WHAT IS AN EVANGELIST?

Why Sharing Jesus Was Never Just for Professionals

by Charlie Marq

Sharing the Gospel is what God has called me to give my life to, and I count it one of the greatest privileges I could ever have. Somewhere along the way, many Christians quietly concluded that telling others about Jesus is that person's job, not theirs.

WHAT IS AN EVANGELIST?

An evangelist is someone who announces the Good News of Jesus Christ. The word comes from the Greek euangelistēs, which simply means "a bringer of good news." Scripture names evangelists as one of the roles Christ gave His Church: "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11, ESV).

God calls some people to give their lives to proclaiming the Gospel, often traveling from place to place to do it. For 40 years, Forge has sent evangelists like that to lift up Jesus in more than 100 nations, and I thank God for that calling.

WHAT DOES AN EVANGELIST ACTUALLY DO?

Christ gave these roles "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12, ESV). The evangelist's job is to equip the saints—that's you—for the work of ministry. If you have been waiting for someone with a title to reach your neighbor, that's not how it works. The evangelist is supposed to be equipping you to do it.

In Kisumu, Kenya, Forge helped train about 700 pastors and leaders representing 102 denominations. Months later, those churches were still applying what they had learned, empowering every believer to live as a daily Kingdom Laborer. That is what an evangelist is for.

IS EVANGELISM A SPIRITUAL GIFT?

God calls some people to the role of evangelist. He calls every one of His followers to be a witness. Before Jesus ascended, He told His disciples, "you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8, ESV). Peter wrote to scattered believers living normal lives that they should always be "prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15, ESV).

It makes sense, then, that Jesus chose the word He did. When He said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few" (Matthew 9:37, ESV), He didn't ask for more experts. He asked for laborers—a roll-up-your-sleeves, work-clothes kind of word. That is why we talk so much about Laborership at Forge. Everyone is called to the harvest.

EVERYDAY EVANGELISM THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

The person best positioned to reach a community is almost never the visiting speaker. It's the people who already live there. When a believer realizes God put them in those relationships on purpose, something shifts. The Gospel starts traveling along roads that no event or program could ever map.

In Somalia in 2023, a man named Mohammed heard about Jesus through everyday Kingdom Laborers at the very moment he was being recruited by a terrorist group. He chose Jesus, and he says that encounter kept him from becoming a suicide bomber.

So what does everyday evangelism look like? Jesus modeled it simply. He would see people, stop for them, spend time with them, and share the Good News.

EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLESHIP BELONG TOGETHER

At another evangelistic outreach in Kenya, more than 20,000 people attended and 4,890 decisions for Christ were recorded. But a decision is the beginning, not the finish line. Jesus didn't send us to make decisions. He sent us to "make disciples" (Matthew 28:19, ESV). If we proclaim the Gospel without discipling people, we can end up celebrating moments instead of multiplying lives.

If our discipleship never moves us outward toward people who don't yet know Jesus, something is missing there too. Growing disciples share their faith, and new believers need to be discipled. That is how the Gospel multiplies: one life reaching another, who reaches another.

EVANGELISM IN AMERICA: WHY I'M OPTIMISTIC

Everywhere I go, I meet people who are spiritually hungry. I see a generation more open to conversations about God than I can remember, and young believers longing for a life that counts. America is a mission field, and it's a field ready for harvest.

When Jesus saw the crowds, "he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:36, ESV). His response wasn't despair. It was a call for more laborers. The vision He cast in the Gospels is still the answer for the hour we're living in.

HOW IGNITE CAMPAIGNS ARE EQUIPPING CITIES

Our vision is to see Kingdom Laborers saturating entire cities with the love of Jesus, and to see transformation that lasts long after any event is over.

Ignite isn't another weekend of excitement that fades by Monday. It works through local churches to equip believers to share the Gospel and to make sure everyone who responds to Jesus is discipled, with the expectation that they will become Kingdom Laborers too. Ignite Campaigns are already taking off in several cities across America.

YOUR VOICE MATTERS. YOUR LIFE COUNTS.
GOD HAS ALREADY PLACED YOU IN A HARVEST
FIELD THAT NO PASTOR OR EVANGELIST CAN REACH.
AND THE PEOPLE THERE NEED THE HOPE YOU HAVE.