

## **Tool #26: Review Your Church's Evangelism**

*Evangelism strategy:* Are any of the following true of your church's evangelism ministries?

- All your church's evangelism eggs are in one basket (for example, the only targets of witness are people in members' relational networks).
- Your evangelism is either wholly explicit (all words) or wholly implicit (all deeds).
- The church does not practice evangelism that brings members in contact with hurting people (such as service evangelism, or evangelistic events targeted at at-risk youth).
- The church does not practice evangelism that encourages the formation of deeper relationships of witness (e.g., church members distribute flyers in the neighborhood and pray for people, but never get to know any non-Christians personally).
- There is no outreach dimension to Sunday school classes, Bible study groups, or other small groups; church activities are best described as exclusive "holy huddles."
- Evangelism is happening only in official church programs (not in members' daily lives), or else evangelism is happening only individually and spontaneously (not in an organized, planned way).
- A small group of people are responsible for most of the church's evangelism.
- Members are not provided with regular training and encouragement to evangelize.
- Your church's evangelism methods have not changed in the last ten years.

If two or more boxes are checked, this probably means your church's evangelistic strategy needs to be revised.

*Evangelism style:* Examine not only *what* you are doing in evangelism but also *how*:

- Do you treat those with whom you share the gospel with condescension or respect, condemnation or loving kindness?
- Are non-Christians viewed as unique individuals to be understood and loved, or merely as "targets"?
- Do you show respect for other faiths while presenting Christian truth?
- Is the message presented in a cookie-cutter fashion, or in a way that is relevant to people's felt needs, experiences, cultural background, and community context?
- Does the invitation to faith feel friendly or confrontational?
- Are people being invited to agree with a set of abstract propositions, or take the next step in an active journey of discipleship?
- Do members practice evangelism begrudgingly out of obligation to a duty, or with eagerness out of love for God and others?

Consider whether you are giving priority to evangelistic techniques over the quality of relationships and the spirit in which you share the Gospel.

Adapted from Ronald J. Sider, Philip N. Olson and Heidi Rolland Unruh, *Churches That Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 73-74.