Introduction

The Bible indicates that God gives spiritual gifts to his people, and that some are gifted as evangelists. Yet those gifted as evangelists need to be considered in the context of the Bible's teaching on evangelism.

GOD IS A MISSIONARY GOD

The Father sends his Son into the world; the Son sends his Spirit on the Church; the Church is sent to the world. God's people are caught up in God's mission to God's world. All Christians are called to show and share the faith to those outside the faith. This involves us in (Colossians 4:2-6):

- Dedicated prayer.
- Clear proclamation.
- Wise engagement.
- Maximising opportunities.

EVANGELISM IS A BODY MINISTRY

Although all Christians are called to the above, each person will have different parts to play within the overall mission of the Church. But because mission is central to the heart of God it must be central to the life of the church. It is not an optional extra for the few. Evangelism is not the preserve of special people at special times doing special things. It is the church living out its faith and speaking about Jesus in everyday life.

THE EVANGELIST IS NOT THE PERSON WE LOOK TO DO TO DO OUR EVANGELISM 'FOR US'

Just as someone who has the gift of intercession can't do our praying for us. The evangelist is someone whom God gifts in a special way in evangelism to help the church to be all that it is meant to be. Evangelists are not meant to be on the edge of a church, regarded as awkward people to be tolerated, rather they are meant to be at the heart of a church, recognised as vital for the health of a church as they exercise their ministry.

How do we Identify Evangelists?

1. Recognise that the evangelist is on a continuum from witness to evangelist, and the exact point at which you may describe someone as an evangelist may be difficult to identify.

2. Recognise that as a 'gift' from God it is not dependant on the age, background, gender, personality type, or experience of the individual. God gives the gift to whomever he pleases.

3. Recognise that God can and does take natural abilities (e.g. relational skills) and empower them for use as spiritual gifts for his kingdom.

4. Recognise that like all gifts, its usage can be hampered by selfishness, disobedience, immaturity, lack of accountability, lack of use, and a desire for personal gain.

5. Recognise that there are different types of evangelist.
   i) Public proclaimer evangelist. This may be local or itinerant, but the person will have a 'one-to-many' aspect to their ministry. (Other gifts likely to be associated with this type of evangelist are teacher and apostle).
   ii) Leader-evangelist. Part of the leadership team of a church, responsible for the shaping of the mission that then shapes the church. (Other gifts likely to be

associated with this type of evangelist are leader and apostle).

iii) Personal evangelist. May never speak in front of a crowd, nor be part of the leadership of a church, but faithfully draws people to Jesus.

6. Recognise for each of these types, there are many different ways they may be exercised e.g. creative arts.

Common Characteristics

CONCERN FOR PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

- The evangelist has a love for lost people and longs for them to come to know Christ.
- The evangelist tends to think of such people first in any decisions made within the life of a church. How is this going to impact those who aren't yet Christians?
- The evangelist tends to consider any opportunity to meet with those outside the church as a potential opportunity to share the faith.
- The evangelist longs that every other Christian would play their part in sharing the faith.

ABILITY TO RELATE TO PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

- The evangelist relates well with those outside the church, understanding their world and making connections with them.
- The evangelist may well prefer spending time with those outside the church.

ABILITY TO EXPLAIN AN ASPECT OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH

- The evangelist can communicate the Christian message with clarity and conviction.
- The evangelist can connect the Christian message with people's needs.

ABILITY TO HELP PEOPLE TAKE THE NEXT APPROPRIATE SPIRITUAL STEP

- The evangelist has 'volitional intelligence'. They sense where people are, what will help them take the next step, and long to serve in helping them take that step.
- The evangelist appeals to the will.

INDEBTEDNESS TO THE GRACE OF GOD

- True of all Christian people, but vitally important in the evangelist, otherwise they can be motivated by a range of unhelpful factors that may lead them to manipulate others or inappropriately drive themselves.

Important note: ability is made up of skill, knowledge, talent and gift. When all four are present the individual will be competent in this ability. Skills can be learnt through training and experience. Knowledge can be acquired through learning. Talents are formed by the time you are an adult, but need nurturing and developing for effective use. Gifts can be given by God at any time.

Conclusion

Key to identifying, resourcing and deploying evangelists are existing leaders. There are a variety of inventories you can use to help identify evangelists, but many in leadership will intuitively 'know' who the evangelists are.

We'd encourage such leaders to be bold in affirming their calling, to make use of existing schemes to resource them (local, diocesan, and national), and to deploy them wisely so they maximise their contact with those who don't know Christ.

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