

E-DD Article – April 2021

What is Evangelism?

The question used as the title of this article is perhaps one of the things that most Christians wouldn't give a deeper thought. This article would therefore like to revisit the fundamental.

Based on Wikipedia, the open-source encyclopaedia, it says "In Christianity, evangelism (or witnessing) is the act of preaching the gospel with the intention of sharing the message and teachings of Jesus Christ." It further says that, "Christians who specialize in evangelism are often known as evangelists, whether they are in their home communities or living as missionaries in the field, although some Christian traditions refer to such people as missionaries in either case. Some Christian traditions consider evangelists to be in a leadership position; they may be found preaching to large meetings or in governance roles. In addition, Christian groups who encourage evangelism are sometimes known as evangelistic or evangelist."

In Life BP Church, our vision for evangelism is "Make evangelism the way of life for every Life Church member." This vision statement should redefine the way many of us look at evangelism. It requires ALL Life Church members to "live out" evangelism naturally, as the way of life, regardless of age and maturity. It requires evangelism to be an integral part of our daily life, and not a special occasion. Thus, the next question is will we ever realise this vision?

In answering this question, perhaps we should first take a step back to look at what is most fundamental. Let's refer to the prayer that Jesus made in John 17. In v15, he prayed not for His people to be taken out of the world, but that God should keep them from evil. In v18, Jesus further prayed that he sent His people into the world just as God sent Him into the world. What then is the purpose of sending them into the world? The answer is found in v21, i.e. that they all may be one, as the triune holy God is one, so also His people, the church, shall be one.

Now, what followed in that prayer is most critical. Jesus didn't stop at the church being one. He continued to pray "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." This is amazing. Let's ask a question, isn't the very fact that the world may believe that "thou hast sent me", is the evangelism we are talking about?

Of course, it is. So, the essence of evangelism is not so much about making active effort to proclaim the name of Christ. Instead, it is to live a life that demonstrates that the triune holy God is one; so that the world may believe that Jesus is sent by God the Father. Thus, the unity of the church is the most fundamental element for evangelism.

On this ground, we may see evangelism at 3 levels:

1. Personal Level:

This refers to attracting people to Christ through your personal faith. Scriptural support can be found in 1 Peter 3:15, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready

always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear". The key elements in this verse are:

- 1) "that asketh you": The party that is active here is "every man". It is they that take the initiative to ask you.
- 2) "reason of the hope": The next question is what do they ask? Will they ask about the hope that is in you? So, the question is, are we living in that hope? Are you living in a way that every man can see that hope that is in you?
- 3) "sanctify the Lord God": Of course, next, we shall ask, how then can we live in that hope? The answer from the scripture is "sanctify the Lord God in your heart".

In conclusion, sanctify the Lord God in your heart, and you shall have bountiful opportunities to evangelise.

2. Church Level:

This refers to attracting people to Christ through our activities in church. This can be seen in the first-generation church recorded in Acts 2:44-47, "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

The scripture clearly states that the Lord added to the church daily. This is because the world admired the life and the joys

of the people in the church. So, the question we need to ask ourselves is, are we enjoying our church life so much so that the world can see the difference in us?

3. Mission Level:

This refers to active effort to go into the world to preach Christ. This is seen in Apostle Paul's teaching in Romans 10:13-15, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

Some are therefore called to take up missionary work. And scripture says it is absolutely needed.

This article should change our perspective of evangelism. While NOT ALL may be called to undertake missionary work, ALL Christians are certainly called to take up personal and church level evangelism.

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Sent from my Huawei phone