

Love People.

Our **relationships** are meaningful and intentional.

Impact the World.

We **reproduce** new Christ-followers and new churches on a similar mission.

EVANGELISM 101

Jesus changed the course of history over a period of three years. In these three years He not only provided a way for humanity to be reunited to the Father, but He also laid the foundation and gave us a framework for building His church and seeing the kingdom expand. This foundation was not programs, was not great preaching (although Jesus was a brilliant teacher), and was not a great church building. The foundation that Jesus laid was in His calling of 12 ordinary men in whom He invested over a three-year period. His basic “process” was evangelism (“come and follow me”) and discipleship (life-on-life development). And through these ordinary followers the Spirit of God built the Church and expanded the Church across the globe.

The Riverside Church plant will be no different. We are not going to be built upon great preaching, programs, music, or a building. Even though we may have all of these things, the foundation of Riverside Church will be every person, by the power of the Spirit, sharing the gospel (evangelism) and then investing in these new believers (discipleship) in a way that they can in turn “go an make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19).” This is the way Jesus established the church, and it’s how Riverside will be established and grow. And just in case you are thinking, “well, that was Jesus, but I can’t do something like that.” Jesus actually said His followers would do even greater things than He (John 14:12)!

BASIC MATH**“Launch big and grow with great church programs”**

There are ~40 adults who call Riverside their church as of June 2009, lets say we launch big (250+) and then grow with great programs (50+ people per year)

Year 1: 40 at start + 250 from a big marketing blitz = 290 people

Year 2: 290 people + 50 more from great programming = 340 people

Year 3: 340 people + 50 more from great programming = 390 people

Year 4: 390 people + 50 more from great programming = 440 people

... almost 800 people after 10 years, that’s a big church!

... almost 1000 people by year 13, that’s a lot of people.

vs.

“Personal Evangelism & Discipleship”

If each of our 40 adults on the church plant team simply evangelize/disciple one person per year, who in turns does the same:

Year 1: 40 at start, each evangelizes/disciples 1 person = 80 disciples

Year 2: 80 at start, each evangelizes/disciples 1 person = 160 disciples

Year 3: 160 at start, each evangelizes/disciples 1 person = 320 disciples

Year 4: 320 at start, each evangelizes/disciples 1 person = 640 disciples

...1280 by year 5

...40,960 by year 10

...Over 325,000 by year 13 (St. Joseph county is a little over 250,000)

And this doesn’t include the impact the 20-30 kids who already call Riverside their church can make! Just for fun, this would mean over 325 million disciples in 23 years, that’s America, and 10 billion in 28 years, which is probably the worlds population by then.

1) When you hear the word “evangelism,” what feelings/thoughts come to mind?

Read Luke 19:10

2) What did Jesus come to do? What is the context of this passage?

Read John 17:14-18 & Matthew 28:18-20 (see also Isaiah 49:6 & Mark 16:15-16)

3) What does being “sent” mean for us? Is it optional?

4) What are the consequences of us not sharing the gospel?

Read Acts 20:22-24 (see also Acts 4:19-20)

5) How passionate should/must we be about evangelism?

Read Luke 24:45-49 & Acts 1:8

6) What is the key context/paradigm that we MUST operate in as we respond to our calling to evangelize?

Next week we will discuss many different styles and practical approaches to evangelism in an “Evangelism Lab.” The goal will be to practically empower each of us to share the gospel in ways that fit how we are individually wired, as well as in ways that will stretch us. But unless we understand and have a heart for the bigger picture discussed today, next week will simply be tips and techniques, that are powerless unless we are first empowered by the Spirit and yielded in our hearts. Spend this week praying in response to today’s passages.