be right, and the chief evil is to call others' beliefs wrong. This essentially douses the fires of evangelism and eliminates the need for an evangelist.

In actuality, the need for the evangelist in North America is great. Once a church acknowledges that evangelists are needed, it is vital that they can be identified and then trained in their gift. The focus of this section will be on examining the marks that helps

someone realize whether he or she has this gift and understand the key dimensions of how that gift operates.

### **Confusion Over the Gift of the Evangelist and the Gift of Evangelism**

“The gift of evangelism” has now become a reality in terms of the conversation about the church and its mission.

But when you look at the role of the evangelist, I think part of the problem is we confused in the '80s these spiritual gifts tests came out, and they told everyone there's a gift of evangelism, which we don't see anywhere in scripture, nowhere in scripture is the gift of evangelism mentioned. But there is the gift of the evangelist (Stetzer interview).

In other words, if there is a gift of evangelism then the average believer could theoretically be excluded from the responsibility to evangelize because of the simple fact that they don't have that gift. This is the same principle as someone without the gift of prophecy would not be expected to prophesy. This has proven to be disastrous when applied to prayer. People have been taught that there is a “gift of intercession” and this has led to the same notion that only those with that gift are really called to prayer. However, there is no gift of evangelism in Scripture, just an evangelist, one who is gifted to equip believers to reach non-believers.

I do not believe that there is such a thing as a “gift of evangelism.” While Ephesians 4:11 calls the evangelist a gift, there is no mention of evangelism (seen as the work of an evangelist) as a gift in the sense of a spiritual gift like those mentioned in the lists of 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12. Those that are identified as possessing the gift of evangelism may actually have a spiritual gift of exhortation, encouragement, mercy, or a prophetic gift. However, there are still those that are called to be evangelists and they must be identified in order to be equipped to equip others.



### **Ten Percent Rule: How Many Evangelists Are There?**

There has been a statistic mentioned in church growth circles that suggests that ten percent of people in a church possess the “gift of evangelism.” Throughout this dissertation I will emphasize that there is no gift of evangelism in Scripture, only the gift of the evangelist. My research makes me aware that less than 1 in 100, are recognized as possessing the gift of the evangelist. In Manila in 2008, a meeting was called for those with the gift of the evangelist. Out of a church of 35,000 (at the time), 350, or one percent, showed up at the meeting. Table 3 demonstrates that the numbers are definitely less than one percent in five of the churches interviewed.

**TABLE 3**  
**PERCENTAGE OF CHURCH MEMBERS WITH THE GIFT OF EVANGELIST**

<b>Church</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Evangelists</b>	<b>Average Percent</b>
Victory Christian Fellowship - Manila, Philippines	35,000	350	1
Grace Covenant Church - Washington, D.C.	2000	18	0.9
Kings Park International - Raleigh, NC	1500	15	1
Morning Star - New York	600	5	0.83
New Song Christian Fellowship - Nashville, TN	1500	10	0.66
Southpoint Community - Jacksonville, FL	1600	25	1.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,200</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>0.99</b>

D. James Kennedy, founder of Evangelism Explosion (EE), one of the most effective tools for training believers to share their faith, confirmed this estimate: “Personally, I doubt that 1% of EE participants are gifted evangelists” (Kennedy 2002:130). That means that the even among those that are interested in learning to share

their faith enough to join an EE group, they are not five-fold evangelists. However, if we can ascertain the marks of an evangelist, and individuals can be identified, promoted and utilized they can become catalysts for mobilizing the North American church.

### **Most Churches Do Not Formally Recognize the Evangelist**

Dale Evrist of New Song Christian Fellowship in Franklin, Tennessee, a church of 1500 people, shared that they had no recognized evangelists in their church. He estimated that there were five to ten (including his wife) that probably had the gift but who needed to be formally trained. He has served as a district supervisor for the Four Square denomination and stated that, “Our denomination does not know how to recognize, raise up and release evangelists. I suspect that is why our conversion rates continue to drop as a movement” (Evrist, journal notes).

From my interviews, I learned that most of the churches and leaders that had evangelists on staff called them outreach pastors or campus ministers. The emphasis always seemed to shift back to pastoral duties rather than outreach. Steve Murrell said the principle of leaving the ninety-nine and going after the one lost sheep is how God values lost people over found people, but not so the North American church (Murrell interview).

### **Most Evangelists Feel Under-Appreciated and Under-Funded**

This theme came out again and again in all of my dialogue with evangelists. At the Evangelism Summit in Orlando, the evangelists present expressed deep hurt and cynicism when it came to how they were received and resourced by the local churches.<sup>1</sup> “It comes down to finances and what have you. There are just churches that feel that they can do it without the evangelists” (Gennaro interview).

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<sup>1</sup> The obstacles evangelists face as they seek to fulfill the call of God on their lives are often difficult and painful. Although not the focus of this dissertation, it is important to recognize this facet of an evangelist’s ministry and the difficulties it may present. See Appendix E for a discussion of this issue.

### ***Marks of the Evangelist***

From my research I identified fifty-six potential marks of an evangelist. Using a process of pattern matching, I distilled that list down to those found in Table 4. In reviewing my interviews there is a wealth of information which can be used for future study. In this chapter I will present the marks of the evangelist, training evangelists and utilizing the evangelist.

**TABLE 4**

### **THE EVANGELIST FROM THE FINDINGS**

<b>Marks of an Evangelist</b>
A preacher of the gospel
A builder who helps lay foundations of true discipleship
An equipper who trains believers to reach non-believers.
A catalyst who makes the church missional
A pioneer, leading the community of the faithful beyond the church walls
A strategist who devises plans and creates tools for ministry that are able to reach effectively into the culture and creatively present the gospel.
A gatherer who seeks and gathers the lost sheep.
A planter who turns outreaches into new churches
A co-laborer who works best in the context of a team
A leader who is a multiplier that reproduces themselves in others
Women can be evangelists
Connects with apostles and pastors
Values one convert, not just crowds
A groundbreaker who opens new territory

### **A Preacher of the Gospel**

It is critical to remember that the gospel is a story. It is good news that needs to be announced and heralded, but it ultimately is a story that God has given us and not just a set of theological propositions (Gibbs interview).

This made sense when reflecting on how the gospel writers are called “The Four Evangelists” in church history. They told the “Jesus story” as they saw and heard it. Much of what they recorded of Jesus words were the stories or parables Jesus taught. In spite of post-modernity’s skepticism about any over arching meta-narrative, the gospel’s advantage is that it is true and the Holy Spirit will bear witness to its validity as the evangelist shares it.<sup>2</sup>

Dave Jamerson is a former National Basketball Association first round draft choice for the Houston Rockets. He has been hired as the outreach director for Traders Point Church in Indianapolis, Indiana. Since the church hired Dave, it doubled in membership in just eighteen months. As an evangelist he is given regular time to preach and to be visible.

At Bethel World Outreach Center in Nashville, Tennessee, the ministry of the evangelist has been recognized and utilized since the year 2000. The church has grown and expanded to six campuses in the greater Nashville area as well as planting churches in New York, Orlando, Phoenix, and in ten other countries. Bethel will be the focus of a case study in this research.

### **A Builder Who Helps Lay Foundations of True Discipleship**

A primary theme running through my interviews was the need to make disciples. The evangelist must understand that evangelism and discipleship are the same thing. “When Jesus told his apostles to go into all the world and make disciples, they didn’t think he meant, ‘go out and find believers and help them mature in their faith.’ They would have understood discipleship as evangelism and evangelism as discipleship” (Murrell, journal notes). The evangelist must realize that their task in preaching the gospel is to make disciples.

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<sup>2</sup> Gibbs recommends attending the annual National Story Tellers Convention in Jonesborough, Tennessee.

To me, the way Matthew 28 is, the big deficiency or misstep today in evangelism is we take two of the four directives Jesus gave us in Matthew 28. We go and we baptize. But we don't make the disciples and teach them "all that I commanded you." And that's why we have anemic churches, and we have many missionaries and that that come back and it falls apart because we're not doing the four things that Jesus gave in Matthew 28. We're doing two of the four (Tomczak interview).

We must not be content to simply ask people to believe in Christ in merely a private way. Our call is make disciples of Christ. That means that those who truly repent and believe will follow Christ in to the world to live as he lived. To fail to call people to be disciples results in an anemic faith.

After several years of such outreach with hundreds of conversions, comparatively few remained in the faith. Understanding that the Great Commission is not simply about evangelism makes all the difference. Over time, we changed our strategies and have seen hundreds more come to trust Jesus Christ – but this time in and through community. The difference is that most of these people have a meaningful relationship with Jesus today. They were not simply converts; they became devoted followers of Christ (Stetzer and Putnam 2006:127).

The altar call or invitation has become a source of confusion and misunderstanding when calling people to faith in Christ. That is why many of those interviewed spoke of calling people to the front of a church building or meeting place as a first step to demonstrate their interest and conviction of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Steve Murrell, along with the team of leaders including the evangelist, would have a second altar call for those who responded to the first. This is where the respondents were taken to another smaller meeting where the gospel would be explained even further and more practically in terms of repentance and faith and picking up the cross to follow Christ. Also, baptism in water and the Holy Spirit would be presented and people would be given another chance to commit to Christ with more understanding and conviction. According to Steve, this was very important in terms of insuring that people who responded were making real decisions, not just emotional ones (Murrell interview).

This has been the practice of most of the evangelists I have been connected with and will be discussed further when I look at the Bethel case study. In the church plant in New York City, Ron Lewis would attest to the fact that the initial altar call was not enough to ensure that people knew what they were doing in making a commitment to Christ. They would need to hear the gospel again and come to grips practically with what it meant to be a disciple (Lewis interview).

Murrell has summed up the disciple making process into four stages, each beginning with the letter E. First is Engage, which means to begin the evangelistic message with someone. This leads to commitment and conversion to Christ. Then comes the Establishing stage where foundations are laid of repentance and faith and the Lordship of Christ. Water baptism and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit are also apart of the establishing stage. Then comes Equip where the person is equipped to accomplish their God-given purpose in the kingdom. Finally is the Empowering stage where the individual is no released to be fruitful and help bring others into the discipleship process (Murrell interview, journal notes).

The laying of foundations is an indispensable part of the evangelist's calling and responsibility. "To preach the gospel and not lay a solid foundation is to set someone up for spiritual failure" (Lowe, journal notes). The Apostle Paul puts it this way, "By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building upon it" (1 Cor. 3:10).

Bob Sanders, is a graduate from Azusa Pacific University and the leader of Baja Christian Ministries based in Los Angeles. He worked as an evangelist for years and was frustrated with decisions made in evangelistic settings that did not produce lasting fruit. He uses *The Purple Book: Biblical Foundations for Building Strong Disciples* (Brooks 2006) as a tool to intentionally lay foundations in new believers and has seen dramatic results.

I think I just had a hunger to do it, just to lead people to the Lord, and so... but not only to lead them to the Lord, but also to see them disciplined. I always, in the bottom of my heart, always felt real bad when you see people come to the Lord but then perhaps they are birthed but they are not really taken care of. That's why I love *The Purple Book* so much because it helps to get a solid biblical foundation. And we've actually come to the place in our time where we really believe that we're happy just to be able to lay foundations. Churches are springing up from these efforts (Sanders interview).

Steve Hollander, said, "We must rejoice when people make decisions for Jesus but we cannot be satisfied until we are assured they are at least beginning the process of digging down deep and laying the foundation of Christ on the bedrock of their soul" (S. Hollander interview). Many either ignore the foundations, or are ignorant of what they are. Minimally the Hebrews 6:1-3 foundational truths must be studied and implanted into people's lives.

Kevin York, a church consultant and church planter, says that leaving the foundational truths is not forgetting them, but like the alphabet we memorize, we take the truths with us to put them into everything we do and say (York interview, journal notes).

### **An Equipper Who Trains Believers to Reach Non-Believers**

The average believer today sees the evangelist as a rare breed of men and women with special power and grace to conduct large meetings. Evangelists are seen as few and far between.

I feel that in the day of the evangelists that we have in the US, and I don't mean this in a bad way, I think it's very good what they're doing, but the Billy Grahams, the Greg Lauries, I think people feel that they're off the hook because there is the evangelist, the Billy Grahams, or the Greg...I don't believe that. I would rather see 100 people equipped to lead 100 people to the Lord... (Sanders interview).

A major focus of my work at Bethel, is to help redefine the evangelist, not as the lone crusader but as an equipper as well as the one who leads the masses to Christ while

valuing the salvation of one person. Evangelists have a strong desire to share the gospel as well as effectiveness in doing so. People got saved. This was the story from everyone I interviewed who considered themselves evangelists. The desire to preach the gospel and see people saved was extremely strong.

When Steve Hollander was filled with the Spirit he began to share the gospel every day. Then he met several evangelists who worked with him and imparted the gift of the evangelist. He heard a particular evangelists stories and would ask God to let him be in a story (S. Hollander interview). It seems that desire comes into play because many evangelists had a desire to be one. Just like the Scripture says to desire earnestly spiritual gifts, there is the stirring of desire in those that become evangelists.

#### **A Catalyst Who Makes the Church Missional**

“Without the presence of the evangelist we are talking to ourselves” (Gibbs interview). Gibbs feels that the evangelist is necessary to make the church truly missional. Otherwise, the church simply ministers to the converted. The evangelist establishes the culture of evangelism in the local church. The establishment of the culture of evangelism by the evangelist is important if the existent church is to become missional.

In an established church that has a good relationship between evangelist and pastor where the pastor knows and trusts that the evangelist is there to help the local church. The evangelist must be able to serve and the pastor must allow the evangelist to have the needed input and be willing to make the adjustments necessary. In such a situation the evangelist is helping the church grow the culture of evangelism. The pastor will allow ample space for testimonies from the pulpit with ongoing reports where slowly it “contaminates,” in a positive way, the congregation with a holy virus of evangelism as



they start seeing young believers who have been trained and become evangelists themselves, able to minister in an ongoing basis in that congregation.

Dave Jamerson's program for outreach is called, "Moving beyond the walls." They are mobilizing the twenty-two ministries within the church to become missional (Jamerson, journal notes). This could easily be described as one of the key marks of an evangelist, the desire and the ability to lead God's people into the harvest field to take the risks that accompany that leadership.

### **A Pioneer Leading the Community of the Faithful beyond the Church Walls**

Many churches and ministries declare that they want to be missional and win the lost and yet without the evangelist this desire is never realized.

I remember John Wimber declared when he started, 'My church is not going to be a church that brings people in from other denominations. We are going to be an evangelistic church and we are going to be populated by new converts.' It never happened and even with signs and wonders, it never happened (Wagner interview).

We create opportunities for people to preach the gospel outside of the church walls. This could be at colleges, high schools, and in the community. We place people with other evangelists to learn their skills. We also send people into different cultural environments to help them understand the difference in ministry in the Inner City as opposed to White Suburbia (Shino interview).

Steve Hollander states that an evangelist has a desire to break new ground starting with an unreached heart. The unreached heart is ground zero for the evangelist. He is drawn to the hard places. He is provoked like Paul was in Athens to preach to people who do not know God. The harder the places the greater the miracle. The evangelist is not satisfied until ground is broken. They are not satisfied with just planting seeds (S. Hollander interview).

You need somebody with the evangelistic anointing, a gatherer. Too often they stereotype the evangelist. Evangelist is a much broader skill and grace of connecting. That's what your great genius was all along is that people...your relatability and then to walk people through their loss as... it's not just a message preached, it's connecting and gathering and the attractionality of evangelist is amazing (Bonasso interview).

Real breakthrough takes time. Hollander states that four weeks of consistent meetings yields a breakthrough. He learned that from the evangelist who taught him. Just like Manila, where the meetings were nightly for a month he believed that it takes a month of consistent daily and nightly preaching to get a breakthrough. Seven of the congregations he helped birth were birthed with at least one-month-long nightly meetings. In one case he went six weeks.

Biblically, the evangelists and apostles were sent to specific people groups. For example Wellington Boone shares:

[W]e targeted the college campuses, when we sent people into different areas. We sent them into educational areas. We got stuff going on down on Wall Street right now where they're doing evangelism stuff. We got stuff going on in the streets where they're open air preaching in the streets down in New York City and places like that. And going on, we reached out in Hollywood (Boone interview).

Philip Smethhurst is targeting the poor and needy in his efforts to open the doors for the gospel around the world. He says he is called to the "forgotten peoples of the world." Through his evangelistic outreaches to the poor he is seeing incredible salvations. He stated, "In one place we gave out over 5000 pairs of shoes to the poor and washed their feet before we put the shoes on. It was an incredible moment for God to move in their lives" (Smethhurst interview).

Darrell Green was inducted into the National Football Hall of Fame in 2008. With all his accomplishments he stated that he is first and foremost an evangelist. In 1983 he began an outreach to the inner city of Washington, DC. Green began the Youth Life Learning Center there and it has eventually spread around the country to six different

cities. He stated emphatically in an interview that this was all about people being saved (Green interview).

Every Nation Churches has targeted the college campuses as the strategy for reaching the nations of the world. Presently we have over 500 campuses in 60 countries. Kevin York, the executive director of Every Nation Churches describes this mindset as both a limiting thing and a liberating thing. “If you know where you are called to minister it eliminates the many other options that are out there” (York interview, journal notes).

### **A Strategist Who Devises Plans and Creates Tools for Ministry**

The evangelist brings strategies and creativity in helping people find ways to utilize ways to reach people for Christ. Steve Peria states,

The evangelist has his own company where he trains Sunday nights evangelistic people. These are people who’ll take a gift survey to find out they’re gifted in attracting people....So we disciple, train them, equip them and we have many hooks in the water. We focus on 24 different hooks that we evangelize with. Because all the people in that same company might not be good at the same thing....Some are door-to-door witnessing. Others are high school outreaches (Peria interview).

Mike Watkins, an evangelist, expressed how the evangelist can bring these strategies to bear to reach nations within nations, meaning the internationals that live within other countries. With over 600,000 international students studying in America it offers an unprecedented opportunity to reach out to nations that are closed or restricted.

Evangelists think strategically. For instance there are 11,000 Chinese students in Kiev. We need a strategy to reach them. Our Iranian pastor (Mark) got saved in Dubai. Our other main pastor in Iran (Timothy) got saved from a friend who got saved in Dubai. He had a Filipina wife who led him to the Lord (Watkins interview).

Tim Dilena from Detroit talked about how an evangelist defined the strategy for his church. “We in Detroit are at the 6-mile marker. The university of Detroit is at 6-mile.

Wayne State is at 3-mile. The evangelist inspired us to plant works throughout the mile marks in our city” (Dilena interview).

The strategic nature of the evangelists calling seems to give them an instinct as to open doors, ideas, and opportunities that can become evangelistic breakthroughs. “My goal is to try and help 100,000 youth groups double and disciple their members every year for the next five years. So far we have about 3000 youth groups that are responding” (Luce, journal notes).

Ron Lewis spoke about the evangelists who take the initiative in church planting. In essence they step up in time of opportunity and step out in faith to make things happen (Lewis interview, journal notes). Tomczak spoke of how these evangelists were encouraged to step up and identify themselves.

We would look to identify the individuals that we felt had the calling to plant a church. It may be an evangelist, may be a pastor, pastor/teacher, etc. And so we would watch them as we disciplined individuals. And those people, as they came to the surface, we would say, “Always tell us if you feel a calling outside this church.” And it would be an emotional thing because they’d say, “I feel so rooted, I love you guys, but I feel called to Philadelphia” (Tomczak interview).

An evangelist who will be involved in planting a church will almost always know that they are evangelists and be proven fruit bearers first in the local context where they are rooted. Having borne fruit in their Jerusalem they can move on to the Judea, Samaria, and then the ends of the earth. When asked how he plants a church Steve Hill says;

Talk to people. Get out there and talk to people about Jesus. You go down to a city park, talk to somebody you know, next thing you know is you’ve got somebody saved. Ask them if they’ve got any friends. Of course they do. And say, “Can I talk to them?” And the next thing you know, you got 10 people sitting in the living room and you don’t have to call it a church or nothing. Now you got a church...And then you have them extend this, and have a dinner with more people and talk to them about the Lord, and you blink your eyes, you’re going to have 100 people. An average church in America is 75 folks (Hill interview).

Lewis described the gift of faith as one of the major reasons that the church plant in New York succeeded. This is practical working of the “step out” part:

...going in and out of New York, calling people to be willing or be open to the idea of moving, relocating, bringing in people to come with music, with talent, with speaking abilities, athletes who came in the night of champions early on, and being willing to sacrifice out of your own local church, which then carried over to me and the follow up out of our local church, bringing people into the city, building a team there, calling for commitment, raising the money which was no easy task (Lewis interview).

This stepping out in faith is one of the most important marks of an evangelist, especially one who is going to step out and plant a church. John Caplin, a church planting consultant from Vancouver said that there were two gifts that can plant a church “out of nothing,” an apostle and an evangelist (Caplin interview, journal notes). Roland Allen confirms the necessity of the faith in the preacher or evangelist, not just faith in the hearers.

To preach the Gospel requires that the preacher should believe that he is sent to those whom he is addressing at the moment, because God has among them those whom He is at the moment calling: it requires that the speaker should expect a response. The air of expectation pervades all the accounts of St. Paul’s preaching. Everywhere we are made to recognize, not only that St. Paul expected to make converts, but that others expected it also. This accounts for the opposition with his preaching created. People were afraid of his preaching, and fear is a form of expectation: it is a form of faith. St. Paul himself was inspired with the faith of hope: he inspired others with the faith of fear. Everywhere he was surrounded by an atmosphere of faith (Allen 1962:74).

Evangelists respond to the Spirit’s initiative for ministry. As important as strategic planning is in the evangelistic and church planting enterprise, there is also the phenomenon of the Spirit directing the evangelist to move quickly through an open door. This would have been the case when Paul received the vision to go to Macedonia in Acts 16. It could have been the case when Philip was taken by the Spirit into the desert and witnessed to the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8. Pastor Ron Lewis described how the events

of September 11, 2001, led to an immediate open door for evangelism and a new church to be planted in New York City.

...[I]t wasn't really in the context of let's go strategically plant a church, it was just let's go respond to a need, and that is something that I see so often in scripture. You see people responding to needs and then out of that can flow the kingdom of God and the activity of the kingdom, which often or could include the planting of a church. So I think that's the first major thing is that you take initiative. Secondly...you started immediately grabbing a team. So there's a multi-faceted inreach there of people being gathered to go, pastors and qualified leaders....I think the third thing would be the step of faith or the willingness to take a risk and say we can do this....then the next step being let's go back to our local churches and declare what we see and feel God doing. And that's when the Lamb's Theater opened up (Lewis interview).

### **A Gatherer Who Seeks and Gathers the Lost Sheep**

Mark 7 is a principle that emerges from talking to most leaders. Great evangelists are not professional. In fact, most of the effective evangelists in churches will not be officially recognized, or funded, but demonstrate through the fruit they are bearing that they are evangelists.

Dale Evrist is a pastor who has a burden for raising up evangelists. He expressed in an interview that you need to look for evangelists in unusual places. In his writings he describes an example of the kinds of people that are evangelists. "Not all evangelists are professional ministers. In fact the majority are working in some other profession but minister and evangelize through the platform and the relationships and contacts they form in their respective arena's" (Evrist 2000:22-23).

The mass fallacy we have in Western Christianity, especially the United States is multiplication....We add to our churches instead of multiplication. In Columbia or Korea, inherit in the brand of Christianity, when you commit, you're a multiplier. That's part of what you do, you bring people to Christ and you disciple and you multiply. It's great to have

evangelism where you gather people, but if you can make those people part of the DNA, then it's not extracurricular activity; it's not just for the people who are called to be evangelists....We need to break through a different paradigm of what it means to be a follower of Christ (Luce interview).

The gathering of people looms as the bottom line or one of the key first steps in the evangelists calling. In terms of reaching only lost people, Tomczak feels that as a gatherer, evangelists also gather sheep that have never found their place in a church.

### **A Planter Who Turns Outreaches into New Churches**

The evangelist in his/her very essence reaches out to people or places and will see doors open that many times have the potential for church plants. This mindset was embodied in Spurgeon's church planting strategy, as mentioned in Chapter 3. Spurgeon had 603 "preaching stations" that over 100 evangelists would maintain. These outreaches became the seedbed for future church plants.

Jamerson led an outreach to the city of Indianapolis and began reaching out to the members of a professional sports team. The outreach grew and eventually turned into a new church that has close to 500 members.

Russ Austin, the pastor of Southpointe Community Church in Jacksonville, Florida, experienced the same thing. An evangelist came to Jacksonville and reached out to many of the members of the professional football team there. After over one year of meetings that were simply outreach in nature a core group had formed and a Church emerged. Today the church is over 1500 members.

The evangelist instigates the outreaches that will carry the potential for new churches. If it remains an outreach, it can still be profitable. There are many evangelistic outreaches that remain outreaches but feed into churches and ministries.

Tomczak began an outreach in the early 1970s in the Washington D.C. area that lasted several years before it became a church. It would not only become a church but a

movement of churches known today as Sovereign Grace Ministries led by his former associate pastor, C.J. Mahaney. Larry described the beginnings of the outreach and its eventual growth into a church.

It is important to underscore the importance of the discerning the right time for an outreach to turn into a church. In Tomczak's case it took several years, in other cases it took a few weeks or months.

Steve Murrell pastors a church planted by a team led by an evangelist. The original outreach in 1984 lasted for one month. Steve was only going for the one month outreach but stayed to help follow up the hundreds of people that made commitments. The church started in evangelism and has maintained its evangelistic fire for twenty-five years. He stated in an interview that

...[T]he founding evangelist established the culture of evangelism....The culture was set to reach the lost, I use culture not DNA. I didn't create the culture, I preserved it. The founding evangelist would return twice a year for the next ten years to continue to stir the people and do outreaches....It was the evangelists who breathed life into the ministry and small groups and kept the ministry on the evangelistic forefront (Murrell interview).

Without the evangelist during a church plant, conversions will be lower. Matt Powell, a church planter in Katy, Texas, described how his team conducted an outreach cookout that was well attended by many non-Christians. Yet, because they had no evangelist on team he felt the results were less than what they could have been.

...[W]e had kids and families running everywhere at this park, and they got to see compassion, us serving the community, a lot of positive things came out, but I feel like without that gift of the evangelist that there was a lot left undone. There was so much potential there that couldn't be turned....I think there was some things missed out on (Powell interview).

There needs to be an evangelist on the team that is recognized in starting new churches. This team consists of a preaching evangelist and a disciple maker. "The churches that we started off that were basically pastoral, great pastoral men of God, but



didn't have that evangelist with them, whether layman or full-time, they didn't grow, not as fast" (Peria interview).

### **A Co-Laborer Who Works Best in the Context of a Team**

My research reveals that evangelists and evangelism are apart of the fabric of growing churches. Wagner understands the evangelist as a team member that functions within a local church and concurred that one of the main reasons that the church outside of America is growing is because of the ministry of the evangelist.

...[T]he most effective evangelistic tool under heaven is planting new churches. Out there in the third world, which Philip Jenkins is now calling the global south...those churches that are mushrooming in areas of the global south aren't even raising the questions that we're raising because evangelism and evangelists are part of the warp and woof of where they are going... (Wagner interview).

### **A Leader Who Is a Multiplier Who Reproduces Him/ Herself in Others**

Tim Johnson, now pastoring Orlando World Outreach Center, experienced training and impartation when he came to Nashville from Washington, DC. When he got to Nashville and began to be mentored by an evangelist and church planter, the gift he believed God had originally given him came alive and he was able to become extremely fruitful. During the New York church plant from Nashville in 2001, he traveled alongside the evangelist who was leading the new outreach and church plant and an impartation was received. That year proved to be a time of being mentored in the dynamics of starting a church through evangelism.

In 2008 when Tim when to Orlando he was better prepared to operate as an evangelist and birth the new church with the DNA of outreach. After one year the church averaged over 150 people and after eighteen months since the beginning is now over 250.

He states that almost half are new converts and the others that came are committed to perpetuating outreach as the number one value.

One of the vital aspects of the role of the evangelist is to reproduce him/herself in others. “I would rather see 1000 people leading 100 people to the Lord than one person leading 100,000 to the Lord. That’s just because it keeps multiplying that way. That’s what my desire is—to see that more” (Sanders interview). To be fruitful and multiply is the original command to the human race and is applicable to the calling of everyone in terms of their gifting and resources.

### *Summary*

These marks of the evangelist were the most discussed by those that I interviewed. There were other traits that were mentioned to a lesser extent and they will be discussed in the next chapter. The listing of these characteristics will form the basis of a job description for someone wanting to know how to function as an evangelist in a 21st century church. In Chapter 8 I will present further findings regarding the identifying and training of those with this gift.

## CHAPTER 6

### DISCOVERING THE MARKS OF THE EVANGELIST

In this chapter I use the traits of an evangelist from my findings and the biblical principles to compare and contrast how the evangelist of today can best function to advance the kingdom of God. Then I test the validity of these marks by sending out a survey asking leaders in church at various levels to respond and verify the widespread recognition or rejection of these marks.

The survey was completed by 250 Christian leaders from a wide range of theological backgrounds and callings. The survey was comprised of twenty marks derived from my interviews (Chapter 5) and principles from Scripture (Chapter 2). There were fifteen marks from findings coupled with 5 from Scripture. The other five scriptural principles were not included because of the similarity to the marks of the findings. In this chapter I will look at those marks that agreed with my findings in Chapter 5 and those that disagreed or were undecided. The percentage number represents the combined percentages of those surveyed that answered “strongly agreed” (5) or “agreed” (4). Table 5 gives the survey results from 250 respondents:

#### ***Comparison of Survey Responses with the Research Findings***

In this section I have ordered the top ten marks respondents ranked from my survey and compare them with the broader findings. I have also included comments from the 250 respondents that helped shed light on each of these marks.

**TABLE 5****FINDINGS COMPARED TO SURVEY RESULTS**

<b>Question Number</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1	Evangelist can be a woman or a man	96
2	Evangelist is a preacher of the gospel	95
3	Evangelists must connect with apostles and prophets	91
4	Evangelists open new territory	90
5	Evangelists understand the importance of one convert not just crowds	89
6	Evangelist is a pioneer that leads faithful beyond the church walls	87
7	Evangelists gather the lost sheep	81
8	Evangelist is a catalyst that makes the church missional	75
9	Evangelist is an equipper that trains believers to reach non-believers	73
10	Evangelist is a builder that lays foundations of true discipleship	72
11	An evangelist is a strategist who makes plans and creates tools for ministry that are able to effectively reach the culture with the gospel	71
12	Evangelists reproduce themselves in others	70
13	Evangelist is a co-laborer that works best with a team	67
14	Most churches don't formally recognize evangelists	60
15	Without an evangelist in a church plant the conversion rate will be lower	59
16	There is no gift of evangelism only the gift of the evangelist	49
17	Evangelist is a planter that turns outreaches into new churches	48
18	Evangelists are wrongly used as revivalists	45
19	Evangelists are valued and respected	45
20	1% of church members are gifted as evangelists	22

### **Can Be a Woman or Man**

The number one principle that the respondents agreed upon is that gender is irrelevant to the work of an evangelist. This principle from my findings was a resounding confirmation that the evangelist is a gift-based calling, not one of gender. Women as much as men are called as evangelists. This principle from my findings is confirmed by Scripture as well; eighty-eight percent strongly agreed that this was true. This was the strongest feeling expressed by the respondents, even more than the second principle that an evangelist is a preacher of the gospel.

In the original interviews, a woman being an evangelist was a “loophole” to the woman in ministry question. For those on the side that believed that women should have no place of leadership in the church, the fact that the evangelist work was outside the church made this an acceptable role for women. To those with a more balanced view of the role of women in ministry that would hold that God gives gifts to men and women and a woman can operate in the gift God gave her, the recognition of the possibility of a woman being an evangelist was a foregone conclusion.

### **A Preacher of the Gospel**

This was a principle presented in both my findings and the biblical model of the evangelist in Chapter 2. One of the respondents commented that “today’s evangelist’s are nothing more than life coaches and motivational speakers” (respondent #196). The content of the gospel was a very important issue for those who were interviewed. There was a consensus that the gospel of repentance as well as faith be recovered. The stigma of preaching was also a factor to some of those that responded. “Evangelism can be done without using words” (respondent #176). This was in reference to the Augustinian adage of “preach the gospel and if necessary use words.” The majority of those interviewed

would view speaking as implicit with the phrase “preaching the gospel.” In no biblical account, would Christ’s Apostles preach and words not be involved.

The fact that eighty-seven percent of the 250 men and women surveyed strongly believed that this was a defining principle of the evangelist would make preaching the Word a marker for the marks of the evangelist and a fundamental aspect of their job description.

### **Must Connect with Apostles and Pastors**

This principle was a very strong theme in the interviews of evangelists, pastors and apostles. The pastor would relate to people on the local church level with the evangelist and the apostle contributing more on the macro-level or extra-local level. Apostles also serve as mediators in many cases to the relational issues arising between pastors and evangelists. The issues raised in the interviews surrounded the evangelists access to the people in the local church when it came to fundraising and utilizing of the people’s time in the evangelists ministry rather than the ministry of serving the needs of the local church. The sentiment was that the need existed for covering in the relationship between the evangelist and the local pastor to ensure areas where conflicts of interest can be overseen.

“Most churches fear the evangelist because they are afraid that membership will leave and pursue the call of the evangelist” (respondent #25). If the goals of the evangelist and pastor for the church are divergent then division and competition for resources may result. The functioning of the evangelist with other members of the Ephesians 4:11 team was mentioned by most as a “must.” “Evangelists should flow out of and be funded by the local church” (respondent #247)

This principle showed up in the survey in the form of the statement, “The evangelist works best in the context of a team.” It ranked number sixteen on the list of

twenty and received sixty-seven percent agreement. The difference was that the term connection inferred more about communication and the latter statement implied more commitment on the part of the evangelist to not work alone. “It is hard for evangelists to work in the context of a local church” (respondent #161). This speaks to the tensions of strong leaders not being able to work out their differences.

The principle of “the Gift of the evangelist is valued and respected” ranked lower than I expected it to. It ranked second to the lowest out of twenty marks with only forty-five percent agreeing. “The local church does not value the role, function and purpose of the evangelist” (respondent #62).

The tensions with the evangelist outweighed the benefits seen by most pastors. On the other hand, the evangelists seem equally wary and suspicious of the motives of pastors and other leaders of churches. Both sides in the interviews sited horror stories of abuse and mistrust. The practical connection with the local church and with apostolic covering and mediation seems to be very high on the list of priorities with over ninety-one percent of the people surveyed in agreement that this covering and connection is important.

### **Opens Up New Territory**

Over ninety percent of the those surveyed agreed that it was the job of the evangelist to see new areas opened up for the gospel. This was one of the top ten biblical traits. This is the first step in church planting and corresponds with the principle ranked eighteenth of twenty with only forty-eight percent agreement, “the evangelist is a planter that turns outreaches into new churches.” The fact the ninety percent believe that the evangelist opens up new territories logically follows that those outreaches would be the beginnings of new church plants. “The evangelist spearheads the great commission for the local church” (respondent #188). The evangelist going first and going quickly through

open doors concurs with my interviewees; everything does not flow according to planning. When a door opens the evangelist responds, even if the church isn't ready to plant a new church. The literature showed that the number of churches being planted is not keeping up with the population growth rate. That means that the birth rate of churches isn't high enough to keep up with the need, particularly as represented by the next generation.

Another important aspect that interviewees spoke of was that the first 100 people in a new church significantly established the culture of the church. If the church was started with an evangelistic outreach, the chances that the church would have evangelism in its DNA would be greater. **“EVANGELIST SHOULD BE CONSIDERED THE FUNDAMENTAL BASIC FOUNDATION FOR ALL CHURCHES”** (respondent #174). (The person writing this statement used all capital letters in bold.)

The evangelist has not been included in the discussion of church planting. “A person can operate primarily as an evangelist while also possessing other gifts effective in leading and planting churches” (respondent #12). One of the noticeable themes in the interviews was the reference to the apostle when dealing with planting new churches and the evangelist when talking about reaching the lost.

The principle that “Evangelists are wrongly used as revivalists,” ranked eighteenth out of twenty and received only forty-five percent agreement. This could suggest that the lack of inclusion of the evangelist in church planting comes from the fact that more people still perceive the evangelist being needed to revive the saints rather than reach the lost. “Evangelists that only preach in churches are not true evangelists” (respondent #84). This would reflect the tension that exists over the real job description of the ones with the evangelist gift .

Ranked fifteenth out of twenty was the principle, “Without an evangelist the number of conversions in a church plant will be lower.” It still received fifty-nine percent



agreement from the respondents. There six out of ten felt that an evangelist's absence would affect the number of converts in a church plant. Those interviewed did not overwhelmingly speak of this during my research. Those who did were the evangelists. They felt that they were being overlooked as a necessary part of the church planting team.

### **Understands the Importance of One Convert, Not Just the Crowds**

This is included in one of the ten biblical principles mentioned and was echoed consistently through the interviews. In fact the consensus was that the ability to speak to the crowds came from understanding the needs of the individual. One person involved in the interview process had actually spoken to over one million people in a live audience in Korea. They stated that the ability to speak to the masses was no more difficult than that one on one encounter. The power of the individual encounter was described at times as a the necessity for a patient to talk to a doctor and give specific details about their situation rather than having someone give them general instructions. The gospel can and must be delivered in mass but is experienced by individuals regardless of the size of the crowd. Many told stories of great churches that could be traced back to individual and household conversions. Eighty-nine percent of those who were surveyed agreed that the evangelist valued the individual not just the crowds. This also relates back to the issue of compassion that was mentioned when talking to leaders about the marks of the evangelist. Simply speaking to a large audience and not getting in touch with the people was thought to produce a very superficial, inauthentic public presentation.

“A true evangelist can turn any situation into a gospel message” (respondent #204). This grace is best seen in the one-on-one encounters where a person entrusts the secrets of their heart to the one they feel can possible help them. The authenticity test seems to come into play as a person gets closer to people versus standing on a stage at a

distance. The family issue was mentioned as a critical factor in terms of the character of the evangelist being either discredited or validated by their family. The more there is personal contact, the accountability goes up. Credibility was at the top of the list of concerns when talking about the evangelist. “Evangelists are more interested in money rather than the souls” (respondent #49). The valuing of the work seems to be ingrained in the heart of both the speaker (the evangelist) and the receiver of the message through one-on-one encounters.

### **A Pioneer Who Leads the Faithful Beyond the Church Walls**

The sixth most popular statement was “evangelists lead the faithful beyond the church walls.” This was agreed upon by eighty-seven percent of the respondents. It is similar to the principle that states the evangelist “opens up new territory.” The difference intended and explained in the interviews is the distinction made between church planting and church expansion. Expanding to new territories relates to the first stages of church planting, while this principle is about leading the people in the church beyond their walls and into their city. Many spoke of the vision for multi-site congregations which allowed their one church to meet in multiple locations. It also means that the evangelist must not simply teach classes and be a theoretician but be a practical tour guide to show the church where to catch the fish.

The eleventh principle listed in terms of agreement was that the “Evangelist is a strategist who makes plans and creates tools for ministry that are effectively able to reach the culture with the gospel” (71% agreement from respondents). Many of the most fruitful evangelists testified to a multi-media show, a music group, dramatic presentation, a movie, a skit, a debate on a controversial topic, a famous athlete or actor giving their testimony, or simply a publicized meeting to draw a crowd. With a tool in their hand the evangelist can better empower the average Christian to minimally participate through

handing out brochures for the evangelistic event. The needs of any city were mentioned as starting places for outposts for the kingdom of God and practical starting points for evangelistic outreaches. One person spoke of the evangelist “planting the flag” outside the church walls. This turns the members eyes on something other than themselves. “The role of an evangelist extends beyond the pulpit, missional events (gathering activities that draw people to hear the gospel) and direct contact with non-believers into televised programs appropriated by Christian media” (respondent #205).

There is also an important word mentioned in this statement and that is the word “lead.” The evangelist is a leader. The most basic function of an evangelist is to “lead” someone to Christ. That dimension of leadership was stated over and over in the interviews and confirmed in the Scripture as Philip brought the Ethiopian to a decision and baptized him (Ac. 8). The leadership qualities of an evangelist are undervalued and underestimated in terms of their importance. Someone wrote in on the survey and said a principle should be added to the survey that should read, “The gift of the evangelist is always accompanied by a gift of leadership” (respondent #239). They ranked the statement as a “1,” saying they would strongly disagree with such a statement. However, referring to the biblical model which is the ultimate reference part of the study, the gifts given to the body (including the evangelist) in Ephesians 4:11-12 are to equip the saints for the work of ministry. As I will discuss in the next point, the fact that the evangelist is called to equip implies a certain level of leadership of others. However in this principle the focus is on showing the church how to go into the culture and make an impact.

### **Gatherers that Find Lost Sheep**

This is the seventh ranked principle of the twenty and brings back the biblical model of the priority Jesus placed on reaching the lost versus maintaining the found. evangelists in essence is a gatherer. The majority of churches and leaders discussed the

difficulty in connecting with those who walked into the doors of their church. If those that are walking up to the church cannot be gathered successfully, then those outside the walls may seem even more elusive. Yet, eighty-one percent agreed that the evangelist is a gatherer of lost sheep, “seeking and saving the lost.” This gathering can be in either a church expansion or church planting sense. For a local church to grow, new converts and new people that are locating to the church must find relationships with others where they can grow, learn, and be accountable to one another. The gathering of lost sheep implies that they are also coming in contact with others besides the evangelist. In fact the interviews suggested that the evangelist was the gift that breathed life into small group settings. Simply organizing people in the church into small groups is not gathering lost sheep.

“The church cannot survive and grow without an evangelist” (respondent #38). This agrees with the principle of the necessity of gathering lost sheep which means that the church is always growing not simply trading those that are “found” with existing churches.

### **A Catalyst Who Makes the Church Missional**

This principle gets to the heart and soul of the study of the gift of the evangelist. The emphasis on the missional church is so fresh that the computer underlines the word in red to signify that it is misspelled. From every corner of contemporary literature and in almost every interview, the term “missional” was spoken of and seen as the clear target. “The church must become missional.” However, knowing something should be happening and making it happen are two different things. An evangelist is the catalyst who makes the church missional. This was agreed upon by seventy-five percent of those surveyed. If the churches great oversight is the gift of the evangelist and the churches great need is to become missional, then the data suggests a strong connection between the

two points. “The evangelist keeps the church on the ‘go’ of Matthew 28” (respondent #3). “Apostolic churches need to recognize, re-ignite and re-commission their evangelists” (respondent #54).

Yet, there were many respondents who indicated that this was not the case at all. One respondent wrote in a statement that read, “Would be best to have an evangelist as a staff member of a church?” and then answered “1” which meant they strongly disagreed (respondent #113). The pastor of one of the most successful churches I know answered “1” to this principle. The sense from the interviews and reading the comments from those that wrote in on the survey is that if the evangelist is emphasized again, then the church will revert back to the days of the “one man or one woman show.” The belief in the Holy Spirit as the catalyst that makes the church missional is the sense that those who opposed this statement would have believed instead. The greatest burden therefore is for the church to pray and return to a pre-Pentecostal posture of waiting on the Lord and crying out in prayer as the source of true catalytic momentum. The response from others interviewed would be that the focus of the prayers need to be for the laborers to be put into the harvest field and for more the church to raise up and send out more workers.

My findings show that the church is in search of the missional spark that will convert the church into not having a mission department, but being a missional people. That is accomplished, according to the findings, through recognizing and utilizing the gift of the evangelist.

### **An Equipper Who Trains Believers to Reach Non-Believers**

This principle was one of the most quoted phrases to me during the interviews. Because the majority of those I interviewed embraced the Ephesians 4:11-12 model and agreed that the primary function of the ministry gifts God gave was to be a person who

trains believers to do the work of ministry, the fact that it only received seventy-three percent agreement from the respondents of the survey, then, was a little surprising. “An Evangelist role is to train, inspire, and lead the church to effectively engage non-believers” (respondent #28). The sentiment of all of those I interviewed is that the hope of the church is to mobilize every believer to fulfill the Great Commission. “All believers are called to ministry” (respondent #67). This was echoed in the comments from those that wrote in and gave their suggestions for statements to be added to the survey. “All in the church are to do the work of an Evangelist” (respondent #78). Some wrote in the comment even though it was presented on the survey. “An Evangelist’s primary role is equipping all saints to do the work of the evangelist” (respondent #85).

The survey tested the fact that the findings showed that those interviewed felt that “there is no gift of evangelism only the gift of the evangelist.” There were only forty-nine percent that agreed with this statement. These Christian leaders appear to not want to back to a place where the average believer is ignored and the evangelist as a person is given the responsibility to evangelize. “God can call anyone to do the work of evangelism at a given time, given place, for a given purpose” (respondent #112). Also “Everyone is called to be an evangelist” (respondent #135), speaks to that issue. The balanced perspective sounds more like this: “Evangelism is a responsibility of every believer; the evangelist is a gift to the church” (respondent #153). “While there is an office of ‘evangelist’ all believers all called to a life of evangelism” (respondent #177). The training of the people of God becomes a primary role of the evangelist, not just doing all the work themselves.

The findings showed that there were very few training curriculums for evangelism and for evangelists. The role of the evangelist as equipper though believed in theoretically has no evidence of being acted on by those interviewed and is more accidental than intentional.

### **A Builder Who Lays the Foundations of True Discipleship**

The tenth principle ranked in the survey was the evangelist is a builder that lays the foundation of true discipleship. (72% agreed). In the interviews the evangelists who had started outreaches and turned them into churches all spoke of this priority. This point links the evangelism and discipleship in a greater way. The observation that came from my interviews was in the form of cynicism of results from evangelistic meetings or crusades. There have been so many meetings with millions of “decisions” for Christ, yet the North American church is not growing. Over and over the doubt that evangelism was really effective came through the discussions. Discipleship became the focus because there was little confidence in the power of someone making a commitment to Christ. Yet for those that were not cynical about evangelism there was the emphasis on preaching the gospel and having people make a quality commitment before they were counted as converted. This is where the idea of a “second invitation” emerged. This is where the evangelist takes the ones who have responded to the invitation and takes them to a room and “repreaches” the message and gives an opportunity for the person to verify whether they are willing to repent and follow Christ. It is the responsibility of the evangelist who births someone into the kingdom to make sure that those foundations are laid. This is where the training of the evangelist becomes so important. Their work really begins once the altar call is given. “An Evangelist should understand that only the fruit that remains will he be rewarded for, therefore he must preach the full counsel of God and not hold back the full counsel” (respondent #194). Others went as far as saying, don’t have children if you are not willing to train them. “The evangelist should stop making converts if the churches are not ready to disciple” (respondent #172).

### ***Other Observations from Survey***

I present in this work that the number of evangelists in a church is around one percent. This figure received the least number of those that agreed (22%). The figure of one percent in the findings was an assessment based on estimates of several churches that believed in the gift of the evangelist and could estimate the number that were operating in their midst either formally on staff or informally as lay leaders. The previous number of ten percent of people in a church have the gift of evangelism has been printed and distributed and has become accepted in many circles—in fact, it is a myth! The fact that most people surveyed were divided on whether there is a gift of evangelism made them less sure of the number of evangelists. One respondent wrote in and said they strongly felt there were less than one percent who were evangelists (respondent #105). The confusion seems to stem from the misunderstanding of that there is a gift of evangelism to the lack of training on the gift of the evangelist and the marks that would identify them.

### ***Summary***

Through the use of the survey to over 280 Christian leaders from a variety of denominational backgrounds I was able to confirm many of the findings from my interviews (Chapter 5). This survey yielded many surprises that would have not shown up simply through the interview process. The fact that ninety-six percent felt an evangelist can be a woman or a man showed me the feeling is strong for women in ministry despite their often being denied. The top ten marks from the survey will serve as a guide in helping establish the marks for understanding how an evangelist can function in church planting and church expansion. Putting forth a job description for the evangelist might go along way toward giving understanding and incentive for churches to hire them in light if understanding what they can bring to the table.





## **CHAPTER 7**

### **BETHEL AS A CASE STUDY THAT DEMONSTRATES THE MARKS OF THE EVANGELIST**

Bethel World Outreach Center (Bethel) was started in the greater Nashville, Tennessee, area of Brentwood in 1988 as a non-denominational teaching center. The congregation grew to 600 in attendance in the year 1999. I moved to Nashville in 1993 to base from there and travel to start churches and equip others in evangelism. In 1994, the ministry now known as Every Nation (EN) began and Bethel became a part of this international movement in 1995. From Jan 2000 to present 2009 I have led Bethel as the Senior Pastor. The church has grown to an average attendance of 2,917 in 2009 meeting in six locations throughout the city. There have also been significant church plants in New York and Orlando, as well as five countries around the globe. Outreaches to the poor as well as campus ministries on seven campuses have been birthed in the city of Nashville that have been extremely fruitful.

The mission of the church is: “Reaching a City to Touch the World.” I believe the good things that have happened since 2000 started with the gift of the evangelist and the proper functioning of that gift. This case study chronicles the application of the marks of the evangelist in order to bring about strategic planning that resulted not just in the growth of Bethel, but the growth of the kingdom of God in the greater Nashville area and beyond. In Table 6 I list the marks of the evangelist at Bethel, code numbers for future reference, and the strength or weakness of each mark.

TABLE 6

<b>Marks of the Evangelist at Bethel</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Strength/Weakness</b>
Utilizing women as evangelists as well as men	M1	Weakness
Preacher of the gospel	M2	Strength
Connects with apostles and prophets	M3	Strength
Opens new territory	M4	Strength
Values one convert, not just crowds	M5	Strength
Pioneer - leads faithful beyond church walls	M6	Strength
Gatherer - who gathers lost sheep	M7	Strength
Catalyst that makes the church <i>missional</i>	M8	Strength
Equiper - trains believers to reach non-believers	M9	Weakness
Builder - lays foundations	M10	Strength
Strategist - creating tools for outreach	M11	Strength
Leader - reproduces himself/herself in others	M12	Strength
Co-laborer - works best with a team	M13	Strength
Planter - turns outreaches into church plants	M14	Strength
Evangelists are formally trained	M15	Weakness

### MARKS OF THE EVANGELIST AT BETHEL

#### ***3-Ds: Devotion, Discipleship, Diversity***

In January of 2000 as senior pastor, Ron Lewis from North Carolina spoke the following Scripture to me that became a defining word for me in the next few years.

The men of the city said to Elisha, ‘Look, our lord, this town is well situated as you can see, but the water is bad and the land is unproductive.’ ‘Bring me a new bowl ‘he said ‘and put salt in it.’ So they brought it to him. Then he went out to the spring and threw the salt into it saying, ‘this is what the Lord says: ‘I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive.’ And the water has remained wholesome to this day, according to the word Elisha had spoken (2 Kg. 2:19-22).

The interpretation to me was that Nashville was that well-situated city and had many great advantages; however, the message that was being preached (the water) was

needing salt. My focus, beginning in that year was to emphasize the gospel of repentance and faith in Christ as Lord. The first value of devotion to Christ as Lord has been one of the three key values that the church is built around. In the beginning I treated the new assignment as if I was starting a new church. Every meeting was like an outreach meeting and altar calls were given for people to come down to the front of the church to receive Christ as Lord. Hundreds of people responded each year to the salvation call. In one forty day period of 2003, over 500 people responded to the salvation call.

The church was growing by conversions each year. I instituted a ministry team made up of everyone involved in follow up ministry of new people. This ministry team included paid staff, small group leaders, department heads, and anyone involved in the disciple making process. Everyone was encouraged to get training in the use of our follow up tool, *The Purple Book* (Broocks 2006), a twelve chapter study that covers the foundation truths of Christ's Lordship, repentance and faith, baptism, and other important truths. It was the gift of the evangelist that helped to make this significant value of devotion a reality. Without that truth preached with evangelistic fervor there would have been little material to work with to build the spiritual house (church).

The strength of the church has been the ability to lay foundations (M10).<sup>1</sup> This is another major function and duty of the evangelist in our midst. Our foundation classes are all led by evangelists. This points to the second value of discipleship. Jesus' command to "make disciples" in Matthew 28:19 has been a non-negotiable in terms of ministry focus. Our success or failure is measured not by the number of attendees but by disciples who are growing in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. SuYeon Yoon (2009) agreed with this in her case study assessment of Bethel. "He [Broocks] believes that making disciples should be the top burden for apostolic leadership. He sees his ability to focus on discipling as the cause for church growth" (Yoon 2009).

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<sup>1</sup> M refers to the code numbers from Table 6 that will be used in the following section.

The disciple-making process, beyond laying the foundations, has been our greatest challenge (M9). Bethel has received much guidance from Steve Murrell and Kevin York who are leaders and overseers of the EN family of churches. Through the wisdom they have provided the process of making disciples has been given greater strength and clarity. One of the most important principles of Murrell's leadership is establishing the principle that making disciples is not the process of maturing believers but primarily reaching new people, or recovering the backslidden and laying foundations and equipping and empowering them to do the same with others.

The third value of diversity is one that has been the real priority since my leadership began in 2000. The church was situated in a suburban part of Nashville and is predominately white. The call to raise up a multi-ethnic church was a challenge but has been accomplished because of the intentional focusing of our outreach to African-Americans and the various ethnic groups that are resident in the greater Nashville area. Today, the church is forty percent African-American, forty percent white and twenty percent Asian and Hispanic. The diversity value also can be attributed to the work of the evangelist in our midst in two ways. First to preach the gospel (M2) and confront racism as a sin and call men and women to repentance. Secondly, to raise up evangelists (M12) of all ethnic backgrounds that operate in our midst. Because of this Bethel has members from over fifty nations.

### ***The Role of the Evangelist at Bethel***

Evangelism has been the central focus at Bethel since the year 2000 because of the presence and influence of many with the gift of the evangelist. The emphasis that many have placed on the role of the apostle in my estimation has been a squandered opportunity to emphasize the need to go and make disciples and plant churches. At least twelve recognized evangelists have helped build our church and caused it to expand to as

well as plant new churches (M14). If there is a distinctive about Bethel's culture of evangelism it would be the emphasis of the gift of the evangelist not the apostle. Though I have been called "apostolic," for me the term is only important as far as being sent to accomplish a task.

...BWOC's definition of apostle is purely functional, and is just for the strategy of ministry. In other words, for them, an "apostle" is important only as far as starting churches, making disciples, and multiplying churches are concerned and no more...Instead of allowing various spiritual gifts to bear on his ministry, he draws resources almost exclusively from being an evangelist to plant and build new churches and to disciple them (Yoon 2009).

One of the most glaring weaknesses in Bethel which also shows up in most churches is the lack of formal training for evangelists. Instead, they have been handpicked and personally mentored by the other evangelists (M12). My being an evangelist as well as the Senior Pastor has given us an extra emphasis of evangelistic flavor and energy. The prospects are bright for great growth if the church can develop a more systematic way to identify, train, and deploy new evangelists as well as upgrade the training of the existing ones. If we could double the number of evangelists to two percent of the church population, the church would experience greater growth

In the following section, I will look at how we have identified, trained and utilized evangelists at Bethel to become more effective in church expansion and church planting that is helping us to fulfill our mission statement of Reaching a city to touch the world.

### ***Identifying and Training Evangelists at Bethel World Outreach Center***

The best analogy of this is the Aristotelian proposition of a first cause or prime mover in creation. There must be an evangelist who is the prime mover or first cause in a relative sense to ignite the missional spark in a church. This is what I was able to do as the Senior leader at Bethel. I was able to use my evangelistic gift to help create a

missional culture in the people as well as the birthing of other men and women with the same gift (M8).

The other advantage Bethel benefited from was that I was able to bring three significant evangelists whom I had led to Christ and trained as evangelists to help me (M12): Ken Dew, Franco Gennaro, and Steve Hollander. Each of these men were already fruitful evangelists and church planters, and they joined my staff and helped reinforce the evangelistic message and build the missional culture. I also benefited from an evangelist named Tim Johnson whom I had not led to Christ but who was an evangelist that needed to be mentored. He came to Bethel in 2000 to be the assistant pastor. Being an African-American, he helped make sure that our value of diversity was a reality. From those four significant evangelists came a second and even third generation of evangelists that have contributed to the missional mindset. Hollander's wife, Cindy, is also an evangelist and she was able to help ignite the evangelistic fires in women as well and see several female evangelists emerge.

The ministry of the evangelist has been recognized and become a paid position at Bethel, yet each of the evangelists have worn several hats and carried other titles as well. This has been a weakness in our midst that although we have evangelists on staff, they have multiple duties that have kept them from concentrating fully on evangelism. Each of them has operated at about a fifty percent focus of their time on doing the work of the evangelist while fulfilling pastoral duties or directing campus ministries.

The process of identifying evangelists has been mostly the existing evangelists picking them out and mentoring them personally in developing their gift. Ken Dew, who now pastors a church in Auckland New Zealand, found Chris Sanders, a member of the Tennessee Titans football team in Nashville. Chris was a very visible athlete and personality in the city of Nashville and was a pure evangelist. After months of meeting with Chris he became effective as a witness and someone who was able to identify others

with that gift. During training camp he led a teammate named Shino Prater to Christ. Shino was born again and baptized and immediately began to share his faith. Recognizing the gift upon his life, both Chris and Ken began to disciple and train Shino as an evangelist.

Today, Shino is an extremely fruitful evangelist who helps open doors for evangelism all over Nashville and in many other parts of the country. Shino has also raised up other evangelists that he has either won to Christ or has found that possessed the gift but were not functioning fruitfully in it (M2). He still bases in our church and also leads an evangelistic outreach called AARM (African American Resource Ministries). This is an outreach to the 103 historic Black colleges and universities.

### **Training Evangelists at Bethel**

In Chapter 8, I will describe in greater detail the traits of how individuals expressed that they came to identify their calling as an evangelist: (1) desire; (2) witness of the Spirit; (3) prophetic utterance; (4) impartation from others; (5) outward confirmation; (6) leadership affirmation; and (7) bearing fruit. All the evangelists at Bethel confirm that these signs pointed them to their gift.

Again, no formal training of evangelists has taken place at Bethel (M15). Over the course of this study, the goal has been to identify and train evangelists in Nashville and then export that training to the body of Christ as it proves to be successful. In looking at Bethel, several principles emerge that contribute to evangelists being trained in an informal way. These could become the beginnings of the training curriculum that I hope to develop as a result of this study. Many of these marks were also seen in the data from the other leaders outside Bethel and mentioned in Chapter 5 including: the culture of the church, calling, character, charisma, content of the gospel message, contact with



unbelievers, creativity, contextualization, being a co-laborer, having a covering and accountability, showing compassion through prayer, and being commissioned to minister.

### **Church Expansion**

In the year 2000 Bethel began to expand beyond a single location and adopted a multi-site model. The congregation in Murfreesboro had already begun and was operating as a separate church. In order to accomplish the goal of one church in many locations, the church joined back with Bethel for greater unity and focus of efforts. The satellite congregations that Bethel has planted since include: U-Church/campus congregation, Bethel-Franklin, Bethel-Metro Fellowship, Bethel-Hispanic congregation, and Bethel-Clarksville (M14).

### ***U-Church/Campus Congregation***

Soon after 2000 a campus outreach that had been called U-Church began to function as one of the congregations of Bethel. This outreach began as a concerted effort of a team of evangelists with a desire to touch the approximately ten college campuses in the greater Nashville area (M3, M4, M5). While campus meetings were taking place on a weekly basis, the feeling was that there would be greater results if all the campuses came together for a weekly joint service and have it function as a church, not just a campus outreach. The statistics have not been officially kept, but each year Steve Hollander, an evangelist and pastor of this congregation, estimates that over 200-300 students make commitments to Christ through this congregation. Attendance has varied over the last decade from a high of 400 to a low of 100. Many evangelists have been raised up and sent out to start other congregations from this outreach to the college campus (M12).

***Bethel-Franklin***

The city of Franklin is next door to Brentwood and Nashville and is the site of another satellite congregation. We purchased twenty acres of land and an historic home and began a congregation on the new property in 2008 (M4). The growth came primarily from transfers from the existing congregations. Because of this, the majority of the first 100 people were not gathered through evangelism. The growth of this congregation was hindered initially because of the lack of the presence of the evangelist in their midst on a regular basis. Now, an evangelist, Shino Prater, who is a proven soul winner and door opener, has been working the Franklin area with the congregational pastor, Rafe Young. He has already reached out to three high schools and has seen many come to Christ. We have gone to two Sunday services and are treating the smaller service that is attracting only 50 adults compared to the early service attracting 150 adults, as our evangelistic service. Besides the pastor, the core of the leaders there are also people of tremendous character and with the addition of the ministry of the evangelist should cause the congregation to become missional and experience significant growth (M8).

***Bethel-Metro Fellowship***

Bethel-Metro is a congregation that was birthed by an evangelist and a team of workers with him that is one of the most exciting outreaches we have had. After several years of serving the inner city with our after school program. The congregation has about 120 people and meets once a month in a larger setting while serving the community on a weekly basis. The primary strategy is to have regular evangelistic events that feed people and offer services for the children. The circle of influence has grown and the plans are to go to weekly services in early 2010 (M11).

The pastor, Mike Williams, is also an evangelist. His heart for the community is so amazing that two years ago he donated a kidney to one of the children who attended

one of our Life Centers. He is loved by the community and has the credibility to preach the gospel to a needy people.

### ***Bethel-Hispanic Congregation***

The ministry to the growing Latino community in our city has been evangelistic in nature due to the ministry of the evangelist. The gathering of new people takes place in spurts through the impact of the evangelist coming through and stirring the people to evangelize. The congregation is around 100 and is led by an American who speaks fluent Spanish and was once a missionary to Costa Rica. The pastor, Philip Steele was himself led to Christ by an evangelist and carries the passion to reach the lost though he is a pastor and teacher. The congregation has far more impact on the Hispanic community than can be registered by the number of attendees on Sunday (M6). They are constantly performing acts of service to their community and sharing Christ through their good deeds. It is an outreach focused congregation that reaches out and serves the needs of the poor and needy. This congregation needs to experience the presence of an evangelist on a regular basis, especially one who can equip the average believer to share their faith (M9). This combined with their passion to serve should cause the congregation to grow (M8).

### ***Bethel-Clarksville***

The most successful satellite congregation was birthed by an evangelist in Clarksville, Tennessee, which is forty minutes north of downtown Nashville (M14). It is the home of a major military base, Fort Campbell, and a university campus, Austin Peay. The congregation has grown to over 800 in attendance in five different services.

The evangelist gathered a small core of people and then turned it over to the pastor, Mike Cantrell. Though the remnant was small, the tone was set for evangelism because the pastor had himself been led to Christ by an evangelist. Though not an

evangelist himself, Cantrell has been able to maintain the culture of evangelism while utilizing his pastoral gift keep the people healthy and growing (M8). They have an excellent small-group network as well as a campus congregation that meets at Austin Peay University with over 130 students. This outreach is led by a campus evangelist, Brock Lillis that is extremely effective and fruitful. They also have congregations led by Fecri Yousef forming from them in the Hispanic community.

### **Church Planting**

The most significant church plants by Bethel leadership have been New York, Orlando, and New Zealand; Bethel is moving beyond Nashville. Furthermore, we have assisted in sending out significant teams to provide leadership in birthing churches and starting outreaches in five nations.

In most cases it has been the role of the evangelist that has been drawn upon to break open the new territory, and gather a core group of new believers (M4). The evangelist has also been a key in stirring existing churches evangelistically and helping them gain a vision of expansion and church planting. The evangelists have been able to plant the DNA of expansion into the new churches as well as transplant that missional DNA into existing ones (M8).

#### ***New Zealand***

Evangelist Ken Dew was led to Christ by an evangelist in 1981 and ended up going into full-time evangelistic work, being mentored by the evangelist who led him to Christ. In the late 1990s he moved to Nashville to become a part of the Bethel team and functioned primarily as a traveling evangelist reaching athletes, being a former college athlete himself. Around 1999, he was challenged to take a step of faith and go the nation of New Zealand and start a church. He led a small team to Auckland and conducted a

campus outreach. The outreach turned into a church that has now grown into four congregations (M14). A key dimension of the success of the church and all of its outreaches in the South Pacific have been Dew's drive and passion as an evangelist and discipler. Among the marks of the evangelist that were operating was first and foremost that Dew had been trained and mentored by an evangelist and church planter (M12). The second key aspect was his ability to work in concert with a team and not have to work alone. He also was helped by an evangelist but still functioned as the key leader through the birthing of the church. He also proved that an evangelist can be a pastor. He has also raised up other evangelists that are leading campus outreaches throughout the South Pacific.

However, of all the marks of an evangelist Dew manifests, he is first and foremost a man of character and integrity. His strong foundations have allowed him to weather the storms of the multitude of difficulties he has faced as a church planter. He has also connected well with apostles and prophets which have helped the church become grounded and stable (M3).

### ***New York***

On September 11th, 2001, while watching the reruns of the terrorists attacks in New York City, I sensed the Spirit speaking to me to go to New York. On September 12, a small team accompanied me and we drove all night and arrived in New York City on the evening of September 13th. Besides the devastation in the city from the attacks, the spiritual devastation was even more catastrophic. Pastor Ron Lewis from North Carolina had joined me to walk the streets and minister to the people in need there. We stood near Times Square and prayed that God would help us plant a church in response to the crisis. On the Sunday after 9/11, I returned to Nashville and stood up at Bethel and announced, "Somehow, we are going to start a church in New York." A man named Lynn Keesecker

came out of the crowd and said that he was affiliated with a theater on Times Square and he would help us start our congregation there. Within one month of 9/11 we had begun our new congregation. Ron was a pastor of a church in North Carolina and I was in Nashville. We would both conduct our Sunday morning services in our respective cities and meet in New York on Sunday nights (M4).

One of the keys was getting a small evangelistic core of people to drive to New York and help make up a small crowd of at least 50 people (M6). The Lamb's Theater where we met on 44th and Broadway held about 250 with space for another 100 in the balcony. Bethel invested our best music leaders and small group leader into the team. We also spent over \$35,000 monthly for a year to help the new church get off the ground. By the end of the first year, there were more than 100 people in the new core; Pastor Ron became the pastor and I turned the leadership over to him. He still pastors in both cities and the church in New York has grown into two congregations with about 600 people. They have also planted several other congregations as well, including in Philadelphia and the Dominican Republic.

Many of the key marks in my findings operated in this church plant. The leader began as the evangelist and helped develop the strategy (M11), gather the people (M7), lay the foundations (M10), transition the outreach into a new church and then turn the church over to a pastor (M14). The evangelist sensed the open door that had resulted from the tragedy in New York City and immediately went through that door without the benefit of long-term planning.

### ***Orlando***

In 2006, the Senior Associate Pastor of Bethel, Tim Johnson, announced he was ready to plant a new church in his home state of Florida, in the city of Orlando. As a gifted evangelist and pastor he spent almost one year preparing to leave Nashville for

Orlando. Unlike the New York church plant that was spontaneous, this one was more deliberate and took advantage of the tools that were available from our church consultant, Kevin York, to successfully launch a new congregation (M3).

A small core of people relocated to Orlando with him and his wife LeChelle and four children (M13). They officially began in January of 2007 with their first “official” Sunday morning service. They held smaller meetings and gathered a core as well as cast a vision for the new church. The first meeting had over 100 in attendance and after two years has an attendance of around 300. Already, leaders are emerging and a vision to reach the city and touch the world is in the DNA of that church as well (M8).

### *Summary*

Looking over the last ten years of Bethel’s history, the transition in 2000 to an evangelist as a leader instead of utilizing a pastor-teacher, brought about expansion and growth. The strengths of Bethel lay in our ability to recognize and utilize the gift of the evangelist. The strongest elements being that of laying foundations (M10), preaching the gospel (M1), and pioneering new outreaches that turn into churches (M14). The key challenge at Bethel in the coming decade is to see more clarity and consistency in the disciple-making process (M9). The first two values of Devotion and Diversity have been well established in the culture of the church. Now the focus of making disciples, which starts with winning the lost and training them to follow Christ’s commands, must become a clear, simple, transferable process. As Steve Murrell continually tells our staff at Bethel, “Jesus told us to make disciples and he promised to build the church.” We want to see evangelists be the leaders in helping train every believer to be an expert at making disciples.

Bethel continues to become more missional by getting more intentional through identifying the marks of the evangelist which can then be used to promote and utilize

evangelists in the broader church of North America (M8). It has become such a strong dimension that it is the aspect of our church that is glaringly obvious. Our church is like a tennis player whose playing arm is far bigger than the arm he doesn't use. Our efforts are embryonic on the grand scale of things but there are signs of life that by promoting and utilizing the evangelist, the yearning for real growth, as Van Engen says, can be achieved.



## **CHAPTER 8**

### **HOW TO IDENTIFY AND UTILIZE THE GIFT OF EVANGELIST**

One of the great hopes of this study is to see the thousands of churches in North America, become effective in evangelism and outreach. This is what is being termed “missional” churches. In order to see this become a reality, evangelists must first be identified and trained. Then they can be effectively utilized in any type of church context.

#### ***Identifying the Evangelists***

Throughout the interviewing process, I tried to keep in mind the traits that help identify those with the gift of the evangelist. There were many ways that those who are evangelists came to realize that they have this gift. The majority of them would explain that the Holy Spirit ultimately confirmed to their hearts that they possess this gift and calling. Besides direct communication, the Spirit also spoke in various ways and through various people and circumstances. Here is a summary of some of the major responses to the question of how the evangelists came to know they were evangelists.

#### **The Witness of the Spirit**

Some testified that the sense of God’s Spirit speaking to them was the way they came to know they were evangelists. Usually, that came after hearing about the gift from someone speaking or preaching about it. Myles McPherson, a Senior Pastor who considers himself first and foremost an evangelist, stated that he went to hear someone conduct a seminar on evangelism. He was the only one who attended. However, when he came away from that seminar, he knew he was an evangelist (McPherson interview). Over and over again, the bottom line for most evangelists was that they felt that the Holy Spirit had confirmed in their hearts that they were indeed called to be evangelists.

### **Prophetic Utterance**

The Spirit of God speaks to someone through the gift of prophecy. “The Holy Spirit not only speaks to an individual, he speaks through an individual prophetically” (Evrlist interview). This happened to me in the fall of 1978. A man with a prophetic gift came to our campus and asked me to stand up in a meeting and spoke these words, “Always be ready to pack your bags. The Lord is going to use you as an evangelist with a gift of faith.” The Apostle Paul instructed Timothy to “remember the prophecies that were spoken over his life” (1 Tim. 1:18). These words of personal prophecy would help Timothy to fight the good fight. Many times the Lord uses this method to give someone much needed insight into their gifts and calling.

### **Impartation from Others**

Several said that direct contact with an evangelist was probably the primary way they came to know they were an evangelist. Being in proximity to an evangelist allowed them to see the tendencies in the evangelist and imitate them or simply see how they were similar to traits they had in their own lives.

Franco Gennaro was born again as a result of an evangelist’s ministry and became one himself. The moment he was saved he began to preach the gospel to his Florida State teammates. He went on to establish churches in America, Latin America, and Cuba.

Just as Timothy received his gift through the laying on of hands, there must be a greater faith in this dimension of training and impartation. Gathering evangelists and potential evangelists together for this kind of prayer is important. Taking the prospective evangelist out into the evangelistic field is even more effective.

### **Outward Confirmation**

Those I interviewed heard from their fellow believers that they considered them evangelists. Hearing these words from others seemed to have an encouraging result.

...Thirty-some years ago, 1973 to be exact, I sat down and I was interviewed by...the Senior Editor of Christianity Today magazine. And through that interview, he then did an article in the magazine and called me “the nation’s first Roman Catholic lay evangelist.” That was the end of quote. That then was lifted and put on the back of the book I wrote called *Clap Your Hands* which was an evangelistic tool to reach people, especially Catholics. And on the back of the book it said, it had under my picture it said, “Larry Tomczak may be ‘the nation’s first Roman Catholic lay evangelist’ according to Christianity Today.” So that was when I was given that type of “label” or identity, but then as I studied the scriptures, Ephesians chapter 4, and I watched how ministries functioned within the New Testament, I could see myself in two roles: the evangelist and the apostolic ministry to see the gospel go forth and churches get planted (Tomczak interview).

The witness of peers and friends was significant in my own life as I sought to know what was my calling as well. After I spoke at a campus gathering in 1978, a fellow student named Bradley White patted me on the back and said, “You might be the next Billy Graham.” Without getting illusions of grandeur, I realized that he was simply telling me that like Billy Graham, I was an evangelist.

### **Leadership Affirmation**

It is without exception that those that came to know that they were evangelists were told this by their pastors and leaders. Having someone in spiritual authority speak over them made a profound impact. In the conference for evangelists in Manila in July 2009, many of the evangelists referenced the fact that leaders helped them understand their calling.

Most of the evangelists that I have trained would testify that I told them they had the same gift I have. This was important because many of them traveled with me as an

apprentice because they knew they were evangelists and wanted to learn how to move in the gift more proficiently.

### **Bearing Fruit**

A person comes to know that he/she is an evangelist by simply bearing the fruit of an evangelist. Just as Jesus said, “You will know the tree by its fruit.” Before speaking of the evangelist in the book of Ephesians 4:11-12, Paul talks about the grace of God that accompanies the gift of God. “But to each of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it” (Eph. 4:7). This means that if Christ has given a person a gift, he has also given him/her the grace to function in it. The grace produces the fruit.

Wellington Boone, an African American evangelist and church planter in Atlanta, Georgia, says;

...I immediately went out and started winning people to Jesus...[but] I wasn't reproducing people to go out and do the same thing....You've created a culture that says I'm not only going to live it, I'm gonna reach out and give it away. And that to me is what Christianity is all about, and that's what I do. But I do it on a lot of different levels (Boone interview).

Anthony Walton, from Wellington, New Zealand, has been an evangelist and church planter in his home country as well as in many other nations, including North America. He continues to pioneer creative evangelistic works that turn into churches. When asked how he came to know he was an evangelist he replied, “By the fruit that came out of our church” (Walton, journal notes). The bearing of fruit, which means men and women being saved, again and again has been a conclusive marker that a person is an evangelist.

***An Evangelist's Weakness Might Be His/Her Greatest Weapon***

In searching for evangelists the word of the Lord to Samuel concerning David should be heeded, “Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7). There is no prototypical evangelist. God can choose anyone, for any reason. In fact, Paul reminded the Corinthians that “God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the strong” (1 Cor. 1:27). In this regard Spurgeon says, “These infirmities may be no detriment to a man’s career of special usefulness; they may even have been imposed upon him by divine wisdom as necessary qualifications for his peculiar course of service” (Spurgeon 1875:252).

David Ring, an evangelist with cerebral palsy, has been used mightily to win men and women to Christ. His weakness has become his main weapon. Many times I have talked with him and heard him ask the audience, “I have cerebral palsy, what’s your problem?”

Bob Weiland lost both legs in Vietnam and yet has used his weakness to speak to millions about faith in Christ. I am friends with him and have spent many days watching him turn the curiosity that comes from people staring at his legless body into an opportunity to preach Christ.

Jacob Aranza was born in the inner city of Houston and grew up in bars and nightclubs with a broken family and very little hope. His background has brought him before millions of teenagers to preach the gospel.

**Women as Evangelists**

At the Manila conference on Evangelism, Coney Reyes, an actress, is referred to by Steve Murrell as one of their prolific evangelists. The impact of her testimony to countless actors and actresses has helped reshape the landscape of that movie industry.

She has won many visible entertainers to Christ and has reproduced other evangelists like herself.

In Nashville there are several women who function as evangelists. Cindy Hollander served on the campus of the University of Tennessee for many years. She led countless men and women to Christ and now has moved to Nashville with her husband Steve and leads the outreach to the ten campuses in the Nashville area. Donna Lowrey, the wife of a Tennessee Titan football coach, Alan Lowry, is an evangelist. She consistently wins people to Christ and has no fear in approaching others. Observing her in many different contexts it is amazing to see the ease and confidence in which she shares Christ while loving people unconditionally. “God has given me a tremendous desire to love the human being” (D. Lowry interview, journal notes). Her love for people is the driving force behind a relentless evangelistic outreach to everyone with whom she comes in contact.

When Jesus appeared to the women first after the resurrection and told them to go and “tell my brethren,” he was confirming the reality that he can use women (as well as men) to be an evangelist. The reality is that women are leading the way in nations such as China and Korea where there is extraordinary growth in the church.

The 2000 Amsterdam gathering of evangelists rightly called for women to take their place as evangelists and help fulfill the Great Commission.

[R]emember, it was because of the women's faithfulness and their report that the disciples gathered together and heard Jesus give the Great Commission. If it will take women being faithful to the evangelistic call and commission of Jesus for the Holy Spirit to be more fully poured out on this world, then women must obey Jesus' call (Amsterdam 2000:364).

The North American Pentecostal Movement was birthed in Los Angeles in 1907 at a small church located on Azusa Street led by African-American evangelist, William Seymour. The impact of this move of God is still being felt today, over 100 years later.

Women were launched into ministry around the world. Seymour fully supported the ministry of women at the Mission and placed

...them in leadership positions, assigning portfolios in preaching, evangelism, church planting, and world mission. He provided them with ministerial credentials. Undoubtedly he took some criticism on this fact, but especially during the peak years of the revival (1906 – 1909), Seymour was explicit on this point. “It is the same Holy Spirit in the woman as in the man,” *The Apostolic Faith* reported. “We have no right to lay a straw in her way...” As a result, women were used extensively in a range of Mission activities, in preaching and exhortation, in prayer, in testimony meetings, in music, in developing evangelism and outreach strategy, and elsewhere (Mouw and Jacobsen 2006:152).

One woman impacted by the Azusa Street Revival was Aimee Simple McPherson.

She is known as the founder of the Four Square denomination with now over 50,000 churches.

Aimee Semple McPherson saw the gospel as the “ultimate story,” a timeless powerful fundamental drama. She had profound understanding of common people and their longings. Her early faith was forged in Salvation Army settings at the time when Evangeline Booth led the movement. With an ongoing commitment to the soul and the body, Salvation Army disciples understood the deep realities of human pain. Undoubtedly the years with them also taught McPherson that God used women as well as men to proclaim the gospel (Allison and Anderson 2004:64).

Later in the century, one of the largest churches in the World in Seoul, South Korea, grew to almost 800,000 members and did so by utilizing women as leaders and evangelists.

### **Laymen and Laywomen as Evangelists**

Steve Murrell spoke of how some of the most effective evangelists in Manila are those in the business world. In listing the names of the prominent evangelists in their prolific church many of them use their businesses as platforms for ministry (Murrell, journal notes). Anthony Walton from New Zealand, a successful evangelist and church

planter agreed that the business world was filled with many successful evangelists (Walton, journal notes).

Moody was a firm believer in God's strategy for employing the non-professional minister as an evangelist. He was one of those layman who was mightily used to evangelize and promoted that model of ministry throughout his life.

Through the YMCA, he gave other untrained people opportunities to serve as missionaries during the war. The overall effectiveness of lay people in ministry that he observed in the 1860s caused him to keep pushing this line throughout his life (Dorsett 2003:116).

The Scripture mentions that the Apostle Paul was a tentmaker and supported himself as he ministered and evangelized. This would make sense in light of no established congregation to support his work. My research showed that many fruitful evangelists were not full-time ministers in a professional sense. Some were actors, businessmen and women, professional athletes, housewives, and teachers.

### ***Training the Evangelist***

There are many programs and curriculums for training in evangelism, but not for those with the gift of evangelist.

No, I really don't know of any school that is deliberately training evangelists...in terms of training evangelists, you guys are the exception to the rule because you have a target audience, and planting churches on college campuses involves evangelism and involves reaching, in many cases, unchurched people (Wagner interview).

Although there are few examples of schools for evangelists, various aspects that pieced together could form a blueprint for such training have emerged from my interviews,



including character development, baptism in the Holy Spirit, motivation, and aspects of the message of the evangelist.<sup>1</sup>

### **Character is Critical**

The character or the lack thereof has certainly been the curse that seems to follow this gift of the evangelist. However, there have been far more evangelists that have been men and women of character and integrity. “Churches should recognize and use evangelists. If some so-called evangelists have been unworthy of the title, that does not mean that evangelists as a class have been discredited” (Whitsell 1949:123).

The importance of the gift is probably the reason for the spiritual conflict that surrounds the person with the gift. That is why many who are interviewed stressed the importance of training and covering for the protection of the person with the gift and the ones who will be affected by their ministry. “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Tim. 4:16). The impact of those that are authentic Christians is significant and the impact of those evangelists who fail morally is devastating.

The character of the evangelist should be seen as just as important as his or her gift....This has been the most criticized area of the evangelists life and ministry that a lack of integrity and truthfulness has become synonymous with the term evangelist. For instance if numbers of people that come to Christ are exaggerated that practice is known as “evangelistically speaking” (Evrlist interview).

When speaking of the ending of the long lasting revival in Brownsville, Florida, Tomczak, who had participated for several years in the training of students in Brownsville, spoke about the way the revival.

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<sup>1</sup> It is my hope that the principles for training evangelists that have emerged from this study will provide the foundation for a future training program for evangelists to be developed at Bethel. (See Appendix F.)

Well, what ended the revival there after like seven years, I asked Steve Hill this, point blank. I said, “Steve, what happened? How could this thing fall apart?” And he said, “Flesh, like all revivals. Flesh, Larry.” And he was not exempting himself. He was saying, “Look, all of us, we missed the mark” (Tomczak interview).

Areas of inner conflict eventually overtake a person’s outward visible ministry.

This is why an evangelist must be covered and connected to spiritual authority. This is why first and foremost an evangelist must be a disciple. Many destructive issues could be avoided if the evangelists were properly aligned with pastoral ministry and church life.

### **Motivation of the Evangelist**

Throughout the interview process the proper motivation was stressed by everyone. Evangelists, pastors, leaders, Christians *must* have a heart for the lost. No other motive can be higher except the motive of honoring God and worshipping him. Jesus said in a prayer to the Father, “I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do” (Jn. 17:4).

Tim Dilena has been a pastor in Detroit, Michigan, for sixteen years. He had many opportunities to take bigger churches in more affluent areas. Yet, he continues to focus on one of the poorest areas in America, the inner city of Detroit. He says two things, emphatically, “I am an evangelist” and “I will live in Detroit for the rest of my life.” His passion as a white man in the midst of a predominately African American area clearly shows his heart for people. There is no mistaking his primary motive of helping people know Christ (Dilina, journal notes).

Chuck Warnock is a pastor and evangelist in Texas. He has helped spearhead and evangelistic outreach to the college campuses of America called Campus Harvest. Chuck lost his teenage daughter in a car accident and said it brought him into a greater reality with eternity. and he has been unable to shake the sense of urgency to reach lost people for Christ (Warnock, journal notes).

Evangelists should not be competing for Christians to come to their meetings, but seeking the Lord for ways to reach out to the unchurched. Rainer and Rainer describe this attitude in *Essential Church*: “An essential church does not *compete* for sanctuary fillers. An essential church *battles* the dark powers for the hearts and minds of the lost” (2008:39). This quote is one of the most important thoughts I have read about putting perspective on the supreme task of reaching the lost rather than competing for the found.

We are also not simply growing our own organizations when we evangelize. This is another vital point in terms of our motives as evangelists. Evangelism must be seen in light of its heavenly value. Even as Jesus said that the shepherd leaves the ninety-nine and goes after the one sheep that is lost, we are to place that kind of priority on souls. As Van Engen says, evangelism will not be done in heaven, while worship and fellowship will take place there.

The Kingdom motivates us to do evangelism, because we want to see God’s honor and rule extended to all people. Evangelism is the central task of the church on earth, because it is the one function the church can do better here than in heaven. Worship and fellowship, these it will do better in heaven (Van Engen, Gilliland, and Pierson 1993:160-161).

Paul would say that he was willing to go to hell and be separated from Christ for the sake of his kinsmen according to the flesh (Rom. 9:3). That takes the grace of God to want to see people come to Christ so desperately that you would be willing to take their place in hell if they would repent and believe.

### **The Message of the Evangelist**

In the biblical section, the gospel was presented as the essence of the evangelist’s calling and focus. The message includes preaching the gospel in a way that accounts for both the biblical content, and the local context. In talking with the evangelists and leaders

in this research, it was a constant theme that each city and situation was very different and needed a specific strategy to take the timeless truths of Scripture and make them relevant to the context they were being directed to. Though most of the leaders I referenced were not versed in missiological language, they intuitively understood the need to contextualize their message. As Eddie Gibbs emphasized in our interview, “Tell stories, don’t just give out gospel formulas.” These stories need to be relevant to the audience that is being addressed (Gibbs interview).

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Shaw and Van Engen grasped the central challenge of the dynamic and tensions faced in communicating the gospel to a particular audience. They propose a “hermeneutical spiral” in describing the constant need to hold the message in one hand and be aware of the context in the other hand. I see this spiral as a picture of a “drill bit” that if functioning properly can penetrate the toughest of situations in any culture. “The spiral represents a contextualizing movement of the communicators from their understanding of God’s message to an encounter with the people and culture they seek to address with the gospel” (Shaw and Van Engen 2003:81).

As communicators we need to see ourselves not as the experts, nor as technicians, nor as religiously or theologically astute scholars. Rather, we need to cultivate the ability to interact as fellow travelers in this global context and allow the message to come out of that interaction (Shaw and Van Engen 2003:206-207).

The most effective evangelists are not just students of the Bible, but students of culture. This includes being a reader not only of spiritual and theological books but of current events, novels and cultural trends. An evangelist should have Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other to be able to interpret the times in light of Scripture and cultivate a relevant message to the listeners.

***Public Invitation to Come to Christ***

The image of the crusade evangelist like Billy Graham giving an invitation to walk down the aisle to accept Christ is still a stereotype associated with the ministry of evangelists. Yet giving people a chance to publicly confess their faith in Christ is the evangelist's way to demonstrate that the Holy Spirit is moving on the hearts of people to and drawing them to himself.

Churches can use an evangelist to give the invitation for salvation without preaching the primary message. James Lowe spoke about how at Perfecting Church in Detroit Michigan that Pastor Marvin Winans would have an evangelist ready to give the invitation regardless of what the sermon topic was. The church of over 5000 people grew yearly because of the recognition of the special grace on an evangelist's life (Lowe interview).

Steve Murrell utilizes an evangelist in the same way. In fact, after having this discussion with him he asked an evangelist to finish the meeting and the results were "amazing" according to Steve, people responded in a short period of time (Murrell, journal notes).

Looking at Scripture, Peter's message on the day of Pentecost lasted only a few minutes, yet 3000 people were saved. In fact, most of the key messages in Scripture that were evangelistic were relatively short—Stephen in Acts 7 and Paul at Athens in Acts 17 and to Agrippa in Acts 26.

***Evangelists Need Administrative Helpers***

Bob Sanders is teamed with an administrator named David Angulo who helps keep records of the progress and makes sure that the vision becomes a reality through strategic execution. He described their relationship and the significant numbers of people that have been impacted.

David is in the ministry. He's the one that can take and really put wheels to a vision....He asked me the question, "Bob, you have a goal to reach a million souls for the Lord in the peninsula, well how many of those have you reached?" The question was a good question, and yet it was almost an embarrassing question because we led a lot of people to the Lord, but we didn't know. So what we did is we set up this *Purple Book* discipleship program where we could actually calculate. We have a chart that they check off. David's got 36,000 names in his computer right now. And he knows all the names that are finished, and we don't record them until the group is finished. But we have 14,000 people finished. So he comes in as an administrator, I come more like a visionary. Kind of the tension between the visionary and the administrator (Sanders interview).

This is a very important point for anyone wanting to see the maximum impact from an evangelist. Pairing them with administrative help will produce exponential results. Again and again, the ineffectiveness of the evangelist can be traced back to simply putting them in a place where their weakness in area such as administration can tarnish and discredit their work and reputation.

### ***Evangelists Begin Sowing the Seed, Not Just Reaping the Harvest***

The evangelist knows that evangelism and discipleship are connected, therefore the evangelism process starts long before a person is saved. The relational connections are made and trust is established. People are taught to pray and read the Scriptures before any conversion is experienced. The hard work of seed sowing must be done by someone. As the Apostle Paul attested, "One sows, another reaps, but God gives the increase" (see 1 Cor. 3:6-7).

Franco Gennaro, an evangelist and church planter, feels that discipleship begins before someone is saved.

Well it started at Cloverland High School in Murfreesboro, TN going in and meeting the head football coach and beginning a Bible study, actually what I call a pre-salvation discipleship Bible study, understanding that discipleship doesn't start after a person gets saved. Many times it's before they even get saved (Gennaro interview).

He described another encounter that he called pre-salvation discipleship.

And so beginning the discipleship, pre-salvation discipleship is starting from ground level of the foundations of repentance, lordship, everything that we hold dear...I think the idea of evangelism in the past has been blow in, blow up and blow out, just bringing a message and that's it vs I'm going to take responsibility for these contacts that God has given me. He's given me some divine contacts. And seeing them go from contacts to being inquirers, and then inquirers to pre-disciples (Gennaro interview).

Tim Johnson, founding pastor and evangelist of Orlando World Outreach Center, felt that one of the most important aspects of his success as a church planter was to build a relationship with people and then begin to get them into the Scripture. As a result of doing Bible studies with them, the Word of God began to perform its work. Both he and Gennaro embrace this sense of the importance of seeding sowing in the form of pre-salvation Bible studies.

Anthony Walton echoed this truth by pointing to the results in Northern Baja Mexico with the use of *The Purple Book* Bible study. Over the last three years statistics show that the more they served the people and helped them with their physical needs, the more they gained access to them and were able to get them into Bible studies using *The Purple Book*, a foundational study guide to Scripture. Ron Lewis of New York also believes that relational bridges must be established and then the seed can effectively penetrate the human heart.

***The More an Evangelist Preaches the More His/Her Gifting Is Stirred***

The way that a gift is stirred or fanned into flame is through consistent use. By consistently realizing that you have the power of God in you, the love of God motivating you and the discipline to continually share the gospel in season and out of season. Bob Sanders spoke about how easy evangelism has become for him because of his constant use of the gift of evangelist in his life.

It will become natural when you start doing it. A friend of mine says when you're in function, the oil flows. And I tell you, when you're out there doing it, people just start coming to the Lord. God gives the grace, the anointing, gives everything that's necessary and all of a sudden people are turning to the Lord, and it's real, and the Holy Spirit is falling on their hearts, and He is bringing conviction. And it's not a difficult thing. I think the biggest thing to get over is the fact that most people can't believe it can be done. It's just like the 4-minute mile. As soon as somebody ran it one time and they knew it could be done, a whole bunch ran it. I think it's the same way with this (Sanders interview).

Evangelist Steve Hollander attested to this principle of the more you use the gift the stronger it gets. He stated that he becomes more effective when he speaks for several days and even weeks straight (S. Hollander, journal notes). Gregg Tipton leads students on ten day mission trips around the world. He believes in the power of those short mission moments to ignite the evangelistic callings in men and women and have that fire carried back to the places they came from.

### **Evangelists and Prayer**

The power of prayer is well documented as a necessity for the gifts of God to operate and the blessing of God to flow in any area of ministry, much less the ministry of the evangelist. In talking to the various leaders, prayer was a prominent aspect of their stories of evangelism or in describing the functioning of the gift of the evangelist.<sup>2</sup> The scope of this is so great that it could become a study in itself. The important thing to know is that the spiritual awakenings in America have been traced to prayer movements that have preceded them.

Today, a significant prayer movement has been going on in America that could signal another awakening on the horizon. The International House of Prayer, founded by Mike Bickle in Kansas City, Missouri, has conducted twenty-four-hour prayer meetings,

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<sup>2</sup> In the Bethel case study I discussed how prayer was instrumental in guiding and birthing the churches and outreaches that succeeded and the lack of prayer was directly connected to our failure and decline.



seven days a week for over ten years. These prayer meetings have been replicated all over America and now have resulted in over 200 houses of prayer on University campuses. Prayer alone will not be enough to accomplish the task given in the Great Commission, but the preaching of the gospel is made effective when undergirded with significant prayer.

### **An Evangelist Becomes More Effective with a Tool to Utilize**

The evangelist's ministry is greatly enhanced through the use of tools that aid in presenting the gospel in a fresh, relevant fashion. For instance, the Jesus Film produced by Campus Crusade has been seen by tens of millions and has been translated into hundreds of languages. According to the New York Times, *Jesus* is likely the most-watched motion picture of all time. The Jesus Film Project states that *Jesus* has been viewed almost 5.6 billion times (including repeat viewings).

For evangelists like Steve Hollander, the use of tools such as multi-media seminars that cover cultural issues that get people's attention, simply help draw the crowds for the evangelist to preach the gospel. It has been said that drawing a crowd is not a miracle, but what God does with the crowd is the miracle.

In 1984, I utilized a tool called *Rock and Roll—A Search for God*. This multi-media seminar produced by Eric Holmberg (1984) was a key instrument in drawing crowds to hear the gospel. There are creative people who can create films, posters, and websites.

### ***Utilizing the Evangelist***

It was through studying the Pauline pattern of pioneering that Larry Tomczak came to the sense of direction to launch out into church planting.

Yeah, I think what was happening was is we were studying the book of Acts, and I was identifying with the ministry of Paul. I noticed in Acts 13 that Paul was set apart for the work to which God has established him to do. And he then went forth and went into the region of Galatia and planted churches. And we as a local church and as leaders were feeling that is the multiplication process for the church. And were we reaching that place and who was going to be the one who was going to be a pacesetter pioneer? Everybody thought, well Larry it's you. Let's send you forth and let's see if we could multiply our so-called, like flagship church in DC area and do it a second place, and that would be in Cleveland. We did it and the church grew...(Tomczak interview).

### **Evangelists Can Infuse Evangelism into Small Groups**

Ron Lewis of Morning Star, New York, believes that the gift of the evangelist is an ongoing force that pumps evangelistic life into the pipe line of the churches small group structure.

We...make our number one value reaching the lost. That's on every piece of literature and everything that we do internally. It's not like we're out there reaching the public, the sinners, with hey, we want to win you. But that is our internal value that we tell every member, that this is why we're here...that means that we are going to do things differently. This is truly a value and something that we're focused on. And we want all of our small groups to be reflective of that value and to embrace that value. These people that we try to meet with and encourage, they are, I don't know what you would call it, I don't know if it's a gift, or their dedication, it seems to me that they are graced, that they're they ones who are bearing fruit of evangelism and love it and enjoy it, and spend a lot of time doing it (Lewis interview).

Steve Murrell described the role of the evangelist in producing a prolific small group ministry that continues to expand and multiply:

The predominant theme of the small groups became outreach and they began to structure their meetings with this in mind...As they multiplied small group leaders and consequently small groups, the church attendance began to directly grow...There is no question that the influence of the evangelist was felt by our small group leaders (Murrell interview, journal notes).

Murrell is primarily a pastor and a teacher but continues to champion the need for the evangelist in the local church.

### **Churches May Share an Evangelist**

Chuck Warnock, pastor of New Covenant Church in Longview, Texas, has been a leader in a church movement called “Church on the Rock.” He stated that the evangelist has been “underutilized” by American church. He recommended that three to six churches share an evangelist. He thinks that the churches can jointly pay the evangelist and keep them busy in instilling the culture of outreach into the churches. He called the evangelist as “revivalist” as “old-mind set.” The new mindset is where the evangelist works with the local church to build it on a regular basis (Warnock, journal notes).

### **Evangelists Work Better on a “Short Term” Mentality**

Many would acknowledge that having a proven evangelist that visited the church from time to time was more fruitful than hiring a full-time staff evangelist. Many evangelists saw themselves as “sprinters” rather than “marathon runners.” The evangelist seemed to agree that having a goal in view in terms of an outreach is more empowering for them. A short term goal from three days to three weeks, actually brings out the best in the evangelist. I know in my evangelistic ministry, a shorter time frame helped me focus better and accomplish more. Steve Murrell would agree that the short term “blast” from the evangelist would carry the church for months in an evangelistic direction and influence. Over the years, the periodic influence of the evangelist brought significant fruit (Murrell interview, journal notes).

Evangelists’ ministry can be maximized by giving them a starting time and a stopping time. Pastors are wired for the long haul, but an evangelist’s effectiveness can be diminished if the time frame for their ministry is indefinite. In my own ministry this has

been true. If I had a short time to minister in a city then every moment counted once I got to a city or nation. The results were better than if the period was indefinite. It is really the genius behind short term missions. In a short term mission situation you give an evangelist a team to work with and a definite time frame to operate.

### **Evangelists Who Are Led Are Not Limited by Finances**

In talking to pastors about the financial strain of trying to fit an evangelist into a church budget, Kevin York confirmed that by an evangelist adding fifty new people to the church that will account for about \$4000 a month in income to the church (York interview, journal notes). This means that a person can “fruit” their way into ministry, as I have heard for many years.

Darrell Rice of the Church of God conducted a church planting campaign in Atlanta in 1986-1988 called, “Love Atlanta.” During that time they planned to plant fifty churches a year over that two and a half year period. He said, “We got the best results where there was the least amount of money” (Rice interview, journal notes). The more money they gave a church planter, it seemed to lead to failure. “The person with the gift of the evangelist does not need permission to succeed. They say ‘if you can help me fine, but if not I’m going to do it anyway’” (Rice interview, journal notes).

### **Evangelists Understand the Importance of One Person Coming to Christ**

Just as Philip the evangelist left the multitudes in Samaria and went to a desert road to reach one person, so the evangelist knows the importance of one person being the key to a whole group of people, city, or even nation. Steve Murrell could point to one Filipino who was the catalyst to initiating the church plant in Manila. Brain Smith came

to Christ in an outreach in Arizona and became the catalyst for a movement on campus. Brian is very emphatic about the power of one person being saved and properly disciplined.

The woman at the well was used to bring an entire region to the Lord. The Apostle Paul was led to start the church in Philippi because of a vision of one man from Macedonia, saying “Come over here and help us” (Ac. 16:9). Larry Tomczak expressed this principle in talking about beginning a new church plant in Cleveland, Ohio.

One of the questions that I wrestled with at that time, and I’ve tried to address this with others that say how do you know where to go to plant other churches, well there’s no one answer to that, but one could be kind of a Macedonian call just as you see in Acts. Come over to Macedonia and help us. And there were two young men who were Assembly of God graduates from a bible school. A man named Steve Witt, and Bob Cohen, both of whom I have contact with to this day who visited me in the DC area, saw the church emerging, and said desperately, “Help us. We feel that we want to see a New Testament church established in the Cleveland area. We just don’t know what we’re doing.” So I took a few trips with some fellow leaders I was discipling in 1981 and realized that God was calling me to take this next step of faith. So over the course of about six months we got the team ready and I took about, I’d say about 10 others with me, one of whom became the senior leader of that church when after one year I left (Tomczak interview).

The crowds are important but the impact of one person becoming a leader is equally important. I often tell my team that there are approximately 220 nations in the world. To reach every nation, at least initially it will only take 220 leaders. One leader equals one nation. I have seen this many times over from New Zealand to New York.

### **Implanting a Culture of Evangelism**

Ron Lewis described how the church being planted through an evangelist planted the culture of evangelism and outreach in the church.

I knew that I had only one hope and that is to preach Christ and him crucified and stay on the teachings of Jesus, and that was what I inherited

as far as staying true to evangelism vs. starting too prematurely to just try to establish people on the teachings of the whole bible....And I think the seed that was planted initially has kept that same emphasis in place, and is the number one top priority and value because NY has a lack of churches....All we had basically was that weekly point of contact to preach the gospel. And we stayed true to that for the next 3 years, so for the first 4 years, that's all we did was preach the gospel. (Lewis interview)

The evangelist is the one gifted to help establish evangelism as a culture. It is a simple, yet very real impartation that takes place when this gift is present and effectively functioning.

### **The First 100 Sets the DNA**

Russ Austin of Southpointe Community Church believes that the condition of the core group is critical.

Our church began with several evangelists gathering the initial core of around 100 people. Because of how we began it has established the mindset of outreach that exists to this day almost 10 years later. The church has grown to over 1700 people and continues to grow through evangelism (Austin interview).

Kevin York also states that the first 100 people will set the tone and destiny of the church. His assistant, David Houston, also a church consultant, agreed (York, journal notes). Steve Murrell from Manila was very strong about the fact that the culture of the evangelism was established in the first 100-150 people (Murrell, journal notes).

Steve Hollander, a campus evangelist and a church planting evangelist who has helped birthed fourteen congregations in seven nations, states that the first 50-100 will set the tone for the church. Because evangelism is taking place from the start it becomes the normal Christian life for those that are a part of it. If they learn Christ in that way they don't have to unlearn as much (Hollander interview, journal notes).

Ron Lewis of Morning Star, New York, estimated that out of the first 100 in the church, fifty to seventy percent were converted to Christ. That produced a culture of

outreach that lasted intensely for the next four years. By injecting evangelism/discipleship DNA into a new church plant, we double the number of people in a new church. “After four years, a church plant averages eighty people. The average in an Every Nation church plant is 160” (Lewis, journal notes). This is vital information for church planters to grasp and not neglect the evangelist input early on. The tone that is set through those who are preaching and ministering is critical to the long term success and health of the church.

### **Evangelists Redirect Church People Back to Their Former Church**

This is very important in light of the fact of the first 100 people in the new church are important in terms of establishing the culture and DNA of the church. This point has been made by those who want to say that they are starting churches through evangelism and not simply transfer growth. “This is difficult when you are beginning a new church and believing God for new people,” said Steve Hollander. “Yet the foundational people are critical for the type of focus the new church will have” (S. Hollander interview).

Anthony Walton states bluntly, “Most new churches are simply sheep-stealing stations” (Walton interview, journal notes). If most of the growth is simply transfer growth then the practice of coming into a context and attracting Christians to join a new church gives “the illusion of progress.” Walton noted, “One of the major blockages to evangelism that can occur in starting a new church are the Christians that come out and divert the attention from the lost” (Walton, journal notes).

Dave Polus is an evangelist and pastor and is spearheading a church planting movement in Los Angeles. He was adamant about making sure that some people are sent back to their churches when attempting to join a church he leads.

I do a membership class every quarter, and we usually have about 20 people in each class, 15-20 people. I send about 25% of them back to their church because they leave with a bad attitude or a bad spirit, and I know it's not going to be a good fit for them in our church (Polus interview).

### **Evangelists Can Start a Church and Then Transition It to a Pastor**

According to Wagner, “Very few evangelists plant churches and turn them over to pastors” (Wagner interview). However, in the contexts I researched, this is precisely what happened.

So our churches are growing when there's an evangelist in-house, not traveling church to church...They gather and turn them over to pastoral people to care for them, and then we turn them over the teaching/discipling people to disciple them...and then we expect them to father another church. So we're producing sons that produce sons (Peria interview).

In Manila, the church was started by an evangelist and the pastor served as the secondary leader for a short season. In New York, the evangelist led for almost ten months while Ron Lewis served as the secondary leader. In that context, the process was able to take on a more gradual feel and the pastoral ministry emerged while the role of the founding evangelist decreased. The key in all the contexts was an inseparable unity between the evangelist and pastor that translated to the people. The people understood what was happening. There was no slight of hand. The evangelist had to be clear that they were in the leadership for a short time and when the church was firmly established the pastor would take over.

In Nashville, all six of the satellite congregations from Bethel that the evangelist helped start were turned over to pastors who lead them. The time frame varied from three months to three years (see the case study in Chapter 7).

Larry Tomczak started a church in Washington, D.C. and took almost five years to transition it to a pastor. He then moved to Cleveland and transitioned the new church



there within a year. Anthony Walton, an evangelist, put it bluntly, “Evangelists need to start churches and then get out of the way.” He went on to describe how after pastoring a church and doing many things that he was ready as evangelist to start churches (Walton interview, journal notes).

### **The Evangelist Can Be a Pastor**

Evangelists can also pastor churches. Myles McPherson is such a leader and has a large staff in San Diego that helps him perform and oversee all the related services and ministries that are necessary in a church. Their ministry recorded over 7000 decisions for Christ in 2008 and has goals for more in 2009. With sixty different outreach departments in the church, he constantly motivates and holds the department leaders accountable to reach their evangelistic outreach goals.

Darrell Rice of the Church of God has been a pastor and church planter for over thirty-five years. He spear-headed the “Love Atlanta” campaign to plant churches in Atlanta in 1986 and 1987. He stated that evangelists make fruitful leaders of churches. “Our most effective pastors are evangelists” (Rice interview, journal notes).

Steve Hill is an evangelist that led a series on evangelistic meetings in Brownsville, Florida. The meetings went on for over two years for several times a week with thousands of people attending and thousands being converted and revived.

We have a vision of planting thousands of churches...I want people to get saved in the church, that's the evangelistic thrust in me, alter calls, they get saved, and then I want to disciple them through the process in the church, and then get 'em out in the marketplaces, on the streets, doing the work... I'm equipping thousands of people to be little Steve Hills, if you will. They go out there and the do the work of the ministry (Hill interview).

Over and over I have seen evangelists with a gift of leadership function effectively as pastors of churches. I have pastored a church myself for ten years and feel that being an Evangelist has been a huge asset for me.

### **The Church Does Not Have to be Perfect to Turn Over, Just Healthy**

A hindrance to turning the church over is the sense that there are too many needs and the need for more time to get the church “perfected.” The reality is there will be significant needs in any setting and the transition to a pastor will actually help solve the needs that are still evident in a new church.

...I had an epiphany experience while jogging in Cleveland on a kind of fact-finding trip, and I felt the Lord gave me this nudge, or this word in my heart: “You don’t, in leaving, you don’t need a perfect church, simply a healthy church.” That was a defining moment for me that it would be ok to entrust the leadership to CJ and go forth with a team, I did not go alone just with my wife and children, I took a team with me to plant a church and this time it was in Cleveland (Tomczak interview).

An effective church planting team can utilize this strategy of the evangelist beginning the work and then turning it over to a pastor. The needs that emerge in a normal church context will be helped by the presence of someone with these kinds of gifts.

### **Evangelists Minister Boldly**

Because the evangelist is gifted to boldly go where others will not go, they are more likely to confront those in darker circumstances. Some of the most dramatic testimonies that you will hear result from an evangelist daring to speak boldly. Those who are the recipient of a dramatic conversion become compelling witnesses if not evangelists themselves. Asher Intrater, raised as practicing Jew, graduated from Harvard in 1974 and traveled to Latin America very disillusioned and searching for the meaning of life. He described how he met the Lord through the bold witness of a woman evangelist:

When I was there learning Spanish, a woman started telling me about the gospel for the first time, straight and as soon as she started talking I could understand everything she was saying, instantly. I had studied some and I had a little bit of conversational Spanish, but I thought how can I

understand everything she's saying, and she's talking to me about Jesus... I jumped up and said real loud three words, is God real? When I said that, the power of God hit the building we were in. The whole building began to shake; everybody ran out of the building yelling terremoto and all that. I said wait a minute, I ask God if He's real and the building shakes you know something's up. I was totally, totally transformed, instantly. Just went out the next morning and started preaching on the streets. I didn't know what else to do. I had nowhere to go, so I figured I was going to spend the rest of my life preaching the gospel in South America (Intrater interview).

Mike Watkins was a physics major at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina. He was saved through the ministry of evangelist Steve Hall and was impacted both before and after his conversion by the bold witness of evangelists. Watkins describes his encounters and their impact:

I was saved through an evangelist....The men that helped disciple me dragged me to the center of the campus and threw me up to preach. Six months before I was saved I was coming out of a bar and saw an evangelist preaching boldly and it was like I was being struck by lightning. I didn't even hear what he was saying but I was struck by the Spirit of God. I ended up taking my studies in Russian to Russia and met an evangelist who demonstrated through his boldness what was in my heart (Watkins interview).

Watkins became an evangelist and church planter and is pioneering churches now in the Ukraine.

### **Evangelists Can Produce Dramatic Results**

After being converted in Central America, Asher Intrater became an evangelist and church planter in America and described how God used him to reach people and plant congregations.

I went to Baltimore Hebrew University, and I got a Master's degree there. I told them I'm coming there to learn, not to preach. I want to learn, so I said I'm not going to hide who I am; I'm not here to push on other people; I'm just going to be here. Either receive me or not. At the end when they

realized they were about to give me a degree, it was a little sticky. I did get to share a lot because many people would talk to me and ask, but I wasn't coming as a missionary; I was coming as a student....The whole movement grew to grass roots, supernaturally, independently, growing in hundreds of congregations, tens of thousands of Jewish people getting saved.

This spontaneous expansion of the church was ignited by the consistent, bold witness of men and women like Asher who would not stop speaking about what they saw and heard.

### ***Summary of Findings***

In summary I defined eighty-eight aspects from the interview process and reduced these to the primary marks presented in this chapter. These marks were compared with the biblical principles to compare and contrast how the evangelist of today can best function to advance the kingdom of God. I tested the validity of these marks by using a survey to ask leaders at various levels in church to respond and verify these marks.

## CHAPTER 9

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter answers my final research question: What is the role of the evangelist in growing North American churches? And, what impact does the evangelist have in planting new churches and expanding existing ones in North America? In light of the answers presented by those I interviewed, and the application of the emerging marks of an evangelist as expressed in the Bethel case study, there are definite changes that I believe need to be made by the church in North America. Having noted the marks of the evangelist, the church in North America needs to promote and utilize the ministry of the evangelist in order to realize a new expansion movement that brings people back into the church. I conclude this dissertation with fifteen conclusions based on my research and divided in three areas: understanding, responsibility and outcome. I present these along with recommendations that reflect both the biblical and cultural understandings of the evangelists gifting.

#### *Understanding the Marks of the Evangelist*

My research reveals the errors in teaching by the church in North America that have resulted in misunderstandings about the gift of evangelist. By identifying the marks of an evangelist, I can reach five specific conclusions about this understanding: (1) there is not a gift of evangelism; (2) there is a severe lack of evangelist training; (3) the practical role of evangelism is missing; (4) the gift of evangelist will operate in any church; and (5) there is the need to distinguish between revivalist and evangelist.

### **There is Not a Spiritual Gift of Evangelism**

In this dissertation I define “evangelist” as the ministry gift given by the Holy Spirit to men and women to preach the gospel to unbelievers and to equip other believers to do the same, while leading the entire community of faith (to which they are connected) to expand their borders as well as plant new churches. One of the factors that adds to the confusion about the gift of the evangelist is the mistaken notion that there is a spiritual gift of evangelism. The consequences of this are many. First of all, if evangelism is a gift then those without that gift are not responsible to share their faith or be responsible to evangelize. Second, it obscures the role of the real gift of the evangelist. Since everyone is called to be a witness and is responsible for obeying Christ’s commission in Matthew 28:19, the lack of obedience to this could stem from the failure to be clear. The evangelist is called and gifted by God to empower all believers to be faithful to the Lord’s command.

My recommendation is for the clear biblical teaching regarding the evangelist to be explained to the church and for the notion of a “gift of evangelism” to be corrected by those who write and teach on the subject. As this correction is made, the impact should be felt in a greater fruitfulness of both the evangelist and the Christian witness.

### **Misunderstanding of What an Evangelist Is Results in Lack of Training Evangelists**

When it is unclear as to what an evangelist is then it is understandable why more evangelists are not being trained. The clearer the picture of what an evangelist is the more training and mentoring will arise, and hence more evangelists. The one-on-one training of a person who shows signs of having the gift of evangelist is only a start; there needs to be programs and training established to ensure the North American church grows through the work of the evangelist.

My recommendation is that every church needs to have access to some type of evangelistic training for both evangelist and for the average believer. I am developing a training program out of this study that is based in Nashville in conjunction with several of the evangelists and leaders interviewed in this paper. We have conducted several training sessions that have been more field work than classroom study. It is vital that any training of evangelists be conducted beyond the church walls. Christ's training of the Twelve took place in the heat of battle, in the midst of human need, and around those with enormous turmoil and suffering in their lives. The mistakes made by the original disciples were corrected as they ministered and did not cause the Lord to retreat and abandon their on the job training.

### **The Practical Role of the Evangelist Is Missing**

This is the testimony of many of the leaders I interviewed as well as the observation after thirty years of ministry. Churches have full-time pastors, teachers, worship leaders, youth pastors, information technology experts, janitors, choir directors, missionaries, administrators, and secretaries, but few evangelists. In fact, no one that was interviewed had a recognized evangelist on staff. All of those who were evangelists had other job descriptions and titles.

My recommendation is that churches who say that evangelism is a significant value they embrace should have recognized evangelists on staff. By identifying them and promoting their ministry, they will be more effective in equipping the people of God to evangelize as well as reproduce evangelists.

**The Gift of Evangelist Will Operate in Any Church Regardless  
of Structure or Church Government**

Because the gift of evangelist will operate in any church regardless of structure or church government, I feel the debate about organic versus hierarchical, missional or emergent, apostolic or traditional, is not as important as recognizing the importance of preaching the gospel and recognizing the role of the evangelist to empower all believers to preach and lead to them out of the church walls. Usually the debate about why the North American church isn't growing digresses into a debate over structure or form and misses the real issue of God-given principles and gifts that should be the constants amidst the many variables that exist in the way ministry is conducted.

It would be revolutionary for the various theological camps to express the way the evangelist operates within their structural framework. My recommendation is that when conducting evangelism training or in dealing with church growth models, the gift of the evangelist needs to be defined, embraced, and empowered to move throughout the organization.

**There Is a Need to Distinguish between a Revivalist  
and an Evangelist**

To not know the difference between a revivalist (reviving believers) and evangelist (reaching the lost) leads to perpetually stirring the saved and never engaging the sinner.

My recommendation is that churches make this distinction between revivalist and evangelist. In so doing the church will not think that the work of evangelism has been done when only the believers themselves have been revived and encouraged.



### ***Responsibilities of the Evangelist***

My research further reveals the responsibilities of evangelist. Five specific conclusions are presented in this respect: (1) the evangelist leads the church beyond her walls; (2) makes the church missional; (3) primarily preaches the gospel; (4) must ensure new believers are properly grounded in God's Word; and finally (5) gather the harvest of souls.

### **The Evangelist Leads the Church beyond the Church Walls**

If there is one central trait of the evangelist that must be remembered it is that the evangelist leads the church beyond her own walls. The evangelist will strategize as well as improvise in order to bring the gospel to new people and new places and will not be able to confine him- or herself in the walls of the church protecting and maintaining the status quo. There is a compelling sense of urgency to go.

My recommendation is that the church should have an evangelistic calendar. Minimally, outreaches should be scheduled and budgeted for. Materials, tools, training, and overall prayer should be factored in on a regular basis. There should also be contingency plans made for when there is a breakthrough or open door that an evangelist will create. We have taken the names of all those who have attended our services in a given year and placed them in a program that works in conjunction with Google Earth. All of the addresses show up on a map of our region and the places where people are coming from are clearly seen. This can be the start of practically planning to reach out beyond the church walls.

We also have several grids to evaluate where outreaches should take place. There is a grid that shows where the various ethnic groups are located around the city. There are certain neighborhoods that have high concentrations of immigrants that can be targeted for the gospel. There is also a demographic grid that we look at that shows where there

are high concentrations of young people ages 18-35. This group must be targeted as well since they are described as the age demographic that is missing from most churches.

### **The Evangelist Is the Gift that Makes the Church Missional**

With all the books, articles, and messages on the need for the church to be missional, the glaring omission concerns how this can happen. Just creating a new, cool word will not motivate or empower the people of God to finally get the point and begin to share their faith. The universal problem of mobilizing the church to be missional and to share their faith will have a greater chance to take place if the God-given gift to make that happen is recognized and is operating within the local church. The early church was certainly a missional one and the believers met publicly and from house to house. The spontaneous expansion of the church took place because the five fold gifts of Ephesians 4:11-12 were operational.

My recommendation is that missional church authors, leaders, and spokespersons evaluate their efforts and come to conclusion whether their calls for the church to be missional have made any progress. By examining the evidence for the continuing slide in conversion growth as opposed to transfer growth will provoke them to find the causes of the lack of real growth and implement the biblical patterns rather than sociological or pragmatic answers.

### **The Evangelist's Primary Responsibility Is to Preach the Gospel**

This may seem obvious but it cannot be overstated. The role of the evangelist is to clearly portray Christ as crucified. The gospel must be preached so thoroughly that there is true conversion. If the gospel is preached, people will be saved and the true church as Van Engen describes it will grow. Surveys have shown that many Christians do not

believe that Jesus Christ is the exclusive Savior and that there are other paths and other religions that can lead a person to God. If there is no real eternal judgment, which is called one of the foundations of the faith mentioned in Hebrews 6:1-2, then salvation is optional and the urgency of the need to evangelize is lost.

My recommendation is that training of the evangelist should begin with a thorough explanation of the gospel message. This should emphasize why Christ is the exclusive Savior of the world and the only path to the Father. Regardless of styles for structure the gospel is the ultimate unchanging aspect of the ministry. The evangelist should be asked to preach the gospel in church services periodically and keep the message to twenty minutes so that ample time can be given to the altar call or invitation. The evangelist must also be trained to tell better stories that bring the gospel message in a fresh relevant way. It would be beneficial to attend the annual National Story Tellers Convention where “story tellers” from around the world have fifteen minutes to tell their stories.

### **Evangelists Must Ensure New Believers Have Strong Biblical Foundations**

The evangelist must not be content to have hands raised and mere professions of faith made. There must be a strong righteous foundation laid of repentance and faith, baptism and laying on of hands, resurrection from the dead and eternal judgment (Heb. 6:1-2). The evangelist must not give someone a false sense of hope that simply praying a prayer and asking Jesus into his or her heart is all there is to the gospel. Ample time must be given to fully preach the gospel and to call people to bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance.

My recommendation is that the evangelist give a “second invitation.” After an evangelistic call for salvation, the inquirers who respond should be taken aside and

examined first to see if they understand what they heard. Then a restatement of the basic gospel message of repentance and faith should be preached. Once this foundation is clearly in place there can be confidence that the person is not temporary but is a true convert. Even as the Old Testament had the book of Deuteronomy, which meant a second hearing of the law, there needs to be a second hearing of gospel to make sure that the person is making a valid commitment.

Another recommendation in this area is to have the person involved in a foundational Bible study. We use *The Purple Book*, which is a twelve-step program that emphasizes the teachings mentioned in Hebrews 6:1-2. When someone expresses the desire to follow Christ they should immediately be given a chance to immerse themselves in the Word of God. One of the marks of a new baby is their hunger for milk, and we can tell if there is real hunger or not by their response to engage in study and meditation in the Scriptures.

### **The Evangelist Is to Gather**

The evangelist is a preacher of the gospel first and a gatherer second. Jesus' constant references to the harvest suggest that the harvest must be gathered. The other metaphor used in this regard is fishing. Jesus said that he would make us fishers of men and women. Fishing in the time of Christ involved the use of a net which was thrown into the sea and a tool for gathering a large amount of fish. While we celebrate one soul repenting and turning to Christ, we should realize that God loves all people and wants to gather multitudes not just individuals.

My recommendation is that evangelists be able to demonstrate their effectiveness by the new groups of people who have come to faith in Christ. Individuals that come to Christ will lead you to others that they know and there will be small people movements that result. An evangelist that is on staff should be accountable for this kind of ministry

grace. The most effective way this happens is for a fruitful evangelist to mentor new evangelists and show them how to do this. Church planting evangelists always reproduce themselves in others. Just as a restaurant or business has a strategic plan for growth and expansion, so should the church.

### ***Method of Operation of an Evangelist at Work***

Finally, my research revealed the method of an evangelist at work. Five specific conclusions are presented in this respect: (1) the evangelist will take time to break new ground and gather new people (this will not just be transfer growth); (2) will use every legitimate, righteous, and creative means to proclaim the gospel; (3) will follow the leading of the Spirit and divine instinct in making decisions; (4) will work with a team, including the pastor; and (5) will help identify and train new evangelists for the ministry.

### **The Evangelist Must Take Time to Break New Ground and Gather New People**

The evangelist's effectiveness is maximized through a consistent effort to penetrate the barriers in new territory for Christ. Over the years, when there have been nightly meetings for an evangelist that last for two to four weeks, the momentum builds for an evangelistic breakthrough. Very little happens in just a Sunday service. The evangelist is like the sprinter and the pastor like the marathon runner. The short burst that the evangelist brings is like the booster rocket that lifts the missile out the gravitational pull of the atmosphere. The evangelistic booster must be given the time to be effective.

My recommendation is that a church should plan for an outreach in a new part of the city with an intense time of input from an evangelist. A two-to-three week campaign should be conducted with a team of disciple makers prepared to minister to those who respond.

### **The Evangelist Must Use Every Legitimate, Righteous, and Creative Means**

Closely connected to the preceding conclusion is the principle of using creative tools to achieve the evangelistic breakthrough by helping to draw the unreached. The universal consensus from those I interviewed about the effective use of the evangelist is that a tool such as a film, multi-media seminar on a relevant cultural topic or simply a creative topical advertising campaign will greatly aid the efforts. The use of internet strategies as well as networking through social networks such as Facebook help spread the word in a viral sense and draw people so that the gospel can be presented. Drawing a crowd is not the miracle. Many times it comes down to hard work as well as wisdom and creativity. The real miracle is what happens to the crowd when the power of the gospel is presented.

I recommend that a creative team be assembled in a local church that desires to reach the unreached. They should not only think about advertising campaigns to promote the evangelist and their outreach, but also help develop a tool to enhance the message.

### **The Evangelist Follows the Leading of the Spirit**

There is a leading of the Spirit that is a part of the evangelist's calling. Just as there are serendipitous ways that a person is led to witness to others, there is also the same kind of leading when it comes to starting congregations or reaching larger people groups. The mystery is how the Lord leads a person. God's call is as unique as the way he saves them and calls them into service.

My recommendation is that evangelists have an opportunity to be sent out in an entrepreneurial fashion and given the freedom to go where the Lord leads them. There could be a geographical assignment such as breaking a large metropolitan area down into quadrants and assigning an area to an evangelist. Just as Jesus sent out the seventy-two (Lk. 10:1) and they came back and reported what happened, evangelists will bring back

the testimonies of the new doors that have been opened and inspire the people of God to advance. Evangelists must be allowed like those in the 1800s under Charles Spurgeon to have places to preach without the pressure of something happening in a certain time frame. Some areas of a city or nation may take longer for a breakthrough to happen and the evangelists must not grow weary in well doing.

### **The Evangelist Needs a Team**

The gift of the evangelist functions best within the context of a team. The best possible connection is with a pastor or more specifically a disciple maker. The evangelist functioning in their gift will usually have the leadership in a new church plant or work for a season, but slowly transition the leadership to the pastor. The exception is when the evangelist is called to be the senior leader. Regardless, the evangelist must be properly connected to the necessary complimentary gifts.

I recommend that the evangelist and pastor be overseen by some type of covering. This covering can serve as a mediator in case of conflict or adjustment in creating the proper chemistry for effective ministry.

### **The Evangelist Helps Identify and Train New Evangelists**

The evangelist is the best resource in terms of birthing and identifying those with an evangelistic calling. The work of the evangelist has been described as equipping the saints to evangelize and lead the church beyond the church walls into the harvest field.

I recommend that the evangelist be responsible to find others with the same gift. By charging the evangelist with this stewardship and the evangelist embracing the call to do this, there will be the necessary motivation and accountability to produce a continual stream of new evangelists. Spurgeon's methods should be reexamined today by church

planters and seminaries alike. There must be more of an emphasis on training evangelists, not just ministers.

### ***Conclusion***

When taken as a whole, these fifteen conclusions present a picture of an unhealthy North American church because the gift of evangelist is not being properly recognized and believers are not being trained and equipped to be effective witnesses. My research has identified problems and weak areas that I believe can be corrected and will offer healthy growth for the church to usher in the turnaround Rainer and Rainer suggest, “With nearly four thousand churches closing their doors permanently each year, a turnaround is imperative” (Rainer and Rainer 2008:21). My central area of research has been the gift of the evangelist and the sense that this gift is necessary in order for the church to truly be missional and effectively reach people, cities, and nations for Christ.

For generations, evangelism has been referred to as a move of God. We need to not just speak of a move of God but a move of God’s people. While the intention is to give God the glory as men and women come to salvation, it can so deemphasize human involvement as to lessen the urgency and responsibility the church has to reach the world. McGavran referred to people movements when he spoke of massive response in evangelism. To correct our language is to help correct our thinking and see the necessary motivation return to the church for the goal of reaching the world for Christ.

I am reminded as an evangelist that I have a story to tell when I preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. I must tell it truthfully, passionately, convincingly, and relevantly. I don’t believe it is a coincidence that one of the earliest memories I have of church as a child is a song I learned in Sunday School, at the J.J. White Memorial Presbyterian Church in McComb, Mississippi. It is amazing that after all these years of ministry and study, the



words of this song still embody the ultimate task of my life as a follower of Christ. The song is entitled “We’ve a Story to Tell” by H. Ernest Nichol (1896).

We’ve a story to tell to the nations that shall turn their hearts to the right.  
A story of truth and mercy, a story of peace and light.  
For the darkness shall turn to the dawning, and the dawning to noonday bright.  
And Christ’s great Kingdom will come on earth, a Kingdom of love and light.

The Holy Spirit has been poured out upon God’s people. He has sent his Word, given us authority through his name and instructed us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He has also given us gifts to accomplish this task. By promoting and utilizing this crucial gift, the church will hasten the completion of the task to bring the gospel to the world and to see new people movements result from the work of the evangelists in our midst and the entire body of believers that are mobilized into the harvest field by the evangelists ministry.

## APPENDIX A

### LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

	<b>Person Interviewed</b>	<b>Church or Organization</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Ministry Role</b>
1	Austin, Russ	Southpoint Community Church	Jacksonville, FL	Pastor
2	Bonasso, Phil	Storyteller's Church	Irvine, CA	Pastor
3	Boone, Wellington	Wellington Boone Ministries	Atlanta, GA	Evangelist/Church Planter
4	Caplin, John	Consultant	Vancouver, BC	Church Planting Consultant
5	Dilena, Tim	Revival Tabernacle Church	Detroit, MI	Pastor
6	Evrlist, Dale	New Song Church	Franklin, TN	Pastor
7	Gennaro, Franco	Victory Church	Valdosta, GA	Pastor/Evangelist
8	Gibbs, Eddie	Fuller Theological Seminary	Pasadena, CA	Professor
9	Green, Darrell	Youth Life Ministries	Washington, DC	Evangelist
10	Hill, Steve	Steve Hill Evangelistic Association	Dallas, TX	Evangelist
11	Hollander, Steve	Bethel World Outreach	Nashville, TN	Evangelist
12	Hollander, Cindy	Bethel World Outreach Center	Nashville, TN	Evangelist
13	Intrater, Asher	Revive Israel	Jerusalem, Israel	Pastor
14	Jamerson, Dave	Traders Point	Indianapolis, IN	Evangelist
15	Johnson, Tim	Orlando World Outreach Center	Orlando, FL	Pastor/Evangelist
16	Juster, Dan	Tikkun Ministries	Jerusalem, Israel	Pastor
17	Kreider, Larry	Dove Christian Fellowship		Pastor/Evangelist
18	Lewis, Ron	Morning Star	New York City	Pastor/Evangelist
19	Lowe James	Perfecting Church	Detroit, MI	
20	Lowrey, Allen	Bethel World Outreach Center	Nashville, TN	Evangelist
21	Lowry, Donna	Bethel World Outreach Center	Nashville, TN	Evangelist

	<b>Person Interviewed</b>	<b>Church or Organization</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Ministry Role</b>
22	Luce, Ron	Teen Mania	Garden Valley, TX	Evangelist
23	McPherson, Myles	The Rock Church	San Diego, CA	Pastor/ Evangelist
24	Murrell, Steve	Every Nation	Manila, Philippines	Pastor
25	Polus, Dave	Every Nation	Los Angeles, CA	Pastor/ Evangelist
26	Rice, Darrell	Church of God	Atlanta, GA	Pastor
27	Sanders, Bob	Baja Christian Ministries	Los Angeles, CA	Evangelist
28	Schwartz, Brian	Living Faith Church	Broomfield, CO	Pastor
29	Smethurst, Philip	Overland Missions	Zambia	Evangelist
30	Smith, Brian	Hope Christian Church	Tempe, AZ	Pastor
31	Stetzer, Ed	LifeWay Research	Nashville, TN	Teacher
32	Tomczak, Larry	Bethel World Outreach Center	Nashville, TN	Evangelist
33	Wagner, C. Peter	Global Harvest Ministries	Colorado Springs, CO	Apostle
34	Walton, Anthony	Global Tribe	Wellington, New Zealand	Evangelist/Church planter
35	Warnock, Chuck	First Covenant Church	Long View, TX	Pastor
36	Watkins, Mike	Every Nation	Ukraine	Evangelist/Church planter
37	York, Kevin	Every Nation	Nashville, TN	Church planter

## **APPENDIX B**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHURCH LEADERS ON THE EVANGELIST IN THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTEXT**

1. What is your gift and calling?
2. How would you describe the spiritual condition of the church in America?
3. Describe the role of the evangelist in the local church.
4. Do you see the evangelist as important?
5. Do you have an evangelistic strategy in your ministry context?
6. If you are an evangelist, how did you come to know that?
7. Were you trained as an evangelist?
8. How do you train evangelists in your context?
9. Do you use evangelists in your small group structure?
10. Do you utilize evangelists in church planting?

## APPENDIX C

### AN URGENT CRY

by J. Lee Grady

*Charisma Magazine* Dec. 2007

*A group of charismatic ministers have called on American Christians to reclaim the neglected task of soul-winning.*

The American church knows how to design functional buildings, develop sophisticated programs, utilize technology and preach to the proverbial choir. But we have forgotten the fundamental task of soul-winning—and as a result churches are closing at a record rate and more and more young people are leaving the faith.

That dire assessment of America's spiritual condition was proposed last week in Orlando, when 50 national and international evangelists convened for an honest, 24-hour strategy session held at Charisma magazine's headquarters. The participants included South African revivalist Rodney Howard-Browne, veteran street preacher Scott Hinkle and German crusade evangelist Reinhard Bonnke.

Rice Brooks, pastor of Bethel World Outreach Center in Nashville, Tenn., and founder of the Every Nation church-planting movement, organized the Orlando gathering because he believes the charismatic segment of the church has become distracted from its evangelistic mission.

"The statistics don't lie," Brooks says. "America has been described as a post-Christian nation. The urgency of the hour demands that we recapture the role of the evangelist for the planting of new churches and the equipping of churches to mobilize believers for ministry."

Brooks recently teamed up with charismatic author and pastor Larry Tomczak to form ICE-CAP, the International Center for Evangelism, Church-Planting and Prayer, which just opened its offices in Nashville. ICE-CAP's mission is to help train a new generation of evangelists and mobilize churches for strategic evangelism efforts.

Brooks introduced Tomczak as "the only guy I know who still gives out personal tracts." Tomczak then told the story of how, on the previous night, he led a hotel desk clerk to salvation after giving him his printed testimony.

In three sessions held over two days, the leaders outlined several reasons why evangelism has waned. They include:

1. A lack of spiritual zeal in our churches. "**Soul-winning must be a passion, not a program,**" one attendee said. The renewing power of the Holy Spirit is the key to shifting our churches into a place of contagious faith.

2. A spectator mentality. Many Christians have been deceived into believing that evangelism is the work of paid clergy or itinerant specialists. Said one evangelist: **“You don’t limit tithers to those who have ‘a gift of giving,’ do you? Everybody tithes. In the same way, everybody is supposed to be doing evangelism.”** Broocks, Hinkle and others made it clear that the primary role of the evangelist is not to conduct meetings but to train and equip all believers to win souls.

3. A cultural disconnect. Hispanic leader Samuel Rodriguez pointed out that a large segment of the millennial generation has abandoned church because they feel it isn’t relevant to their lives. As long as the church remains mired in superficial religiosity, we won’t reach young people—who crave authenticity and want to apply the gospel to their world.

4. An increasingly secular culture. Vincent Esterman, who has done street evangelism for decades in France and Australia, believes the United States would do well to study how Christian faith has waned in Europe. Americans will most likely face similar hostilities in our culture, since universalism and atheism are growing here.

5. Tensions between evangelists and pastors. Eric Cowley of Global Focus Ministries spoke for many in the room when he shared that many pastors feel threatened by evangelists and don’t want to share local church resources with them. At a time when the role of apostles and prophets has been reclaimed in charismatic circles, the role of the evangelist has been marginalized.

6. The church’s credibility crisis. **Recent religious scandals, incessant fundraising on Christian television and reports of televangelists living in opulence have produced increased skepticism about preachers’ motives.** Many of the leaders in Orlando were incensed by the blatant moral and ethical abuses occurring in our movement. Said one leader in a moment of candor: “If I see one more telethon on Christian television I’m going to puke.”

7. Bad theology. Broocks pointed out that American Christianity has, at times, morphed into an errant “virus” that has had a negative impact on countries where it has been exported. **“We preach a gospel that offers faith without repentance, grace without the fear of God and destiny without discipleship,”** he said.

8. A poorly defined mission. Many churches no longer understand what evangelism is. Missionary mobilizer David Shibley offered the group a succinct definition, borrowed from his days in Southern Baptist seminary: “Evangelism is sharing the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit with a view to bringing people to repentance and faith in Christ so that they might serve him in the church.”

In the first evening session, after a time of spontaneous prayer, Bonnke laid his hands on all the participants and asked God for a fresh anointing of evangelism on the American church. This humble man who has led 47 million people to Christ (and once saw 2 million make decisions for salvation in one meeting in Nigeria) told the group that this

anointing has nothing to do with him. “I am not giving you my anointing when I lay hands on you. Jesus is the one who anoints you,” he said.

As Bonnke laid his hands on my head, I stood in the gap for all of us. I believe there is indeed a new grace available to the American church in this hour. I hope we are ready for the changes it will bring. **When the spirit of evangelism grips our hearts, it will totally reorder our priorities, interrupt our schedules, mess up our church programs, destroy our religiosity, challenge our timidity and burn up our selfishness.**

If you are willing to embrace that anointing without placing conditions on it, please ask for it now.

**APPENDIX D**

**SURVEY OF THE EVANGELIST IN THE NORTH  
AMERICAN CHURCH TODAY**

**Full Name \* (\* Required)**

**I give my permission for this information to be used by Rice Brooks. \***  
(Fuller Theological Seminary Research)

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

**Survey:**

On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree) please rank each the following statements:

**An evangelist understands the value of one convert as well as ministering to the crowd. \***

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

**An evangelist is a builder who helps lay foundations of true discipleship. \***

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

**An evangelist can be a woman or a man. \***

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

**An evangelist is an equipper who trains believers to reach non-believers. \***

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree



**An evangelist functions in concert with apostles and pastors. \***

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

**An evangelist is the catalyst who makes the church missional. \***

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

**An evangelist is a pioneer, leading believers beyond the church walls. \***

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

**Most churches do not formally recognize the evangelist. \***

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

**An evangelist is a strategist who makes plans and creates tools for ministry that are able to effectively reach the culture with the gospel. \***

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

**An evangelist opens new territory with the gospel message. \***

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

**An evangelist is a gatherer who seeks and gathers the lost sheep. \***

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

**An evangelist is a planter who turns outreaches into new churches. \***

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree       Strongly Agree

**An evangelist is a co-laborer who works best with a team. \***

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree       Strongly Agree

**Evangelists are leaders who reproduce themselves in others. \***

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree       Strongly Agree

**An evangelist is a preacher of the gospel. \***

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree       Strongly Agree

**One percent of church members are gifted as evangelists. \***

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree       Strongly Agree

**Evangelists are wrongly used as revivalists. \***

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree       Strongly Agree

**Without an evangelist involved in a church plant the conversion rate will be lower. \***

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree       Strongly Agree

**There is no “gift of evangelism” only the “gift of the evangelist.” \***

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree       Strongly Agree

**The evangelist is a gift that people value and respect. \***

1 2 3 4 5

---

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

---

**Is there any area you think should be added?**

Please type the statement you think should be added and rank your response to that statement.

**Statement you would add.**

**Please rank your added statement.**

1 2 3 4 5

---

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

---

## APPENDIX E

### OBSTACLES FOR AN EVANGELIST

The research I conducted reveals consistent obstacles the evangelist may face in the role of building the church. This includes being wrongly used and tensions that arise in leadership.

#### **Evangelists Have Been Wrongly Used as Merely Revivalists**

Stetzer brought out that not only has the evangelist been de-emphasized, but wrongly used, as he put it.

We've de-emphasized the role of the evangelist in trying to say, well that's just people with the spiritual gifts of evangelism and I don't think it is....I do think there's a role there that's being de-emphasized in the church. Or maybe de-emphasize is the wrong word. Maybe it's wrongly used... (Stetzer interview).

This misuse is a critical aspect that points to the reality that many have never seen an evangelist functioning in his or her New Testament role. The distinguishing between a revivalist (reviving believers) and evangelist (reaching the lost) is important. To not know the difference leads to perpetually stirring the saved and never engaging the sinner.

Darrell Rice of the Church of God bluntly stated that "an evangelist is a revivalist in our movement" (Rice interview, journal). When the focus is not on the harvest of the lost but on reviving "found" then the numbers of people making commitments are ones that are simply rededicating or reconfirming previous commitments.

#### **Occurring Tensions Need a Covering and Mutual Submission to a Recognized Mediator**

Tomczak describes the tensions that arose as he planted congregations and then tried to relate to them. In the end this lack of senior covering resulted in a splitting and a severing of relationships that had been very fruitful.

Even though the work of the Lord was advancing and there was a measure of blessing, the return was difficult for me...if there had been senior leadership to steer us, I think we would have been able to come through it very successfully, and we didn't. If we had fathers, not just instructors, but fathers as Paul said he was...It was a birthing. And it was messy (Tomczak interview).

One of the primary issues blocking the ministry of the evangelist is the tensions that arise between two strong leaders that are gifted in different ways. The results of these tensions are church splits and an atmosphere of mistrust that is distracting at best and devastating at worst. Gennaro shares:

So I think that maybe also some pastors feel threatened...that there actually could be somebody there that could stand with them, and not trying to get the limelight off of them or steal their position or their church...I would lean more towards the competition side, looking at evangelists in a suspicious way as to what their motives are (Gennaro interview).

It is the responsibility of the evangelist to make sure that they submit themselves to pastoral authority when working in the context of a local church.

Before I even preach, I ask him [the pastor], “What’s going with the church? How can I bless the church, how can I benefit the church?” ...So I say to all evangelists, if you want the blessings of God, you work with that local pastor. Because once you leave out of there, he’s gotta take care of the sheep that have come to the Lord (Hill interview).

### **The Evangelist As a Vital Part of the Team**

The importance of the evangelist as being on the team is underscored from the leaders I interviewed.

...[T]hat’s his strength, but he should bring in a guy that has a real evangelistic fire, like a Steve Hill, somebody like that. I need that fire put into my people. I can do I, but I’m better at really raising up these sheep. I’m gonna bring this guy in. He can put the fire in them (Bevere interview)

I would encourage every pastor, put an evangelist on staff to where that’s all he does is raise up, equip the church in evangelism....Let him raise up, let her raise up these prayer warriors that are gonna go out, hit the streets in intercession and evangelism. So to me there’s no option there. I think that’s one of the greatest failures of the church in America is us neglecting the giftings of the evangelist (Hill interview).

Ron Lewis spoke about the vital role the evangelists in their church in New York were to the planning of outreaches and the setting of goals for people getting saved.

...[T]he church is now structured in four basic areas: evangelism, equipping, edifying and empowering for leadership. So the evangelist is

the first.... Now whether they are driving the growth or not, that may be too strong of a statement, but they are an extremely important part of what's happening in that church today. And there's no doubt in my mind that the church was founded on evangelism, and it has been a major part of the momentum to this day, no doubt about it (Lewis interview).

Trying to reach people without the evangelist on the ministry team is like trying to operate a plumbing business without a plumber, or a choir without a singer. Guder summed up the importance of the evangelist as being an essential part of the team.

We have come to see evangelists as manifesting a particular kind of leadership gift for nonlocal settings. Our current models of evangelist generally include images of itinerant ministry and mass rally events. But what if we began to think of the evangelist as having a particular leadership gifting in the local congregation? The pastor-teacher is essential to grounding and caring for the missional people of God within the community. But in dynamic combination with the evangelist he or she would best lead a missional congregation (Guder 1998:215).

## **APPENDIX F**

### **MARKS FOR TRAINING EVANGELISTS AT BETHEL**

As I study Bethel, several principles emerge that contribute to evangelists being trained in an informal way. These could become the beginnings of the training curriculum that I hope to develop as a result of this study. Many of these marks were also seen in the data from the other leaders outside Bethel and mentioned in Chapter 5 including: the culture of the church, calling, character, charisma, content of the gospel message, contact with unbelievers, creativity, contextualization, being a co-laborer, having a covering and accountability, showing compassion through prayer, and being commissioned to minister.

#### **Culture**

The most prominent aspect of Bethel is that evangelism is in the culture of the church. That culture has been grafted into the original congregation that had been established on another foundation, and was birthed in the other congregations as the evangelists involved began the congregations with that spirit. Kevin York, a church consultant and elder at Bethel said,

The obvious thought is that the evangelist has two roles; one to evangelize the other to help create a culture of reaching the lost thru members being equipped and sent as witnesses in a discipleship context. These both have definitely been prominent at Bethel (York interview).

This culture of evangelism is the goal of the churches and leaders I interviewed. They all wanted their churches to have a culture of evangelism, though none seemed quite sure how to bring out of the theoretical into reality.

My primary function as an evangelist at Bethel was to equip Christians who neglected sharing their faith and never had a personal experience in leading an unbeliever to Christ to learn how to do so. I was able to equip around 20 or so Christians some of who went on to train others (Johnson interview).

## **Calling**

Bethel has made sure that an evangelist knows that they are indeed evangelists. Regardless of the way they personally come to know they possess that gift they are sought out and identified. One of the metaphors that is used is the example of how Cracker Jacks (caramelized popcorn) puts a prize in every box. In the similar way, God has put a gift in every believer's life. It is our the job as evangelists and pastors to find out the gift or gifts that God has put in them and help them develop them. Knowing your gifts and calling are part of the culture of the church. Shino Prater emphasized that the most important thing an evangelist can possess is the faith that he or she indeed has that gift (Prater interview).

## **Character**

In light of the fact that so many evangelists have suffered public shame through character flaws and failures, every evangelist must be a first and foremost an authentic disciple with strong foundations. They must also be able to lay those foundations in others lives as well. At Bethel there is an expression that is widely known and used: "You can destroy with your character what you build with your gift" (unknown). James Lowe the senior associate pastor of Bethel states that the thing that gives the evangelist clout is character (Lowe interview).

## **Charisma**

At Bethel we preach that the power of the Holy Spirit is indispensable in the life of a believer and especially the evangelist. The promise of Acts 1:8 is emphasized, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you shall be witnesses in Jerusalem Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." Every one is given the chance to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and receive that power, just as it happened to the disciples in the book of Acts. This is done through a consistent foundations class held on Sunday mornings, in small group ministry and overall as believers have been equipped to minister to others and see them filled with the Spirit.

## **Content**

The evangelist must understand the gospel and be able to preach it soundly and boldly. There is no greater aspect of training evangelists than the preaching of the gospel. This corresponds biblically with the consistent admonition to "preach the Word" Through our consistent preaching the gospel on Sunday morning church services, to the Tuesday night leadership school, we have stressed the content of the gospel. If the gospel is preached, people will get saved. It's that simple.

When training people to preach or simply preaching the gospel to people I repeat three things that I want people to have burned in their hearts and minds. First, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only thing that can tell people what is really wrong with them. The



gospel as preached in contemporary churches across North America, does not emphasize sin and the separated state that people are in. Eternal judgment which is called one of the 6 foundations of the faith in Hebrews 6:1-2 is rarely mentioned. Second, the gospel offers the only real answer of how to fix real human problems, and third, , the gospel not only tells us what our real problem is, and what we need to do, but gives us the power to change and become new people in Christ. The evangelist must communicate the truth of these three emphasizes all of which are represented in my interviews, emerge from the findings of the survey, and are reflected here in the Bethel case study.

### **Contact**

Contact emphasizes learning to make a connection with unbelievers. The evangelist must be a friend of sinners. This is done through a wide variety of outreaches that include campus ministries on multiple campuses both high school and college, as well as the many contexts that bring evangelists into contact with the real world that for Bethel is the city of Nashville.

Bethel has five Life Centers that are outreaches geared to the Urban Community. We also offer after school assistance and spiritual guidance as well. This aspect of the ministry of outreaches to the inner city, is patterned after a ministry started in Washington DC an evangelist Darrell Green, who played professional football for twenty years with the Washington Redskins and was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2008. Green has regularly helped Bethel through funding, establishing and growing these centers. He is very outspoken about his call as an evangelist and the goal of these centers to go beyond social service.

### **Creativity**

Creativity is tied closely to the focus, above, on contact with unbelievers. The evangelist must learn to use all means to see men and women come to Christ. At Bethel there are a variety of outreaches that become tools in the hands of the evangelist. Morgan Stephens a campus leader at Bethel and Every Nation said,

I have seen Bethel constantly and effectively add new members through evangelistic events and services- as much as the church is about equipping members, the “economic engine” of this local church is really an evangelistic grace and focus led by the various evangelists (Stephens interview).

The “Festival of the Nations” is an outreach of Bethel that hosts events attracting thousands of men and women from other countries to experience the hospitality of the church and to hear the gospel in a culturally relevant context. Jonathan CamCam a Filipino who came from Switzerland to work in the restaurant industry was saved at

Bethel and trained as an evangelist. He now leads this aspect of the ministry. The motive is to show hospitality which means to be a friend of the foreigner.

### **Contextualization**

The evangelist must understand that the importance of becoming all things to all people (1 Cor. 9:19). Understanding context is gained by the evangelist going out to preach the gospel on short term mission teams and realizing that what speaks to people in Tennessee doesn't necessarily translate into another culture. The more someone goes out to other cities and nations and preaches, the more effective they are when they return home. The city of Nashville is so diverse that it takes extreme diligence to discern the audience and the right words and expressions that will connect with them.

### **Co-Laborer**

The evangelist can best be trained by being paired with a seasoned evangelist that can help inspire and model how the gift works. Jesus sent people out in groups of two. Paul worked in terms of a team and spoke repeatedly of the relationship and the resultant impartation that came from the integration of one persons gift with another.

### **Covered**

The way that an evangelist grows is also to be covered and accountable. The evangelist can get so focused on winning the lost that they lose sight of other things that can "slip through the cracks." For instance, the apostles came down to Samaria and helped fill in the gaps that existed in Philip's evangelistic campaign recorded in Acts 8. The people did not receive they Holy Spirit and there was actually a counterfeit convert named Simon who practiced magic that had been mistakenly baptized that was exposed by the apostle's presence. The evangelist needs to ensure there is proper covering, connection and accountability with a local church and team ministry.

### **Compassion**

The fruit of prayer is the heart for the lost and a love that will never fail. Over the last ten years there has been a consistent emphasis on corporate prayer. At the height of our first wave of growth there would be up to 300 in prayer on a Friday night. These prayer meetings almost always focused on asking God to send laborers to the nations and send nations to us. There have been many leaders from nations simply walk in our doors and then go back to their nation to preach or start a church. The ultimate fruit of prayer is the softening of the heart for the needs of others. As evangelists learn to pray and cry out for the souls of lost people, lost cities, and lost nations they are changed as much as the people and places they are praying for. These prayer meetings now take place on

Wednesday nights and never have under 100 people praying and crying out for the nations. As Jesus said, “My house will be a house of prayer for all nations” (Mt. 21:13).

Bert Thomson came to Nashville from Canada and served in an administrative capacity at Bethel. He never ceased to pray for his Canadian homeland. As a result Bethel helped plant two churches in Canada in the last ten years. One in Vancouver and the other in Montreal. This was a direct result of God moving on the heart of people through prayer. We are convinced that compassion that compels the evangelist is fervent prayer.

### **Commissioned**

The evangelist must be sent out and be a fruitful disciple maker. The initial training can be seen as complete if the evangelist has successfully reached and reproduced a disciple who is able to do the same with others. The challenge is to actually go out and allow the gift of God in the evangelist to operate. One of the greatest investments we have made in training our evangelists is sending them out much like Jesus sent out the 70 in Luke 10 and having them return to report on the response. I think of the popular TV show the Apprentice. Donald Trump conducts a contest to see who can be a successful entrepreneur like him. He gives each contestant a challenge and sends them out to see what they can accomplish with minimal instructions and minimal budget. So many times a person can actually be hurt by too much outside interference that creates a dependence on people to help rather than the Holy Spirit to help. Just like Philip went to Samaria in Acts 8, he wasn't specifically sent. His gift began to function and a ministry was born. This is what happened in several of our congregations. Evangelists went out and came back and reported that there was a breakthrough.

The city of Nashville is so diverse that it takes extreme diligence to discern the audience and the right words and expressions that will connect with them. Understanding context is gained by the evangelist going out to preach the gospel on short term mission teams and realizing that what speaks to people in Tennessee doesn't necessarily translate into another culture. The more someone goes out to other cities and nations and preaches, the more effective they are when they return home.

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## VITA

William Rice Broocks, Jr., was born in San Angelo, Texas, on February 18, 1956, to W.R. Broocks and Marian Broocks. His father, an executive for Sun Oil Company for approximately thirty years, served as an elder and clerk of the session at Highland Park Presbyterian Church in Dallas, Texas. His mother taught school for thirty years, specializing in English, Debate, and Drama.

Rice graduated from Mississippi State University in 1979 with a B.S. in Business Administration. Following graduation, he entered into full-time Christian ministry, speaking at universities and churches around the world. It was through a campus outreach at the University of Texas, Austin, that he met his wife, Jody. They were married two years later in September 1982. Jody is a graduate of the University of Texas with a B.A. in History.

Rice's ministry has focused on the university campuses of the world, conducting outreaches and planting churches. He is the author of several books: *Change the Campus, Change the World* (1985); *Every Nation in Our Generation* (2002); *Finding Faith at Ground Zero* (2002); and *The Purple Book: Building Strong Biblical Foundations* (2006), which has been translated into fifteen languages.

Rice holds a Master's Degree from Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi. He has served as an adjunct instructor for Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, and received his Doctorate in Missiology from Fuller in 2010.

In 1994, Rice co-founded the Every Nation family of churches and ministries, which consists of hundreds of churches and outreaches in over sixty nations of the world. He is currently serving as the Senior Pastor of Bethel World Outreach Center in Nashville, Tennessee, where he provides oversight for this multi-congregational church currently meeting in seven different locations.

Rice lives in Franklin, Tennessee, with his wife, Jody, and their five children; Elizabeth, Louisa, William, Wyatt, and Charles.