

Are all Christians to be Evangelists?

Written by Calvin Fox

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I hear Preachers occasionally lament that Christians are not getting out into the world enough. They need to leave the confines of the church, they say, and get involved with evangelism and missions outside, beyond the church. This sounds good. But it also is confusing and misleading.

Defining the Church as the People of God, there is only one Church and it is either gathered or scattered. The local church is gathered in a space (probably some church building) somewhere for only a few hours at most each week and then all of us are scattered out in the world the rest of the time. We do not need to be exhorted to go into the world. We do that! The question is what does the Church do out in the world?

First Answer: In the world, we are salt and light

How are we salt and light? The answer from the Beatitudes: by simply being the person described by Jesus in Matt.6 -

- poor in spirit
- mourn
- meek
- hunger and thirst for righteousness
- merciful
- pure in heart
- peacemakers
- persecuted for righteousness' sake, "on my account"
- rejoicing and being glad,

"You are the salt of the earth" & "You are the light of the world."

Second Answer: In the world, we glorify God living as redeemed human beings

WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

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Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever

Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A. The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

Scattered and gathered, the Church is to glorify God. Originally, we were to do this by being who God created us to be: the Image God in the world. Sin spoiled that Plan. It fractured the Image. However, the Good News is that the image is redeemed in Christ and once again, we are to glorify God by being what He created us to be, living as redeemed human beings in relationship to Him, each other and the natural world.

In short- we are to glorify God by being who God made us to be in Christ- redeemed human beings. How does a flower or tree glorify God? by being what God intended a flower or tree to be; but flowers and trees are not all the same. They differ in species and they differ as specimens. We glorify God by being the kind of human being God created us to be in Christ, using the unique qualities and gifts He has given to each of us.

Third Answer: In the world, we are to be the Body of Christ.

The Church is a Spirit-filled Body. All members share the Spirit of Christ in common. Each and all of us are to be filled with the fruit of the Spirit, which is the character of Christ within us. That fruit is to characterize our personal lives and all our relationships.

We also are individual and unique parts of the the Body of Christ. Our responsibility is to recognize, develop and use our unique gifts together with all the other parts for the common good? How do we know what our parts or ministries in the Church are? By recognizing, developing and using the gifts of the Spirit, both when we are gathered and when we are scattered. 1 Cor 12, Eph.3, 1 Peter 3, et al.

It is the responsibility of the Leaders of the Church to help us do that. Eph.4:11 And [Christ] gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ

There are the itinerant vocations of Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists [those who move around and preach the Gospel and plant the churches]. And there are the located vocations of Pastors-Teachers [who also celebrate the Sacraments]. The latter equip the saints for their various ministries in the Body and in the World according to the gifts that the Lord of the Church has given to each and all of them (again 1 Cor 12, et al)