



Integrating Evangelism Throughout Adult Ministries - June/July 05

Perhaps one of the most critical issues Christians face in America today is the lack of growth that occurs in 85% of our congregations (Barna Numbers). According to Barna these churches are plateaued or are in decline. Even more disturbing are the growing numbers of younger-than-Boomer Christians who express a genuine faith, but don't see involvement in church as a relevant part of their Christianity.

We could analyze this situation ad infinitum and come up with a myriad of sensible explanations based on whom we have "read" or listened to. However, whatever reason we choose, the solution seems to always come back to the same place – we need to get back on task. For me that means doing the Great Commission in, through, and with our congregations. An undeniable part of our God-given Mission is evangelism. One characteristic of the believers and churches that have stopped growing is that they have managed to stop doing evangelism.

So, how can we get evangelism going in a church where it has stopped? I believe we must intentionally make it a part of every ministry structure in the church to revive its practice. Let's look at a traditionally structured church that has a worship service, ABFs, and small groups. The first question I want to ask and answer is, "What strategy does each group have to reach unbelievers?"

There are many possible strategies, here at Crossroads Community Church, we have chosen to use these: Worship Services – 4 times a year we will have evangelistic themes for all three services (1 Sat. night and 2 Sun. morning). We encourage everyone to bring a family member, friend, work associate, or neighbor to one of these services. The gospel is (prayerfully) clearly communicated with a specific invitation given and follow-up in place. In our ABCs (What we call ABFs.), each community is encouraged to continuously invite unbelievers to social functions, set up evangelistic events, and/or leagues, etc. And finally, in our small groups each believer is encouraged to carry a "Five Most Loved" card (adapted from Masterplanning's "10 Most Wanted" card) that lists 5 unbelievers they are praying for, reaching out to, loving in some practical way and, as a group, doing something with. At all levels of ministry structure we encourage involvement as a "prayer", "inviter", and/or "teller" and provide equipping for each type of involvement.

Slowly our culture is changing to reflect this emphasis and excitement builds as more new converts are brought into the congregation. Our hope is to some day being able to say that the majority of our growth is from new converts as opposed to "transfers."

Healthy churches see about 10% growth each year from new converts! It can happen wherever leaders are ready to embrace the Great Commission as their Mission!

- Bill Barnett, Pastor of Adult Ministries at Crossroads Community Church in Kokomo, Indiana