

The Function and Utilization of the Evangelist

The function of the evangelist is essential to train, equip and mobilize the local church for the gathering of a harvest of souls. We must believe that we can train and mobilize the local church in Alabama for real community influence. Our preaching ministries must translate to helping the local church reach out beyond their church walls and the Sunday experience. If we fail in this effort, we will only stir the local church but not adequately affect the communities where our churches are located. Pastors can preach, so preaching ministry is already established in every Alabama church. What they need is the office, mantle and function of the five-fold ministry gift of the evangelist to come beside them to assist them in strategy planning, training and mobilization of their people for community influence. A pastor can function in what a pastor can do in his mantle and calling. An evangelist can bring to the local church the function, mantle and gifting that a local pastor cannot fulfill. The pastor needs the evangelist and the evangelist needs the pastor. Working together in mutual respect and function produces the fruit of harmony, growth and forward movement for the local church and the evangelist. We must repair the opinion of the local church in respect to their perception of the functioning evangelist.

We as evangelists need a unified message where there are central themes that we are all expressing to the local churches. An example could be reaching out to their community, or developing an ongoing follow up system for tracking visitors and absentees, etc. We should be saying some of the same things in every church where an evangelist is assisting an Alabama Assemblies of God Church.

The following are my thoughts on how we can assist the local church with evangelism training:

1. Planning, promoting and performing a community outreach
2. How to give an altar call
3. How to host an Evangelist
4. Zero Tolerance for any church reporting zero salvations in 2017
5. Section by Section Invasions with Evangelist networking in that section
6. Resources for ongoing training for evangelism
7. The Covenant and pledge of how the Evangelist will function while in a local church.

Remember, the Evangelist is a gift to the church. If that is to be, then the Evangelist must be a servant to the church and not a burden to the church. By serving the church, the Evangelist earns the right to be a gift to that church. The Pastor is honored and the ministry is received. The Pastor should consider the needs of the itinerant ministry so that they as well have all expectations covered during the ministry together.

These are some things to consider where ministry between the Evangelist and the church are considered:

1. Planning, Promoting and Performing a Community Outreach:

It must start with the local Pastor assessing the needs of his congregation. Each church needs vitamin supplements that will help them to remain healthy. Vitamin "P" for Pastor, vitamin "E" for Evangelist, vitamin "T" for Teacher, vitamin "A" for Apostle and vitamin "P" for the Prophet. Once the Pastor discerns what their congregation needs for vitamin supplement, they should contact the ministry leader that the District has sanctioned as a viable ministry in their church. It starts with the Pastor seeing the need to bring in the ministry needed to assist their congregation and add vitamins for growth.

Once the pastor discerns the need for the evangelist to come, there should be conversation about what ministry function the evangelist will fulfill while in their church. ***For example:*** *Will the evangelist preach and teach on evangelism? Will the evangelist do a training session to equip the believers in personal soul winning strategies? Will the evangelist have a prayer line for the laying on of hands to anoint the people for works of ministry? Will the evangelist provide printed resources that will assist that pastor in ongoing training for his people?* These and other questions should be discussed in how the pastor needs the evangelist to help them in preparing their people for looking to the community for real Kingdom influence.

Setting a Date:

Once the pastor and the evangelist have decided the need, the pastor needs to set a date and contact an Alabama Evangelist. A list of Alabama Evangelists could be made available by the District, supplied to all Presbyters and put on the Alabama District web page.

Financing the Event:

After a date has been set, the pastor and the evangelist should discuss travel plans, housing and honorariums. This will navigate around any confusion or pressure on the local church or the evangelist and negate any frustrations between the pastor or the evangelist.

After these items have been established, ongoing communication should take place between the evangelist and the pastor. Budgets should be established by the local church for ministry materials during the time set for the evangelist to assist that church. (Printing of materials, securing sites, purchasing items to distribute to the community or any items needed for the evangelist and the church to flow together for an effective ministry event.)

Promoting the Evangelist and the Evangelistic Event:

The promotion of the arriving evangelist is essential to a successful ministry event linking the evangelist to the local church. Promotion, marketing and communication for this event will be central to success. The evangelist should provide a "bio" for the church to share with the congregation. A picture should be supplied by the evangelist as well as any "web-site

connections” to help the people prepare for the upcoming event. If possible, I have found it very helpful if you simply take a cell phone video and send it to the Pastor and ask them to have their media ministry or someone in the church who can assist the Pastor in showing a 1-2 minute video of the Evangelist. This is a very easy and “no cost” way to promote the evangelist and allow them to meet the congregation by video before they arrive. It also allows the evangelist to promote whatever they and the Pastor have discussed for how they will perform the event.

Flyers:

Local businesses will do “Bag Flyers” to put in their business bags when customers are checking out at their business. Flyers can also be placed at registers of local businesses for distribution.

Touch Cards:

Simple graphic design can be found on-line. If that is not possible, larger churches may assist with a design. The Evangelist may have a design to send to you for distribution. Finally, there are stock cards at bookstores that you can fill in the card with the event information. Cards can be printed very inexpensively to put in the hands of the people to give to neighbors, co-workers, family members, class mates or friends promoting the event.

Banners:

Banners can be printed very inexpensively to put in church lawns, fences in high traffic areas, businesses or homes with high visibility. Local sign companies can assist in this effort. They can also assist you in design logos as most of them have Graphic Design personnel to help you.

TV and Radio Advertising:

These are expensive but can be impactful in branding the event for success. TV ads can be made by churches with their own media ministry (or a larger church who might be able to help with producing a video) to save production cost and then aired on local TV programs. Companies like On-Media, or contacting local cable providers or TV stations, can offer churches discounted rates. Ads for promotion on Christian Radio or secular radio stations can be effective on Sports Stations, News or Talk Radio or local music stations.

Social Media is a MUST for Promotions:

Internet and Social Media efforts are a must in reaching the community. 80% of people today visit a church on-line before they ever visit the church personally. There are many ministries that can help secure this for a nominal cost but a big return. Facebook, web-site promotions and texting Apps will allow you to connect with hundreds of people at once, and can help you network with many people for almost no cost to promote an event. Any teenager or young adult can help in this effort for promotion.

Billboard Advertisement:

This can be very expensive but very effective advertising for community recognition and invitations. Contact national companies like Lamar Signs that have a local application in your area. This is high cost but high visibility.

Prayer Teams:

After doing all to stand, stand firm. Gather people together several weeks before time for the evangelist to arrive. Have them pray for the evangelist, the people, the community, and to wage war against the spiritual strongholds of your specific region. Pray for the weather, schools, families, businesses, community leaders, and for an open heaven.

Performing the Event:

The pastor should be in constant communication with his evangelist and his people. Saturation should be the goal:

90 days out

60 days out

30 days out

2 weeks out

1 week before the event

1 day before the event

On the set day and time for the event, all department leaders, deacons, and volunteers should be notified and be available as much as possible to assist the evangelist in carrying out the previously described dreams and hopes of the pastor. There should be great encouragement from the pastor to get the people out to support the event and prepare for successful ministry to the congregation and the community.

Planning, promoting and performing are all essential for a successful event in the local church.

The results: Transformed and enhanced lives!

2. How To Give an Altar Call:

This is an area where many pastors struggle. It is, however, a strength in the function of the evangelist. It is like a cloud without rain to prepare for people to arrive and not invite them to an open relationship with Jesus Christ. Preparing a banquet but not allowing people to eat seems cruel. The method of an altar call is as varied as there are individual ministers. It is a time that after the foolishness of preaching has concluded, the door is opened for people to come close to God and for God to come close to the people.

The Altar Call:

I have seen a very successful way to get people from hearing the sermon to a response to the sermon. After preaching scriptural truth, faith is awakened by hearing; faith is awakened in the hearts of the people. The Holy Spirit is at work in the hearts of those who hear. No one can say that Jesus is Lord except the Spirit draws them. So, if faith comes by hearing- and it is impossible to please God without faith- we must allow the word to be spoken so faith is awakened and people can respond to the Spirit's drawing. Then, with all the love and passion that the minister can supply, we call people to come close to God.

Sample altar call:

"God does not hate you and He is not and at you. He loves you. But He loves you too much to leave you in your life situation. So, if you are here in the church today, and you realize that you are not where you should be with God, or you have never accepted Jesus into your heart and life, this is your moment. You may fool me, you may fool your pastors, your parents or even the police, but you will not fool God. You are the only person that I am talking to right now. Ask yourself, if today was your last day on earth, do you know that you know that you know that Heaven is your home? That the Father would say, welcome home! If not, just know that it is not too late for you! It is too late for those in Hell. They have made their choices, but it is not too late for you! So, with heads bowed and eyes closed, please I need every believer praying, your prayers could be the difference in someone's eternity. Ask yourself, what about me God? If you were killed by a drunk driver, if you were killed in a tragic car accident, if you were killed in a drive by shooting, do you know that you know, that you know that heaven is your home? So young lady or young man, mom or dad, grandmother or grandfather, guest here today, ask yourself, are you talking to me God? If you are not sure about your relationship with God, when I count to three, I am asking you to lift your hand so God can see it! This is not about church membership, this is about your heart and an eternal God who loves you and is reaching out to you through this preacher. If that is you in this room today and you know that you are not where you need to be with God, no matter who is on your right or your left, this is not between anyone but you and our true and living God, when I count to three, lift up your hands...one...two...three...lift up your hands now...yes I see you, yes I see you..."

Let me ask again, Christians pray right now. If there are others here today that you know you should have raised your hands with these others, I am going ask once more. Do not let your past or others around you stop you. If you know you are not where you should be with God, when I count to 3, please raise your hand. Christians praying. If that is you, you are the only person I am talking to...when I count to three, raise your hand...one...two...three...raise your hands now! Come on someone, let's clap for these who just raised their hands.

Let us all stand.

Now, everyone look at me. If you raised your hands, I know who you are, you know who you are, God knows who you are and Satan knows who you are. Raising your hand was the first step. Here is the next step—to publicly stand for Jesus. Jesus was crucified publicly, buried publicly and resurrected publicly. We must stand for Jesus publicly. He says in His word, that if we confess Him before men, He will confess us before the Father. But if we deny Him before men, He will deny us before the Father. If we cannot stand for Jesus in here, we will never stand for Jesus out there. When I count to three, I am asking you to get a friend and come to this altar. I know it is hard to walk in front of others you might not know but let me assure you...No one will laugh at you or make fun of you. We will give you a standing ovation. So all those who raised their hands, or you know that you should have raised your hands, when I count to three, please join me here at the platform...one...two...three please come now...everyone give these coming forward a standing ovation! Clap until they all get here!"

Pray with them, pray over them, and lead them in a sinners prayer. Then, tell them it is a first big step to make a "decision" to follow Jesus Christ. Now, they must become a "disciple of Jesus!" Give us one year to be your pastor to teach you and guide you. Altar workers or deacons come and pray with these...have them fill out a decision card...give them discipleship and prayer information...connect them with someone in the church.

Pastors, this is simply a sample. It varies but many of these components should be in the altar call. Go ahead, give the altar call...I dare you!

3. How To Host an Evangelist:

Once an evangelist has been secured, a date has been set, and all is ready for an event:

1. The evangelist should communicate any travel needs: flying, driving, renting a car. Communicate this up front.
2. Discuss any financial expectations. The evangelist should ask if there will be a love offering or an honorarium? Will travel expenses, rental car, and airfare covered? What will be the housing arrangements? Someone's home or a hotel? Can we bring sales materials for a ministry table with ministry resources? CDs, DVDs, etc. Can someone work that table for the evangelist? This should all be discussed before the event. ***Pastors hate surprises.***
3. The evangelist should be grateful for any and all efforts put out by the local church or the host pastor. The evangelist should never express disappointment in the love offering. If you have a budget, it should be discussed before arrival. If you truly are going by faith, then have faith and be grateful for what you receive.
4. The local church should be responsible for travel expenses, a love offering, housing and meals. All financial issues should be within the churches financial comfort.
5. A 1099 form should be filled out upon departure, or a W9 form with a Federal Tax ID or a social security number for proper tax records for the church and the evangelist.

6. A thank you note should be written by the evangelist blessing the pastor and the church. The pastor should write a thank you note to the evangelist blessing them for their ministry in their church.
7. Look to the calendar for the next time that the evangelist could be secured to return for ministry in their church.

Proper Ministry Performance by the Evangelist:

The evangelist should display good theology and proper protocol while in the local church. There should always be proper attire that is fitting with the Pastor's dress requests and proper pulpit decorum in addressing the congregation. (No displays of anger, no embellishments, and always honoring the Pastor, their family, any church staff and the church). Kindness towards the pastor and their family will help in a repeat invitation to minister in their church. If the evangelist will serve the church, the pastor will always be more willing to bring the evangelist back to their congregation. Professionalism, in all aspects, will edify the local church. How the evangelist acts at restaurants, the hotel, and with the congregation will be essential for ongoing ministry in that church.

4. Zero Tolerance for any church to report Zero salvations in 2017:

We must work section by Section, presbyter to presbyter, church to church, and pastor to pastor to see that EVERY CHURCH in Alabama has at least (1) reported salvation in 2017. This should be our goal and our obsession as a team of Evangelists in Alabama.

5. We could consider a Section by Section Blitz!

We could consider a Section by Section networking where we have every Alabama Evangelist working in the same section on the same weekend with the same objective. Working with the local churches to help them see their community and assisting them in reaching out to gather people to that local church. Then, we could consider a Sunday Night Fire Revival Night at one of the churches to bring all of us together for a community rally!

6. We could consider printing resources to give to every Pastor in Alabama.

Each evangelist will have specific passions, revelations and insights. We could synergize all ideas and produce a real resource to help every church in Alabama. Combining all of our revelations to assist the local church could bring a shot of health as we all network our understandings for the local church. A networking of ministry ideas will bring a resource to life that we could have the District distribute to every church where the evangelist could then follow up with those churches to see if implementation has become a reality. It could then give us a place to begin measurements to see if growth, development and overall health is progressing in that local church.

One Last Thought: Communication is essential for success!

Communication between the Evangelist and the Pastor will be essential for success. The Evangelist should be proactive and transparent to help the Pastor to be at ease where finances are concerned. Frustrations on the side of the Pastor or the Evangelist can often be avoided with clear communication. There are several things that need to be discussed before the event? When phone calls or emails or texts are not quickly returned, frustrations can set in before the event. Quick, helpful and kind communication is needed to ensure a smooth ministry for the local church.

1. Finances for the event. This is the area where most frustrations set in between a Pastor and an itinerant ministry. The Evangelist and the Pastor need to communicate what the needs are for the ministry? Will the church provide a ministry honorarium or will a free will love offering be received? How will the offerings be received? Will the Pastor receive the offerings or will the Evangelist share with the congregation and then have the Pastor come to receive the offerings? How will travel be secured? Will the church reimburse the Evangelist before the ministry date or is the Evangelist to cover all expenses and then be reimbursed by the church when they arrive? Where will the Evangelist stay while with the church? A hotel or a members home? How will meals be covered? These are all essential questions that need clear communication before the event.
2. What kind of ministry will the Evangelist offer the church? What kind of ministry will be needed? What is the church expecting from the Evangelist? How long will the event be planned? One weekend, 3 days, a week, or longer? Communication is the key to success.

Cancellations

Should a scheduled ministry date need to be cancelled, several things should be considered:

1. Is the Pastor resigning? If the Pastor is resigning, the Evangelist should be contacted as soon as possible to see if the date can be rescheduled.
2. Should the church reimburse the Evangelist for a missed ministry opportunity? It is very time consuming and difficult to schedule weekly meetings as an itinerant ministry. There is extreme navigation to work with local church ministry calendars and it takes weeks to reschedule a cancelled event. Communication between the Evangelist and the Pastor should take place as far in advance as possible. If the Evangelist is unable to reschedule the event, the church could consider helping the Evangelist with an offering to offset any missed opportunities. This way, there is no harm to either the church or the Evangelist.
3. If the Evangelist should cancel an event, the Pastor should be notified immediately. If the church has advertised the event with mailings or other avenues, the Evangelist should consider reimbursing the church for those expenses and another date could be considered for future ministry in that local church.

May we as Pastor and Evangelist, share in common humility, a passionate pursuit of our God and a commitment to one another so that the church will move forward with the blessings of heaven upon it! After all, isn't the purpose of the ministry for the Kingdom of our God to advance? That we might preach this Gospel of the Kingdom, to the whole world, and then the end can come! Maranatha!

Evangelist Johnny Jernigan
Matthew 11:12