

Why Evangelism Matters

By: Tim Reaves

1. We Are On A Mission From God.

I. Our situation. 1. A mission situation.

A. The Church was born, the Church in Wesley's day. The Church today.
-Thomas Rainer –Statistics -63% of people who accept Christ do so before age 18.

-18% are between 18-25.

-20% are 26 and over.

B. Generations

-Builders 1910-1946 65% were reached for Christ.

-Boomers 1947-1964 35% were reached for Christ.

-Busters 1965-1976 15% were reached for Christ.

-Bridgers 1977-1994 – If current trends continue only 4% will be reached.

C. 7-10 people in Florida are unchurched.

D. Church Growth is not necessarily reaching the lost.

-Shuffling the cards, circulation of the saints.

-5 billion dollars a year on Evangelism, yet Worship attendance remains at 40% of the population.

E. There are the un-churched, which many are de-churched.

***** Understanding our culture.

Modern vs. Postmodern

A. Modern Society- Len Sweet's *Soul Tsunami* and Brian McLaren's *A New Kind of Christian*.

1. Marked by the Renaissance – Linear scientific formula to everything.

- Father Knows Best.

2. Age of the machine – industrial revolution.

3. Age of analysis.

4. Secular Science

5. Age of objectivity

6. Age of the modern nation-state

7. Age of individualism

8. Age of Protestantism and institutional religion.

9. Age of consumerism.

10. The nuclear family -Front porch society

B. We are in a chasm now between this and post-modern society.

1. A new renaissance

2. Experiential

3. A post-Christian better named pre-Christian society.

4. Deep interest in spirituality – Zen Buddhism and new age.

5. Questioning of the facts.

6. New picture of family.

7. Behind the blinds-meet you at the door society.

8. Generation now who have not darkened the doors of a church.

II. The Mission Was Given to Us by Jesus.

A. Scripture tells us this. -Matthew 28:19-20 **“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.’ Amen.”**

-Mark in 16:15 **“Go into all of the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.”**

-Luke 24:46 **“and he said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are the witnesses of these things.’”**

-John 20:21 **“Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”**

B. Len Sweet - Why do churches make new mission statements when Jesus told us what our mission is.

1. We are to make more disciples of Jesus Christ. -The Church is a Body of Believers and we know that in any body, Reproduction is a natural process.

2. Lost People Matter to God.

I. Jesus said that he was sent to **seek and to save that which is lost.**

A. Matthew 9:36, **“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”**

-This word for compassion in the Greek means, “A stirring or movement down deep in ones bowels.” -If we don’t have the same passion or compassion for lost people that Jesus does, we need to pray for God to send us a fresh desire for the mind of Christ.

II. God desires a relationship with lost people.

A. **This relationship delivers lost people from an eternity in Hell.**

1. There are many different descriptions of Hell.

-Wailing and gnashing of teeth. -Burning with an unquenchable fire. -The worst description is the being cast in outer darkness for eternity separated from God and from everyone else.

2. There will be a judgment and -Romans 3:23 **“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”** -Humanity’s sin problem has one solution. -It is Jesus Christ and the atoning blood that he shed on the cross of Calvary. -It is that relationship with Jesus that reconciles us and makes an eternity with God in heaven possible.

B. **This relationship delivers lost people from Hell on Earth.**

- Bob Tuttle uses the phrase “You don’t have to die to go to hell.”

-There are people living different hells right now. *******Key Principle – Our Evangelism should involve reaching people for Jesus Christ to help them escape the Hell they live in today and the Hell that is to come for eternity.**

C. When Jesus used the actual Greek word that translated to Hell, he used the word *Gehenna* which was a valley southeast of Jerusalem. The Jews understood it as a *place of burning, a valley where rebellious Jews had been slaughtered before and would be again if they didn't repent, as Malachi, John the Baptist, and Jesus urged them to do.*

1. For the people in Jesus’ day, they saw Hell as a place on earth. -The Church has lost that aspect of the Gospel.

2. Rob Bell in his book, *Velvet Elvis*, calls it “*a way, a place, a realm absent of how God desires things to be.*”

-For many the place is here in this world and now at this time.

-Bell speaks of Rwanda since the Massacre of 1994. –People without limbs and lost them as children.

-Many in abusive homes -living with an alcoholic spouse or struggling with alcoholism themselves. –Running from your past. –Guilt of ones past. –Dealing with caring for a loved one with no help. –Finding out about a bad disease or suffering loneliness or depression.

*****IF WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE ANSWER AND THE ONE WHO CAN CONQUER DEATH AND HELL, BOTH HERE, NOW, AND FOR ETERNITY, THEN WE NEED TO MAKE SURE THAT LOST PEOPLE MATTER ENOUGH TO TELL THEM WHO THE ANSWER IS.

-God desires that no one should perish. God desires that no one will experience hell, both on this earth or for eternity. We have something we can do about that. Lost people matter to God, so therefore we as individual Christians and as the church must be introducing people to the Person who can make a difference in their lives.

This World Needs Jesus

I. When we make disciples for Jesus Christ, we play a part in bringing in God’s Reign and God’s Kingdom.

A. We have the good news that this world needs to hear. –We also are given the power to make that good news known.

-Acts 1:8 The Spirit gives us the power to witnesses this to the world.

Developing a Strategic Plan of Evangelism for Your Church
Tim Reaves

- 1. Develop a long-range plan including evangelistic goals.**
 - Do in a retreat setting with your church.**
 - Create a dream team or a Joel committee.**
 - Put goals that your church could only accomplish with the help of God.**
 - Follow up on those goals.**

- 2. Check your churches goals to see how many point outward and how many point inward.**
 - How many enhance our welcome.**

- 3. Use Jesus' mission statement. –Develop a vision to accomplish the mission.**

- 4. Plan a big Sunday.**

- 5. Train our laity to be personal Faith Sharers. –Make sure clergy are trained in this also. –Fox and Morris**

- 6. Have strategic prayer ministries where the lost are prayed for.**