

COE

CREATING A
CULTURE OF EVANGELISM
IN A LOCAL CHURCH

Includes
PLAN OF ACTION



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THE GOAL

Most pastors have a desire to see their congregations, their leadership teams and themselves, equipped and motivated to fulfil the Great Commission. The aim of this document is to help you as a pastor or leader to create a ‘Culture of Evangelism’ (COE) within your local church.

A COE is very different from an evangelism ‘program.’ Evangelism programs come and go. The typical result is people become excited for a while, yet when the evangelist or visiting speaker leaves or ‘the course’ ends, momentum is lost and the program along with the excitement usually die a slow death. Things return to ‘business as usual’ or to the church’s natural ‘default mode.’ In default mode, personal evangelism, in most churches, is just not happening.

THE CONCEPT

When a COE has been established, the hearts of the people in that church NATURALLY want to reach out to people outside the church. I emphasise ‘naturally’ because we don’t want the motivation for reaching out to come from, or be dependent upon, someone at the front of the church, ‘beating a drum.’ With a COE, the motivation to reach out has become internal.

When you have created a COE, the very DNA of your church will have changed. When the culture of a church becomes evangelistic, 100% of the people will be active in evangelism in any given week – and when certain key principles are in place they will remain active. Creating a COE is not easy. It necessitates taking a long-term view and making a resolute commitment to endure until the goal is achieved.

As a Pastor you know that anything really worthwhile has a price.

HOW YOU CAN DEVELOP A COE IN YOUR CHURCH

PLAN OF ACTION GUIDELINE

Overview:

1. Take the time to prayerfully read this document.
2. Invite someone from Evangelism Strategies International (ESI) to your church.
3. Process the material and the action plan, adapting it so you can develop your own COE.
4. Implement the action plan in your own church.
5. **Persevere** with the action plan until 100% of your people are active in evangelism and a COE is established.

This action plan has been developed in conjunction with the book entitled *Evangelism – Strategies from heaven in the war for souls*, by Julian Batchelor. It is strongly recommended that the senior leadership of your church read the book to make sure that everyone on your team is in agreement with what evangelism is; what the gospel is; and how best to move forward with your church in the Great Commission. It is literally impossible for your church to become 100% active in evangelism if those in your leadership team are divided in their knowledge of the basics. **Unity is key.**

Step One:

Invite Julian for a weekend (usually a Friday night 7pm to 10pm, and a Saturday 8:00am to 12:00pm) to speak to your leaders so that he can meet you, answer questions, and develop relationship. Eight hours teaching time is ideal. Once leaders have had a chance to meet Julian, process the material and the plan of action, it can then be revealed to the rest of the church. These eight hours are action packed, hugely informative, and not at all laborious or boring. This would be an excellent annual leadership retreat exercise. No church has regretted taking this first step.

Step Two:

Read the book, “Evangelism: Strategies from heaven in the war for souls,” in full prior to attempting to implement this plan of action. This book is similar to a text book and any chapters or appendices referred to in this plan are found in the book. Unlike most text books, however, it is very easy to read and is based on Julian’s extensive knowledge gained as an evangelist for over 15 years. It not only encourages and inspires and brings understanding about evangelism, but it contains a wealth of practical applications.

Both steps will help you to...

Catch the vision, and be passionate and enthusiastic about God’s plans for world evangelisation, and your part in it.

- ■ Do the EBFT (Evangelism Battle Fitness Test – See Appendix Six, Pg. 653). This test has been designed to help pastors assess areas of strength and weakness in their church with respect to evangelism.
- ■ Seriously and honestly look at any areas of weakness that have been highlighted. Re-read the chapters that have been referenced and put in place strategies to strengthen these areas.
- ■ Remember as a pastor and key leader of the church, there needs to be a strong inner conviction about evangelism that your people will sense. People will follow those who passionately believe in what they are saying (walking the talk). Our people “know” when this is a strongly held conviction and will rally behind the “cause.” Too often leaders “read” their ideas (or repeat someone else’s ideas) for the church rather than passionately believing and living them.

Whether we realise it or not, our people can always sense (and know) whether what we say is “the right thing that we should be saying” or whether it is something that we hold strong, passionate convictions about. If we are genuine, evangelism will literally be ‘oozing from our pores.’ **Passion and inner conviction about evangelism cannot be put on or hyped.**

- ■ The difference to us may not seem much, but oh, the difference it will make for our people. You will find that they will rally behind you like those rallying behind Martin Luther King in his famous “I had a dream...” speech. This is not an exaggeration. People will rally behind a leader who holds strong, passionate convictions. Without this, our people will not be enthused, will struggle to rally to the cause, and the idea will only be half heartedly pursued. The only real proof that you believe in evangelism, in the eyes of those you lead in your church, is that you are personally practicing it. And if you are personally practicing it, you will find you become a ‘can’t stop talking about evangelism’ pastor.

Teach & train key leaders.

- ■ You will need to build solid foundations at the upper level of your church leadership and management. It is important to ensure that they have all:
 - a. “Caught the vision to prioritise world evangelisation.”
 - b. Developed strong inner convictions about the same.
 - c. Familiarised themselves with the devices of the enemy which hinder Christians from evangelising as revealed in the book.
 - d. Come to a place where they are all ‘on the same page’ with respect to:
 - i. What evangelism is and is not.
 - ii. What the gospel is and what it is not.
 - iii. The priority of the Church.
 - iv. What must to be done to unlock a local church so that has the best chance of creating a COE.

■ ■ As stated earlier in this document, to achieve these objectives the first step is inviting Julian to speak to your leaders. If Julian is not available, there is a DVD series available with the same intensive teaching and encouragement he will give at the Leadership Sessions.

■ ■ Purchase copies of *Evangelism - Strategies from heaven in the war for souls*, for key leaders in your church. This book contains a wealth of practical knowledge and is highly recommended. Discounts are available for bulk orders.

■ ■ For those who don't like reading, there is an Evangelism Discipleship group/life group DVD series available, plus workbooks for each small group participant. So when the leadership has seen the material and read the book, then the rest of the church can easily be ‘brought onto the same page.’ **But first, the leadership needs to become aware of the value of implementing the material found in the book and the DVD series.**

Do an examination of the current state of the church with key leaders and elders.

■ ■ This means applying the “Six steps to drawing a non-Christian to Christ model” (see Chapter 9, Pg. 280) to all your existing church ministries, programs, and activities.

■ ■ As a leadership team ask, “Which ministries/activities/programs are ploughing, sowing, watering, growing, harvesting, and discipling?”

Incorporate evangelism into church planning.

■ ■ Read “Building an evangelistic culture.” (See Appendix 8, Pg. 679).

■ ■ Incorporate the ideas in this appendix into your church planning. Remember creating a COE won't happen over night. It's all about taking small achievable steps that will slowly bring about permanent change.

■ ■ Set measurable evangelism goals and targets for the church (e.g. Introduce an evangelism offering (see Chapter 17, Pg. 494, “How to be accountable in evangelism”).

■ ■ Consider carrying out a simplistic SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis for evangelism in the church. Some of the weaknesses and threats can be people in the church (especially leaders or those holding responsibility) that may feel insecure, undermining the creation of a COE. It is important that you know who is “for the change,” and who needs to be “assisted to change.” Please note any “threats” or “weaknesses” can be changed into “opportunities” if they can be harnessed and redirected.

■ ■ Whatever you do, don't make evangelism a department of your church. Aim to make evangelism a vital part of every aspect of church life. **When this happens, the very DNA of your church will begin to change and you will be well on the way to creating a COE.**

Teach your church members.

■ ■ Teach and highlight the six step model of how non-Christians are brought to Christ (see Chapter 9, Pgs 275). After the leadership of your church have seen the DVD series based on the book, *Evangelism - Strategies from heaven in the war for souls*, (or had Julian take you through the Power Point slides based on this book personally with a seminar), plan for the rest of the church to see them through midweek life/home/small groups.

■ ■ To save precious finance, establish a library in your church. Make multiple copies of the book *Evangelism - Strategies from heaven in the war for souls* available for church members to borrow and return. Establish a record of who has read the book and who has not. Reading the book will be a key step towards everyone in your church being “on the same page” with respect to evangelism. When everyone in your church is thinking the same about evangelism, you will have eliminated ‘a house divided against itself’ (Mark 3:25).¹

Ear tag Ephesians 4:11-12 evangelists.

■ ■ Ascertain, and ear-tag those people in the Church who are Ephesians 4:11-12 evangelists. These people are a gift from God to your church. Evangelists with character, maturity and leadership potential ought to be included in planning and discussion with the top tier of leadership in your church. If the evangelist(s) in your church don't currently have these qualities, mentor and pour into them to help develop them in their gifting.

Profile evangelism in your church.

■ ■ Every Sunday service, have people volunteer to come to the front to testify about their evangelism experiences during the week.

Prayer is a key component of developing a COE. The whole process needs to be bathed in prayer.

Help church members with practical training.

■ ■ This is where all the excuses can be brought out as to why “I can not go out and evangelise today.” We need to help your people take that first step and this is where the “**Seven Step Master Plan of Evangelism**” comes in (See Chapter 1, Pg. 14). Once your people have a strong inner conviction that this really is important to God, we need to help them break the ice, hold their hand so to speak, and help them take the first steps towards regular evangelism.

■ ■ There are many ways this can be achieved, but behind any plan must be targets that are “achievable and sustainable.” We want this to be a lifestyle choice not a “flavour of the month” decision. Some ideas to facilitate this would be:

- a. Allow people to choose their own level on the **Seven Step Master Plan**.
- b. Lead by example. Others will look to you for advice and encouragement.
- c. Try and establish key people who can show others how to ‘do’ each step on the **Seven Step Master Plan**.
- d. Make resources available for your people (i.e. tracts, survey forms, and tools to deliver the gospel). This will eliminate another reason your people might give for not doing evangelism. We would also encourage you to check out the resources at the various websites listed in Appendix 7, Pg. 675.
- e. Invite your people to be accountable for evangelism. To view a sample of a simple and effective accountability card go to www.esisite.com/bookdownloads/accountabilitycard.pdf
- f. For steps six and seven on the **Seven Step Master Plan**, provide a range of tools for people to choose from. Encourage them to make up their own tools. Put on ‘workshops’ to facilitate this. For steps four and five, encourage people to make up their own survey forms. For steps one to three, provide a range of tracts. Again, encourage people to write their own tracts. Key idea: what people develop themselves, they are more likely to ‘own’ and therefore use.
- g. Help people get started. Some ideas to facilitate this would be for “manageable” sized groups of people to be taken out and shown how to give out tracts, do surveys, and proclaim the gospel. (Manageable depends on the size of your church and the number of competent trainers available). Make a priority of starting with those that are in leadership positions that have caught the vision. This can be rolled out exponentially to the rest of the church. As in anything if we take time to “do it right first time,” the long term benefits will outweigh any initial time aspect. As pointed out in Chapter 14, Pg. 400, Footnote 2, if we are prepared to spend thousands of dollars and months of time (sometimes years) for a temporal qualification, lets not hesitate or baulk at the commitment needed to establish a COE in our church.

Choose a person to oversee evangelism in your church:

■ ■ Just as your church has someone looking after new Christians, children’s ministry, youth, men’s & ladies activities, it is important that everyone in the church is aware of who oversees “evangelism.” Make sure the person is of good character, highly respected, and capable. Ideally, it should be one of the pastors. They must be active in personal evangelism, passionate, accurate in defining terms, and up to speed with the devices of the enemy. Obviously, they must have the passion and vision to create a COE.

Incorporate regular gospel proclamation and altar calls.

■ ■ Show ‘Proclaim it!’ regularly in your church. To view this program go to www.esisite.com, go to ‘Free downloads associated with this book’ and select ‘To view Proclaim it! for PC’s, click here.’

■ ■ Introduce Pastor Barry Saar’s idea for reaching people each Sunday with the gospel (See Chapter 19, Pgs. 530-31).

Ensure clarification of the altar call decision, and that support systems are in place to support and disciple new decision makers and those on the verge of making a decision. Your congregation will feel comfortable bringing along non-christian friends and family when they know they are going to hear the gospel clearly.

Have new Christian programs ready ensuring the gospel is explained and enabling reinforcement of their decision. Have your best people running these programs.

Be accountable to each other in evangelism.

■ ■ Leaders must set the pace and example. Set achievable (with a stretch) targets for those in church leadership. (e.g. minimum once a week proclamation). This is not about number counting or notches on the belt. It’s all about practically “walking what we are talking.” Too often pastors feel with all their other responsibilities “there is just not enough time.” (See Chapter 17, Pg. 479). This is why it is so important to schedule an evangelism appointment so your people can see how important it is to you. The spin off effects will be enormous. The only way this is going to happen successfully at a leadership level is to be accountable to each other. Don’t think you can successfully develop a COE without accountability.

■ ■ After leaders have established accountability, introduce the concept to the rest of the church. To avoid legalism and any negative backflow, this must be done on a voluntary basis. (See (e) above).

Establish on-going training.

■ ■ Help people move up the various levels of the **Seven Step Master Plan** of Evangelism (tract distribution to one on one sharing the gospel.) Find ways to encourage and celebrate when people move up to another level in evangelism.

Continually reinforce the basics.

■ ■ Teach regularly in your church what evangelism is, and what evangelism is not; what the gospel is, and what it is not; and keep showing the gospel using Proclaim it! **Every time you do, whether people are saved or not, you’ll be building ‘life’ into your people.**

Discipleship.

■ ■ Ensure that new Christians are discipled by your best people. This will help close the back door.

Future new church ministries/ activities/ outreaches etc.

■ ■ Continue to review and establish new ministries etc in the light of the “Six steps to drawing a non-Christian to Christ model” (see Chapter 9, Pg. 280 “ploughing, sowing, etc.”) ensuring wherever possible or practical to incorporate gospel evangelism.

■ ■ Make sure outreaches and other community events include the gospel being presented.

MEASURING CHANGE

Measuring whether change is happening is important. It is fine to talk about change, but it is always important to know whether the teaching given and steps being taken are effective.

- a. Prior to commencing the implementation of this action plan, a survey should be carried out of all the people in your church to ascertain what percentage is already active in evangelism.
- b. After implementing the action plan, (applying the teaching on evangelism and training), the people in your church should be re-surveyed.
- c. There should be continued re-surveying on a regular basis (e.g. 3 monthly).

If you follow the principles recommended in this action plan, you will see the percentage of people who are active in evangelism climb steadily. **Be relentless and determined to activate 100% of your people for personal evangelism.**

¹ Let me explain what I mean. Five things are almost certain in a local church. First, the people who attend will have wide and varying definitions of 'evangelism' and 'the gospel.' Secondly, leadership are not aware of this. Thirdly, most people, including the leaders, will be largely unaware of the devices of the enemy to stop evangelism. Fourthly, the pastor or leader wants 100% of their people to engage in personal evangelism. The fifth is most pastors are frustrated by the apparent lack of interest their people display towards personal evangelism.

Now, if the pastor gets up and announces boldly, 'we need to evangelise our community!' everyone is certain to clap loudly and enthusiastically in agreement. But here's the catch. Those claps and cheers from the people may mean something quite different from what the pastor thinks they mean, or what he/she wants them to mean. For example:

1. A certain percentage of the people clapped and cheered the pastor because they were saying in their minds 'Yes! And we want to get behind those with the gift of evangelism as they go about doing it! But I am not called to do it personally.'
2. Another percentage were clapping and cheering because they genuinely thought they were already doing it through good works, prayer, giving their testimony, being kind and loving, befriending non-Christians, letting their light shine etc. In other words, they were clapping the pastor for acknowledging what they were already doing.
3. Still others clapped and cheered because they wanted something fresh to pray about, and hadn't seriously considered for a moment that they would be involved in evangelism personally.
4. Others clapped and cheered because they liked the idea of their church doing what Jesus wants, and of the church having fresh vision. But they hadn't seriously considered for a moment that they would be involved in evangelism personally.
5. Another percentage knew that evangelism was the proclamation of the gospel or the spread of it through tracts. However, this group thought they were giving the gospel when they engaged non-Christians in general conversation about God and church. They were clapping because the pastor was affirming them in what they were already doing.

All these different groups of people in a local church cause it to be 'a house divided against itself' with respect to evangelism. As such, without bringing everyone up to speed with the devices of the enemy to hinder evangelism, the pastor has little or no hope of establishing a COE.