# 153RD ANNUAL SESSION OF THE VIRGINIA CONFERENCE MID-ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT JUNE 11-16, 2019



## RETOOLING FOR RESPONSIBLE EVANGELISM

Rev. Dr. Evalina Huggins, Presenter

Newport News District, Host Rev. Dr. Vincent M. Jones Sr., Host Presiding Elder Mrs. Devieta C. Moore, Missionary Supervisor Bishop W. Darin Moore, Presiding Prelate

## Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District Convocation "Retooling for Responsible Evangelism"

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"Go ye therefore (evangelism) and teach (discipleship) all nations (inclusive), baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world". (Matt. 28:19-20).

#### **Objectives:**

- 1. Together we will revisit the biblical mandate that commands us to "go and make disciples".
- Together we will explore what evangelism is, is not, and potentially could be... 2.
- Together we will self-reflect, repent, and examine to what extent we have been 3. complicit in the failure of the church to make disciples.
- We will challenge ourselves to continue "Retooling" for Responsible Evangelism 4.

At the conclusion of our sharing together we will leave empowered and challenged to refocus, "retool" and redeploy those who have been converted, to return to the place of their conversion to make DISCIPLES! Our Mandate and our Mission will be clear.

**Retooling means** – to equip with something new, because what was previously thought to work does not; or to adapt, adjust, or alter the tools we have for maximum use or impact.

I.	Evangelism Defined (develop a working definition)

- a. Archbishop of Canterbury
- b. Bishop Darryl B. Starnes

- c. Bishop Reuben L. Speaks
- d. Dr. Evalina Huggins
- II. Signs of "evangelism deficits" indications the discipleship may not be our priority
- Less than 3 people join our churches within our buildings zip code...
- ♣ New members never process their conversion or salvation with anyone in the church, we believe new members class is sufficient...
- ♣ New members class is more about our Discipline and denomination, rather than the study and understanding of God's Word, Holy Living and people's responsibility to live as citizen of the kingdom of God...

## 153<sup>rd</sup> Annual Session of the Virginia Conference "Retooling for Responsible Evangelism"

- Waiting more than a week to follow-up with new worshippers (no phone call, no email, no letter from the Pastor, nothing...)
- ♣ Bulletins are poorly copied, cob webs fill stair ways and windows, light bulbs are blown, ushers are temperamental, members are territorial (seats/ ministries), and children are frowned upon...
- Signs convey no loitering, no unauthorized parking, no trespassing, no cell phones all say to possible disciples you are not welcome here
- ♣ There is no activity at our churches except for Sundays and our churches are locked during the week. In fact, 90% of our ministry takes place inside the church rather than the community

All these are potential indicators that "responsible evangelism" has slipped through the cracks, and we are living our best lives believing that what we are carrying out the mission of the church.

- III. Why Evangelism? the answer is simple, we evangelize because the Lord tells us to do it (Matt. 2:19-20). Saving (winning), the lost is the Lord's purpose for coming and our purpose for being. The Lord has commissioned us
  - a. The great commission Go ye therefore and teach... (Matt. 28:19)
  - b. "He has come to seek and save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10)
  - c. ...and he said, "follow me and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19)

## IV. Evangelism is:

- a. Proactive -
- b. The Preaching of the Gospel –
- c. Transformational –
- d. An ongoing, it's a process –

## V. The Manner and Matter of Evangelism

- a. Personal Evangelism
- b. Public Evangelism
- c. Planting Evangelism

## VI. Retooling for (Responsible/ Effective) Evangelism

- a. Repentance taking an honest look at ourselves
- b. Returning taking a serious look at what our biblical mandate as the church
- c. Regroup and Redirect Examples of Responsible Evangelism.

#### **Conclusion:**

Rev. Dr. Evalina Huggins, Presenter

#### **Scriptural Foundation:**

"Go (imperative or command) ye therefore (with Jesus' authority), and teach (discipleship) all nations (inclusive), baptizing them (public witness of their transformation and faith in Christ) in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them (spiritual maturation) to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always (empowered by the Holy Spirit), even unto the end of the world".

(Matt. 28:19-20).

- God sent Jesus into the world to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10).
- We have been sent into the world just as Jesus was sent (John 17:18; 20:21).
- "Therefore, I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom" (Matt. 21:43)

#### **Objectives:**

Our objective is to revisit the biblical mandate that commands us to "go and make disciples". It is my desire to re-ignite and restore both individually and corporately our desire to reach the lost; and offer potential methods of "Retooling for Responsible Evangelism".

#### **EXERCISE**

The challenge we face today is that we evangelize for church growth, and I contend perhaps this is why some of our churches are in decline. Authentic evangelism is motivated by discipleship that adds to the Kingdom and not our churches. Even more disturbing is that fact that we seemingly have lost our love and passion for people. I pray that I am wrong, but on so many levels we just don't seem to care anymore.

We have shifted from seeing people as viable agents in promoting the kingdom of God, but rather a means to an end... to help raise our claims, to fill our pews, and to carry out our programs rather than God's design for their lives.

As we "Retool for Effective Evangelism", there must be a resurgence and recommitment of our ministries to engage in evangelism at every level of the church. Bishop Reuben Speaks says, "it must become the consuming passion of every church member and pastor". (Speaks, 1996, p. 35). You'll hear me say it over and over again, our mission is to make disciples. I contend that every Pastor and church leader must keep everyone focused on the mission; and that everything the church does reinforces the mission, which is to make **DISCIPLES!** 

#### **Retooling Defined**

– means to equip with new or adapted tools. I contend we don't need a whole lot of new stuff, let's just start with caring about the people around us. How do we re-tool for responsible evangelism?

#### I. Let's begin by defining Evangelism:

- 1. The root of the word *evangelism*, *evangel*, is derived from the Greek *EUANGELION* which is translated good news; from which the word GOSPEL is derived. Therefore, an "Evangelist" is a person who preaches or teaches the good news of the "Gospel".
- 2. The "Gospel" is to be preached to everybody! Our Christian tradition teaches us that we are a part of a "royal priesthood," called to "proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9-10) We believe in the priesthood of all believers... (a doctrine of the Protestant Christian Church that claims that every individual has direct access to God without mediation and each individual shares the responsibility of ministering to the other members of the community of believers.
- 3. When and where the Gospel is preached to people, they are then "Evangelized". Therefore, evangelism is the process of taking the saving message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost, who in turn find the Lord for themselves and share the same message that saved them.

#### **Working Definitions**

"Evangelism is to so present Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit that men shall come to put their trust in God, through Christ, Jesus and accepting him as their Lord, seek to serve Him in the fellowship of His Church" (*Archbishop of Canterbury, 1958*).

"Evangelism is being, doing, and telling the gospel of the kingdom of God, in order that by the power of the Holy Spirit persons and structures may be converted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ." (Starnes, 2008, p,7)

"Evangelism is the Christian's divine imperative. Our evangelistic imperative is to make disciples through our Christian witness. It is presenting the gospel to a lost world. It is the most accurate measure of our Christian commitment. The spirit of Christ is the spirit of evangelism. The closer we get to Christ, the more dedicated we become to evangelism". (Speaks, 1996, 31-40)

Evangelism is God's divine plan to save the lost. Luke 19:10 reminds us that, Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost. It is the assignment of those who have saving faith in Jesus Christ, to present this same Jesus to those who are without him, with such tenacity that the message of Christ is heard, believed, lived and shared among others. (*Huggins*, 2019)

\*\* Any definition of evangelism must consider Matt. 28:19 which is the command to make disciples

**Evangelism vs. Outreach** – Too often we confuse evangelism and outreach, making them synonymous when they are not. Outreach is not found in the Bible, the idea and concept are; but outreach implies action more than message, it is what we do. Evangelism is more about who and whose we are. Both outreach and evangelism are the work of the church, and bring honor to God, but only evangelism fulfills the Lord's command to take the Good News into all the world.

- II. Early Warning Signs of "evangelism deficits" which may be an indication that evangelism and discipleship may not be our priority
  - Less than 3 people join our churches within our buildings zip code...
  - ♣ New members never process their conversion or salvation with anyone in the church, we believe new members class is sufficient...
  - ♣ New members class is more about our Discipline and denomination, rather than the study and understanding of God's Word, Holy Living and people's responsibility to live as citizen of the kingdom of God...
  - Waiting more than a week to follow-up with new worshippers (no phone call, no email, no letter from the Pastor, nothing...)
  - ♣ Bulletins are poorly copied, cob webs fill stair ways and windows, light bulbs are blown, ushers are temperamental, members are territorial (seats/ ministries), and children are frowned upon...
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  - ♣ There is no activity at our churches except for Sundays and our churches are locked during the week. In fact, 90% of our ministry takes place inside the church rather than the community

All these are potential indicators that "responsible evangelism" has slipped through the cracks. I want to challenge us to review every aspect of our ministries to see where evangelism is absent and where evangelism needs to be more intentional.

III. Why Evangelism? - the answer is simple, we evangelize because the Lord tells us to do it (Matt. 2:19-20). Saving (winning), the lost is the Lord's purpose for coming and our purpose for being. There is one statistic that says, there are 3 billion created by God like God and for God, that are living without God. Our task has always been and remains, to make disciples not of ourselves but the Lord, Jesus Christ.

A <u>disciple</u> is a learner of, a student of, and to discipline oneself in the things that Jesus Christ taught and modeled.

- a. The great commission Go ye therefore and teach... (Matt. 28:19)
- b. "He has come to seek and save the lost" (Lk. 19:10)
- c. "and he said, follow me and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19)

Evangelism is more than tracts, pamphlets and knocking on people's doors to see if they will join our churches. Our motivation for engaging in evangelism ought to be our obedience to Christ, our love for Christ and our love for others (coming to know Christ). Church Growth should never be the goal of Evangelism, but rather the result of intentional evangelism. "We cannot cause growth; we can only create a climate in which growth can take place".

## IV. Evangelism is...

1. Proactive – the biblical mandate (imperative) is to "go". Tom Rainer in the, Autopsy of a Deceased Church, says that churches that are internally focused are dying or are already dead. The Lord's command is for us to go out and find the lost for the sole purpose of making disciples.

"In Matthew 4:19, Jesus said, "follow me and I will make you fishers of men".

Carlton Booth (1997) says, "if I am following, I am fishing and if I am not fishing,
I am not following." (p. 96)

We have this idea that if people need saving, they ought to come to us. John Wesley said, "the world was his parish", and so, evangelism and the mandate to make disciples requires us to go where people are... We've got to capture people minds, hearts, trust and respect which is a challenge for the church today.

People trust the Pseudo friendships they have established on Facebook, more than they trust the church and its ministry. As difficult though it may be, we must remind folk of their sinful nature, ungodly ways, and separation from God while at the same time reminding them that while we were, yet sinners Christ died for us, he came to save us, and he loves us.

2. The Preaching of the Gospel – John MacArthur (2005), says that "evangelism is the preaching of the cross of Christ, that He died for the sins of the world, that He arose from the dead, that Jesus is Lord and that we must believe the gospel before it can have any effect on our souls" (p.249). For those who come to our churches the Apostles creed is our expression of evangelism corporately.

Evangelistic preaching doesn't pacify people, it does not dilute and distort the good news of the gospel. Evangelistic preaching is a call for people to leave their sinful ways and to become disciples of Jesus Christ, and anything short of this is not biblical evangelism.

3. **Transformational** – Like Paul we are called to open the eyes of the Gentiles, "that they may turn from darkness, into the marvelous light. Effective evangelism, better yet biblical evangelism always results in changed lives. When we "open the doors of the church" or extend he invitation to Christian Discipleship we are inviting people to come to Jesus and then to take him into the world.

We live in a culture of "what can the Lord do for me" instead of developing kingdom minded people who ask what we can do for the Lord. The Lord expects the church to produce disciples who will transform the world.

Its true that good preaching and exciting worship services can draw people, but good teaching grows people. The word says, "I am transformed by the renewing of my mind". If we want to reach the radically unchurch or pre-Christians, we've got to start teaching that there is more to our Christian walk than Jonah and a great fish, David and another man's wife, Paul and jail time... "Through the church, the gospel will be proclaimed, lives will be transformed, possibilities will be realized, and disciples will be made" (Stewart, 2006, p.15), but we are God's agents in the process.

4. Ongoing... it's a Process - Leroy Eims (1978), in the Lost Art of Disciple Making, says it is the task of every believer to tell others of the goodness of God. Inwardly they must be motivated to have fellowship with Christ; and outwardly they must become witnesses of Christ (p.51). Effective evangelism is the result of effective discipleship. What this means is that we can no longer receive people and assign them to new member class, teach them about our church and Zion and they have no understanding of the kingdom and what it means for them to be kingdom citizen.

#### **But** we must:

- Provide space for them to talk about their conversion?
- What does it mean for them to be saved?
- What struggles do they have that causes them to stumble?
- Do they understand Jesus' model of teaching, baptism (public profession), what are these things they must be taught to observe, and their duty to go out knowing the Lord is with them to convert others?

"Who would you rather have in your church, one hundred people who are 90% committed or ten people who are 100% committed?" (Eims, p. 57) As we teach and disciple people, we will discern who can evangelize and who needs additional support, encouraging and accountability.

## V. The Manner and Matter of Evangelism

If we use the New Testament church's model for how the Great Commission was fulfilled, the odds are in our favor for success, because this is the biblical model:

(1) through personal evangelism – all evangelism for the most part is personal. We share the gospel authentically meeting people where they are... This one-on-one encounter is not about us as witnesses, but it is about the love we have for the one to whom we are witnessing so that they respond not to us but to Christ. (the Holy Spirit reaches where we cannot). It is Andrew finding Simon Peter (Jn. 1:40-42), Philip finding Nathaniel (v.42), Jesus finding Nicodemus (3:1-5) and the woman at the well (4:7-15).

Personal evangelism was the model of the early church. Even the early church went from house to house preaching Jesus. (Acts 5:42). Let me ask a question, other than on Sunday mornings during the Invitation how many of us Pastors and leaders are leading people to Christ? Our churches take on the spirit of their leaders...

(2) through public evangelism – This is the one that scares us because we are comfortable in our sanctuaries. Public evangelism involves our public witness and presentation of the gospel. Jesus' entire ministry was a public ministry, but some to the detriment of the church have confined ministry to the circumference of a sanctuary. Evangelism is powerful in the supermarket line, its powerful in the doctor's office, its powerful in an airport, and even challenging and rewarding at the family reunion...

Public evangelism uses the same methodology as public evangelism but in a larger arena. <u>Unfortunately</u>, most preachers engage in public evangelism solely when they stand up to preach on Sundays... Even at this level we sometimes fail to design our sermons to convert unbelievers, we leave this to a passionate invitation to discipleship.

Through public evangelism we are more likely to be challenged, dismissed, perceived as a religious fanatic, or dogmatic; and I say so what, so was Jesus.

(3) <u>Finally, evangelism takes place through the **planting of churches**</u> – this is self-descriptive. As the black church we have forgotten or failed to pass on to a new generation the correlation between evangelism and church planting. If we are reproducing disciples, then we must be reproducing churches, right?

Research on the life cycle of churches reveals that the best years for a church to experience growth are in the first 25 yrs. Older churches can grow, but it becomes more difficult to break out of old patterns and forms of worship to establish a new vision so crucial to growth". (McIntosh, 2001, p.117) The only problem with evangelism through church planting is that people have grown weary of the church (structurally and institutionally). They have not seen the church fulfill its mission or demonstrate the kind the power they profess to have, so we must confess and repent to move forward.

This is why Retooling for "Responsible Evangelism" is important.

## VI. Retooling for (Responsible/ Effective) Evangelism

#### **REPENTANCE**

If we are going to retool, then repentance begins with the house of God (I Peter 4). Repentance is the acknowledgement of our sin and a strong resolve and resolution to forsake it... So, Lord,

- For every opportunity we had to tell of God's goodness, and we did not forgive us...
- For not loving those around us enough, to offer them healing, and the hope of the gospel, forgive us
- ❖ For every Sunday we press our way pass people in our own house, without pleading with them to come "see a man whose name is Jesus", forgive us...
- ❖ For visitor that sat down next to us, and we never took the time to ask if they were looking for Jesus forgive us...
- ❖ For letting fear, our lack of the Word, and our own assurance of salvation, keep us from sharing the good news of the Gospel, forgive us
- ❖ For coming to this convocation believing that we'll leave here it will be business as usual, forgive us!

My brothers and sisters we must first admit that Evangelism has not been a priority for us, we have failed in our mission and have willfully disobeyed the command given to us in Matthew 28:19-20 and everywhere else in God's word where we have failed to win others to Christ.

#### **RETURNING**

We are challenged to take a serious look at what our biblical mandate is from the perspective of Pastor and people, because effective evangelism requires both to be active participants or agents in the work of multiplying and making disciples. I content that if we are going to move forward, we must implement some new strategies, with the biblical mandate as our foundation:

In Matthew 4:19, we find "follow me and I will make you fishers of men". Booth (1991) says, "I think it is correct to say that if I am following, I am fishing, and if I am not fishing, I am not following. (p. 51)

#### **RETURNING** (cont.)

- 1. Revisit some fundamental biblical concepts like:
  - a. Stewardship of the Pastor are we teaching on conversion, salvation and discipleship, evangelism and the biblical mandate?
  - b. Explore our obedience to God's Word, love of neighbor, and how we live out this gospel we read about, hear about and profess.
  - c. Ensure that at every level of ministry individually and corporately everyone understands our mandate is to make Disciples not to engage in branding, social media marketing, self-promotion, and other forms of cultural engagement to the exclusion of our charge to go (evangelism)
  - d. We are challenged to teach, equip and motivate others to speak about their faith authentically from where they are...
- 2. Pastor's you are instrumental to the work of evangelism:
  - a. **Motivate your people by being an example.** Jesus engaged in the work of evangelism and told his disciples to "follow me, and I will make you fishers of men". We must model the behavior we desire to see.
  - b. We must motivate by having clear expectations
  - c. **We motivate by our exhortations** use the pulpit to excite, challenge and admonish persons to win souls
  - d. We motivate with the excitement of new converts. The joy of receiving new converts is contagious and the testimony of a changed life is a visible demonstration of the power of the gospel.
  - e. We motivate through evangelistic efforts the leadership must endorse and support
    - i. Hold a rally where you know people need conversion
    - ii. Host a city-wide crusade in a park, liquor store parking lot, at the fairgrounds, or in a large mall area (carnivals/fair)
    - iii. Implement some home bible studies specifically designed to invite unchurch people
    - iv. Consider sharing on a large-scale literature that is evangelistic, this should include minimal or basic information about your church

#### **RETOOL**, **REGROUP AND REDIRECT** – Examples of Responsible Evangelism.

Each generation of church goers must find a way to reach the lost. Reading a book, listening to some spiritual guru, or even embracing this presentation must be done cautiously, because to say it plainly every method or way of thinking does not apply to every situation. Evangelism today must be like Starbucks coffee, it must have a bold flavor that keeps producing consumers... Here are some personal examples of what I've done, some of which you are doing and more...

- ♣ I've always attempted to have a strong teaching ministry to equip those entrusted to us for the work of the ministry (not the church).
- Shifted from a traditional Sunday School to Kingdom Classes (Pastor teaches too) – that lasted from 9:00-10:30 so that people received more than an hour of God's word.
- ♣ We developed a comprehensive evangelism plan that looked at the churches around us, what we could offer a new convert (fellowship, time sensitive ministries, childcare and an on-line class leader system). I ensured the sufficiency of the church budget to carry out intentional evangelism (\$8000 and up)
- Excellence in administration, facility upkeep, and radical hospitality are not optional.
- No expectations put on the unchurched...
- Every member asked to lead one other person to Christ within the year, which were acknowledged at our Kingdom Awards Banquet...
  - o Discussed in Executive Board meetings w/ officers
  - Discussed in Class Leaders meeting
  - o Emphasized in our Christian Education Dept.
  - Evangelism breeds accountability how are we teaching, connecting, and discipling new converts
- Follow-up letters to all guests/ extended family that are not cookie cutters, but personal in that we highlighted who invited them, others visiting with them,
- Welcome Materials church calendar, pen, CD/tape of the service & additional information about the church and time with the pastor...
- ♣ We prepared for our media ministry... everybody shouldn't be on Facebook and if you are don't show empty pews
- We acknowledged the Evangelist of the Month –
- Regardless of other churches we claimed the Community as our own –

**Conclusion:** If we are sitting around praying, hoping and believing that the fate of the church is in our ability to get Millennials we are sadly mistaken. Yes, they are needed but so are our youth, our children, our adults and our seniors... "If mainline denominations are to once again become a spirit-energized movement that will have a transforming influence in our culture, a significant part of that ministry will need to happen through older congregations that receive a new heart for witness and ministry" (Harnish, p. 192).

This entire workshop will be an exercise in futility if we don't form some small groups of clergy and lay people who are willing to wrestle with how their church, their district and subsequently their conference can recover its sense of being God's agents of transformation, and how they can recover their passion for evangelizing to the lost and making disciples. The truth is, there are enough spiritually starving people to fill every congregation in this room.

No simplistic, superficial makeover or denominational tinkering will do, our hearts must be changed (or in the words of John Wesley strangely warmed), to ignite the faith of others we seek to lead to Christ. Wow, let's "Retool for Responsible Evangelism" together! Discipleship and disciple-making are not an option; they are a clear command from Scripture.

For a downloadable copy of this presentation please use the link below: www.bemoreamez.org/evangelism

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Dr. Evalina Huggins

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# **NOTES**