

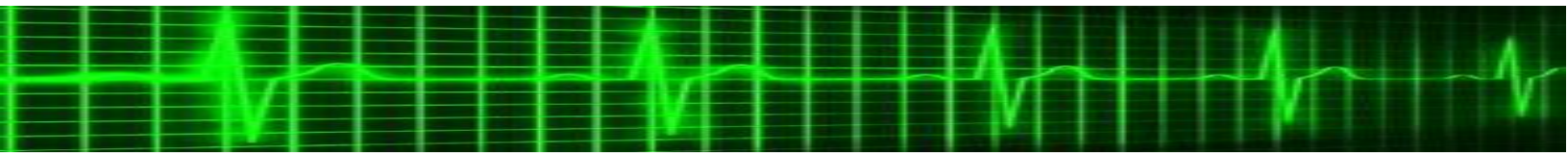
**EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
CONVOCAATION
JANUARY 25-25, 2019**



RETOOLING FOR RESPONSIBLE EVANGELISM

Rev. Dr. Evalina Huggins, Presenter

Simon Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Host Church
Rev. Brian R. Thompson, Host Pastor
Mrs. Sheila W. Monroe, Missionary Supervisor
Bishop Kenneth Monroe, Presiding Prelate



Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District Convocation
“Retooling for Responsible Evangelism”
January 24-25, 2019
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“Go ye therefore (evangelism) and teach (discipleship) all nations (inclusive), baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”. (Matt. 28:19-20).

Objectives:

1. Our objective is to revisit the biblical mandate that commands us to “go and make disciples”.
2. Together we will explore what evangelism is, is not, and potentially could be.
3. We will self-reflect, repent, and examine to what extent we have been complicit in the failure of the church to make disciples.
4. To challenge ourselves to continue “Retooling” for Responsible Evangelism

At the conclusion of our sharing together we will leave empowered and challenged to refocus, “retool” and redeploy those who have been converted, to return to the place of their conversion **to make DISCIPLES!** Our Mandate and our Mission will be clear.

Exercise:

Retooling means – to equip with something new, because what was previously thought to work does not; or to adapt, adjust, or alter the tools we have for maximum use or impact.

I. **Evangelism Defined** (develop a working definition) _____

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Archbishop of Canterbury | c. Bishop Reuben L. Speaks |
| b. Bishop Darryl B. Starnes | d. Dr. Evalina Huggins |

II. **Signs of “evangelism deficits”** – indications the discipleship may not be our priority

- ✚ Less than 3 people join our church within our buildings zip...
- ✚ New members never process their conversion or salvation with anyone in the church
- ✚ We make new members class more about our Discipline and denomination, than about God’s Word, Holy Living and people’s responsibility to live as citizen of the kingdom of God...
- ✚ We pin tags on VISITORS, reminding them they are not one of us...

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- ✚ We wait more than a week to follow-up with new worshippers (no phone call, no email, no letter from the Pastor, nothing...)
- ✚ Bulletins are faded, light bulbs are blown, ushers are means, members are territorial (seats/ ministries), children are frowned upon...
- ✚ Signs on our property – no loitering, no unauthorized parking, no trespassing, no cell phones in the sanctuary all say to possible disciples you are not welcome here
- ✚ All the doors of our churches are locked during the week...
- ✚ There is no activity at our churches except for Sundays
- ✚ 90% of our ministry takes place inside the church rather than the community
- ✚ The church answering machine still has the message from the former pastor

All these are potential indicators that “responsible evangelism” has slipped through the cracks, and we are living our best lives believing that what we are carrying out the mission of the church. I contend that disciple-making and

III. Why Evangelism? - the answer is simple, we evangelize because the Lord tells us to do it (Matt. 2:19-20). Saving (winning), the lost is the Lord’s purpose for coming and our purpose for being. The Lord has commissioned us –

- a. The great commission – Go ye therefore and teach... (Matt. 28:19)
- b. “He has come to seek and save that which was lost” (Lk. 19:10)
- c. “and he said, follow me and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19)

IV. Evangelism is:

- a. Proactive –
- b. The Preaching of the Gospel –
- c. Transformational –
- d. Ongoing, it’s a process –

V. The Manner and Matter of Evangelism

- a. Personal Evangelism
- b. Public Evangelism
- c. Planting Evangelism

VI. Retooling for (Responsible/ Effective) Evangelism

- a. Repentance – taking an honest look at ourselves
- b. Returning – taking a serious look at what our biblical mandate as the church is...
- c. Regroup and Redirect – Examples of Responsible Evangelism.

Conclusion:

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Scriptural Foundation:

“Go (imperative or command) **ye therefore** (with Jesus’ authority), **and teach** (discipleship) **all nations** (inclusive), **baptizing them** (public witness of their transformation and faith in Christ) **in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them** (spiritual maturation) **to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always** (empowered by the Holy Spirit), **even unto the end of the world”**.
(Matt. 28:19-20).

God sent Jesus into the world to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10).

We have been sent into the world just as Jesus was sent (John 17:18; 20:21).

“Therefore, I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom” (Matt. 21:43)

Objectives:

Our objective is to revisit the biblical mandate that commands us to “go and make disciples”. It is my desire to re-ignite and restore both individually and corporately our desire to reach the lost; and offer potential methods of “Retooling for Responsible Evangelism”.

Exercise:

The challenge we face today is that we evangelize for church growth, and I contend perhaps this is why some of our churches are in decline. The greater concern we ought to have is that our churches seem to have lost a passion for people. I pray that I am wrong, but on so many levels we just don’t seem to care anymore.

We want people to help us raise our claims, to implement our programs, walk down the aisle so we can post on Facebook how many members we took in, and if we came looking for them, we couldn’t find them... people to do for us, rather than become for Him.

There must be a resurgence of evangelism designed grow the kingdom in every church, and Bishop Reuben Speaks says, it must become the consuming passion of every church member and pastor. (Speaks, 1996, p. 35). You’ll hear me say it over and over again, our mission is to make disciples. I contend that the leader (pastor), must keep everyone focused on the mission; and that everything the church does reinforces the mission to make **DISCIPLES!**

“Retooling for Responsible Evangelism”

Retooling? – means to equip with new or adapted tools. I contend we don’t need a whole lot of new stuff, let’s just start with caring about the people around us. How do we re-tool for responsible evangelism?

I. Let’s begin by defining *Evangelism*:

1. The root of the word evangelism, evangel, is derived from the Greek word EUANGELION which is translated good news. From that same word, we derive the word gospel. Therefore, an “Evangelist” is a person who preaches or teaches the “Gospel”

2. The “Gospel” is to be preached to everybody, and all who claim the name of Jesus as their Lord have been called into ministry in His name. Our Christian tradition teaches us that we are a part of a “royal priesthood,” called to “proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9-10) We believe in the priesthood of all believers...

3. When and where the Gospel is preached to people, they are then “Evangelized”. Therefore, evangelism is the process of taking the saving message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost, who in turn find the Lord for themselves and share the same message that saved them.

Working Definitions

“Evangelism is to so present Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit that men shall come to put their trust in God, through Christ, Jesus and accepting him as their Lord, seek to serve Him in the fellowship of His Church” (***Archbishop of Canterbury, 1958***).

“Evangelism is being, doing, and telling the gospel of the kingdom of God, in order that by the power of the Holy Spirit persons and structures may be converted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.” (**Starnes, 2008, p,7**)

“Evangelism is the Christian’s divine imperative. Our evangelistic imperative is to make disciples through our Christian witness. It is presenting the gospel to a lost world. It is the most accurate measure of our Christian commitment. The spirit of Christ is the spirit of evangelism. The closer we get to Christ, the more dedicated we become to evangelism”. (**Speaks, 1996, 31-40**)

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Evangelism is God’s divine plan to save the lost. Luke 19:10 reminds us that, Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost. It is the assignment of those who have saving faith in Jesus Christ, to present this same Jesus to those who are without him, with such tenacity that the message of Christ is heard, believed, lived and shared among others. *(Huggins, 2019)*

** Any definition of evangelism must consider Matt. 28:19 which is the command to make disciples

Evangelism vs. Outreach – we confuse the two or make them synonymous when they are not. Outreach is not found in the Bible, the idea and concept are; but outreach implies action more than message, it is what we do. Evangelism is more about who and whose we are. Both outreach and evangelism are the work of the church, and bring honor to God, but only evangelism fulfills the Lord’s command to take the Good News to all the world.

VII. Early Warning Signs of “evangelism deficits” which are indications that discipleship may not be our priority

- ✚ Less than 3 people join our church within our own buildings zip code a year...
- ✚ We make new members class more about our Discipline and denomination, than about God’s Word, Holy Living and people’s responsibility to live as citizens of the kingdom of God...
- ✚ We pin tags on VISITORS, reminding them they are not one of us...
- ✚ We wait more than a week to follow-up with new worshippers (no phone call, no email, no letter from the Pastor, nothing...)
- ✚ Bulletins are faded, light bulbs are blown, Ushers are means, members are territorial (seats/ ministries), children are frowned upon...
- ✚ Signs on our property – no loitering, no unauthorized parking, no trespassing, no cell phones in the sanctuary all say to possible disciples you are not welcome here
- ✚ All the doors of our churches are locked during the week because there is no activity at our churches except for Sundays
- ✚ 90% of our ministry takes place inside the church rather than the community
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“Retooling for Responsible Evangelism”

All these are potential indicators that “responsible evangelism” has slipped through the cracks, and we are living our best lives believing that what we are carrying out the mission of the church.

III. Why Evangelism? - the answer is simple, we evangelize because the Lord tells us to do it (Matt. 2:19-20). Saving (winning), the lost is the Lord’s purpose for coming and our purpose for being. There is one statistic that says, there are 3 billion created by God like God and for God, that are living without God. Our task has always been and remains, to make disciples not of ourselves but the Lord, Jesus Christ. A **disciple** is a learner of, a student of, and to discipline (root word for discipline) oneself in the things that Jesus Christ taught.

- a. The great commission – Go ye therefore and teach... (Matt. 28:19)
- b. “He has come to seek and save the lost” (Lk. 19:10)
- c. “and he said, follow me and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19)

Evangelism is more than tracts, pamphlets and knocking on people’s doors to see if they will join our churches. The truth is, so many of our churches are simply trying to survive and so, we have forgotten our mission in the first place, to make disciples. Our motivation for engaging in evangelism ought to be our obedience to Christ, our love for Christ and our love for others (coming to know Christ). **Church Growth should never be the goal of Evangelism, but rather the result of intentional evangelism. “We cannot cause growth; we can only create a climate in which growth can take place”.**

IV. Evangelism is...

1. **Proactive** – the biblical (imperative) mandate is to “go”. Tom Rainer in the, *Autopsy of a Decease Church*, says that churches that are internally focused are dying or are already dead. The Lord’s command is for us to go out and find the lost for the sole purpose of making disciples.

“In Matthew 4:19, Jesus said, “follow me and I will make you fishers of men”. Carlton Booth (1997) says, “if I am following, I am fishing and if I am not fishing, I am not following.” (p. 96)

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We have this idea that if people need saving, they ought to come to us. John Wesley said, “the world was his parish”, and so, we will never make disciples or grow unless we go... We’ve got to capture people minds, hearts, trust and respect. As difficult though it may be, we must remind folk of their sinful nature, ungodly ways, and separation from God while at the same time reminding them that while we were, yet sinners Christ died for us, he came to save us, and he loves us.

2. **The Preaching of the Gospel** – John MacArthur (2005), says that “evangelism is the preaching of the cross of Christ, that He died for the sins of the world, that He arose from the dead, that Jesus is Lord and that we must believe the gospel before it can have any effect on our souls” (p.249). For those who come to our churches the Apostles creed is our expression of evangelism corporately.

Evangelistic preaching doesn’t pacify people, it doesn’t dilute and distort the good news of the gospel, or the fact that Jesus died for a sinful world, he is resurrected, and we must repent of our sins for one day night is coming when no man can work, and he will judge the quick and the dead... Evangelistic preaching is a call for people to leave their sinful ways souls to become disciple of Jesus Christ, and anything short of this is not biblical evangelism.

3. **Transformational** – Like Paul we are called to open the eyes of the Gentiles, “that they may turn from darkness, into the marvelous light. Effective evangelism, better yet biblical evangelism always results in changed lives. When we “open the doors of the church” or extend he invitation to Christian discipleship we are inviting people to come to Jesus and then to take him into the world.

We live in a culture of “what can the Lord do for me” instead of developing kingdom minded people who ask what we can do for the Lord. The Lord expects the church to produce disciples who will transform the world.

Its true that good preaching and exciting worship services can draw people, but good teaching grows people. The word says, “I am transformed by the renewing of my mind”. If we want to reach the radically unchurch or pre-Christians, we’ve got to start teaching more that there is more to our Christian walk than Jonah and fish, David and another man’s wife, Paul and jail time... “Through the church, the gospel will be proclaimed, lives will be transformed, possibilities will be realized, and disciples will be made” (Stewart, 2006, p.15)

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4. **Ongoing... it's a Process** - Leroy Eims (1978), in the *Lost Art of Disciple Making*, says it is the task of every believer to tell others of the goodness of God, while at the same time corporate evangelism requires people who are inwardly and outwardly motivated. Inwardly they must be motivated to have fellowship with Christ; and outwardly they must become witnesses of Christ (p.51).

If you want evangelism to take place, you must disciple those you have. What this means is that we can no longer receive people and assign them to new member class, teach them about our church and Zion and they have no understanding of the kingdom and what it means for them to be kingdom citizen. **But** we must:

- Provide space for them to talk about their conversion?
- What does it mean for them to be saved?
- What struggles do they have that causes them to stumble?
- Do they understand Jesus' model of teaching, baptism (public profession), what are these things they must be taught to observe, and their duty to go out knowing the Lord is with them to convert others?

“Who would you rather have in your church, one hundred people who are 90% committed or ten people who are 100% committed?” (Eims, p. 57) As we teach and disciple people, we will discern who can evangelize and who needs additional support, encouraging and accountability.

V. The Manner and Matter of Evangelism

If we use the New Testament church's model for how the Great Commission was fulfilled, the odds are in our favor for success, because this is the biblical model:

- (1) through personal evangelism – all evangelism for the most part is personal. We share the gospel authentically meeting people where they are... This one-on-one encounter is not about us as witnesses, but it is about the love we have for the one to whom we are witnessing so that they respond not to us but to Christ because the Holy Spirit reaches where we cannot. It is Andrew finding Simon Peter (Jn. 1:40-42), Philip finding Nathaniel (v.42), Jesus finding Nicodemus (3:1-5) and the woman at the well (4:7-15).

Personal evangelism was the model of the early church. Even the early church went from house to house preaching Jesus. (Acts 5:42). Let me ask a question, other than on Sunday mornings during the Invitation how many of us Pastors are leading people to Christ? Our churches take on the spirit of their leaders... If we want to fulfill our mission, shift the culture and see the kingdom grow it's got to happen one soul at a time.

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- (2) through public evangelism – This is the one that scares us because we are comfortable in our sanctuaries... this involves our public presentation of the gospel. Peter after Pentecost proclaimed the gospel and my bible says 3,000 and 5,000 souls came to know Christ. Jesus’ entire ministry was a public ministry, but we have to the detriment of the church in so many instances confined our ministry to circumference and space of our sanctuaries. Evangelism is powerful in the supermarket line, its powerful in the doctor’s office, its powerful, challenging and rewarding at the family reunion...

Public evangelism uses the same methodology as public evangelism but in a larger arena. Unfortunately, most preachers engage in public evangelism solely when they stand up to preach on Sundays... And, even then we have not we don’t design our sermons to convert unbelievers, we leave this to a passionate invitation to discipleship. Here we are more likely to be challenged, dismissed, perceived as a religious fanatic, or dogmatic; and I say so what, so was Jesus.

- (3) and; through the planting of churches – this is self-descriptive, although the church today, especially our church the black church, fails to see the correlation between evangelism and church planting. If we are reproducing disciples, then we must be reproducing churches, right?

Research on the life cycle of churches reveals that the best years for a church to experience growth are in the first 25 yrs. Older churches can grow, but it becomes more difficult to break out of old patterns to establish a new vision so crucial to growth” (McIntosh, 2001, p.117) The only problem with evangelism through church planting is that people have grown weary of the church (structurally and institutionally). They have not seen the church fulfill its mission or demonstrate the kind the power they profess to have. This is why Retooling for “Responsible Evangelism” is important.

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VI. Retooling for (Responsible/ Effective) Evangelism

REPENTANCE

If we are going to retool, then repentance begins with the house of God (I Peter 4). Repentance is the acknowledgement of our sin and a strong resolve and resolution to forsake it... So, Lord,

- ❖ For every opportunity we had to tell of God’s goodness, and we did not forgive us...
- ❖ For not loving those around us enough, to offer them healing, and the hope of the gospel, forgive us
- ❖ For every Sunday we press our way pass people in our own house, without pleading with them to come “see a man whose name is Jesus”, forgive us...
- ❖ For visitor that sat down next to us, and we never took the time to ask if they were looking for Jesus forgive us...
- ❖ For letting fear, our lack of the Word, and our own assurance of salvation, keep us from sharing the good news of the Gospel, forgive us
- ❖ For coming to this convocation believing that we’ll leave here it will be business as usual, forgive us!

My brothers and sisters we must first admit that Evangelism has not been a priority for us, we have failed in our mission and have willfully disobeyed the command given to us in Matthew 28:19-20 and everywhere else in God’s word where we have failed to win others to Christ.

RETURNING

We are challenged to take a serious look at what our biblical mandate is from the perspective of Pastor and people, because effective evangelism requires both to be active participants or agents in the work of multiplying and making disciples. I content that if we are going to move forward, we must implement some new strategies, with the biblical mandate as our foundation:

In Matthew 4:19, we find “follow me and I will make you fishers of men”. Booth (1991) says, “I think it is correct to say that if I am following, I am fishing, and if I am not fishing, I am not following. (p. 51)

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RETURNING (cont.)

1. Revisit some fundamental biblical concepts like:
 - a. Stewardship of the Pastor, conversion, salvation and discipleship
 - b. Explore our obedience to God’s Word, love of neighbor, and how we live out this gospel we read about, hear about and profess
 - c. Ensure that at every level of ministry individually and corporately everyone understands our mandate is to make Disciples
 - d. Teach, equip and motivate others to speak about their faith authentically from where they are...

2. Pastor’s you are instrumental to the work of evangelism
 - a. **Motivate your people by being an example.** Jesus engaged in the work of evangelism and told his disciples to “follow me, and I will make you fishers of men”. We must model the behavior we desire to see.

 - b. **We must motivate by having clear expectations**

 - c. **We motivate by our exhortations** – use the pulpit to excite, challenge and admonish persons to win souls

 - d. **We motivate with the excitement of new converts.** The joy of receiving new converts is contagious and the testimony of a changed life is a visible demonstration of the power of the gospel.

 - e. **We motivate through evangelist efforts** – the leadership must endorse and support
 - i. Hold a rally where you know people need conversion
 - ii. Host a city-wide crusade in a park, liquor store parking lot, at the fairgrounds, or in a large mall area (carnivals/fair)
 - iii. Implement some home bible studies specifically designed to invite unchurch people
 - iv. Consider sharing on a large-scale literature that is evangelistic, this should include minimal or basic information about your church

All evangelistic efforts require planning and promotion, and really without people knowing it they are taking on a more active role in evangelism as you plan, strategize and implement together.

“Retooling for Responsible Evangelism”

RETOOL, REGROUP AND REDIRECT – Examples of Responsible Evangelism.

Each generation of church goers must find a way to reach the lost. Reading a book, listening to some spiritual guru, or even embracing this presentation must be done cautiously, because to say it plainly every method or way of thinking does not apply to every situation. Evangelism today must be like Starbucks coffee, it must have a bold flavor that keeps producing consumers... Here are some personal examples of we've done in our ministry, some of which you are doing and more...

- ✚ We've always attempted to have a strong teaching ministry to equip those entrusted to us for the work of the ministry (not the church).
- ✚ Shifted from a traditional Sunday School to Kingdom Classes (Pastor teaches too) – that lasted from 9:00-10:30 so that people received more than an hour of God's word.
- ✚ We developed a comprehensive evangelism plan that looked at the churches around us, what we could offer a new convert (childcare), and the sufficiency of the church budget to carry out our plans (\$8000 and up)
- ✚ On-line class leaders –
- ✚ Excellence in administration, facility upkeep, and radical hospitality. No expectations put on the unchurch...
- ✚ Every member asked to lead one other person to Christ within the year, which were acknowledged at our Kingdom Awards Banquet...
 - Discussed in Executive Board meetings w/ officers
 - Discussed in Class Leaders meeting
 - Emphasized in our Christian Education Dept.
 - Evangelism breeds accountability – how are we teaching, connecting, and discipling new converts
- ✚ Follow-up letters to all guests/ extended family that are not cookie cutters, but personal in that we highlighted who invited them, others visiting with them,
- ✚ Welcome Materials – church calendar, pen, CD/tape of the service & additional information about the church and time with the pastor...
- ✚ Media, Marketing and Branding were key – your brand identifies you and you must work to convey it. We prepared for our media ministry... everybody shouldn't be on Facebook and if you are don't show empty pews
- ✚ We acknowledged the Evangelist of the Month –
- ✚ Regardless of other churches, claiming the Community as our own –
- ✚ Intentional Jail visitations with both families waiting and those incarcerated –
- ✚ Providing a needed service – feeding the community

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Conclusion: If we are sitting around praying, hoping and believing that the fate of the church is in our ability to get Millennials we are sadly mistaken. Yes, they are needs, but so are our youth, our children, our seniors... “If mainline denominations are to once again become a spirit-energized movement that will have a transforming influence in our culture, a significant part of that ministry will need to happen through older congregation that receive a new hear for witness and ministry” (Harnish, p. 192)

This entire workshop will be an exercise in futility if we don’t form some small groups of clergy and lay people who are willing to wrestle with how their church, their district and subsequently their conference can recover its sense of being God’s agents of transformation, and how they can recover their passion for making disciples... there are enough spiritually starving people to fill every congregation in this room.

No simplistic, superficial makeover or denominational tinkering will do, our hearts must be changed (or in the words of John Wesley strangely warmed), to ignite the faith of others we seek to lead to Christ. Wow, let’s “Retool for Responsible Evangelism” together! Discipleship and disciple-making are not an option; they are a clear command from Scripture.

Notes

A special thanks to Bishop Kenneth Monroe and Mrs. Sheila Monroe, and the wonderful Presiding Elders, Pastors, Ministers, District Officers and Laity of the Eastern North Carolina District for allowing me to share.

Dr. Evalina Huggins

RETOOLING FOR RESPONSIBLE EVANGELISM

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