

# THE BIBLICAL EVANGELIST: *A MISSIONARY*



#ministrywithintegrity

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***“Missionary zeal does not grow out of intellectual beliefs, nor out of theological arguments, but out of love for God and for lost humanity.” – Roland Allen***

The entire life and ministry for which the Lord Jesus Christ prepared his disciples—the Twelve as well as the 120—was to send the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who are living in darkness (Mark 16:15). This was the fulfillment of ages old prophecy (Matthew 4:12-17). This was the revealing of the mystery of the ages (Ephesians 3:1-12). The aggressive spread of the Gospel light filled up the known world through planting local churches that opened the eyes of the unreached, and turned them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God (Acts 26:18).

Yet, Satan rose to the challenge. Not only did he inspire governments and religions as persecutors of the faith, but he also infiltrated the ranks of the faith itself with imposters. From first Century Rome to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Communists, from the First Century Sanhedrin-led Judaizers to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims, the faithful in Christ Jesus have been hunted, tortured, and killed. But even in the spilling of her blood, nothing wounds the church more than compromising her spirituality and confusing her message. False christ's and prophets propagating a false gospel by a false spirit keep the light of the transforming message of the Gospel of Christ from finding homes in faraway lands and from setting the captives free and giving hope to those in bondage (Matthew 24:24, II Corinthians 11:1-4).



David Livingstone said, “If we have not enough in our religion . . . to share it with all the world, it is doomed here at home.” We need a pure religion and undefiled that is compassionate to the hurting and careful to stay unspotted from the world; one that makes a difference by snatching

the lost out of the fires of damnation. The world needs those who will venture into those fires in search of those being consumed by them. The world needs the evangelist—a biblical evangelist.

*“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. And he gave some ... evangelists.” Ephesians 4:7-8, 11*

## **I. The Role of an evangelist.**

**Ephesians 4:11 lists the offices in the local church: Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and a teachers.**

**A. Each has biblical qualifications for that office...except for the evangelist. Let’s look at them in the order of their appearance.**

1. Apostles of Christ: Present only for the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20). The qualifications were: (1) to have been a witness of the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:21-22; I Corinthians 9:1), (2) to have been explicitly chosen by the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:15), and (3) to have the ability to perform signs and wonders (Acts 2:43; II Corinthians 12:12). There are “apostles of the church” mentioned as well. But they are not the same as the apostles of Christ. Also, the contexts in which they are mentioned indicates that their roles were not for life, like the Apostles of Christ, were appointed by the church not by Christ, and they were appointed for a certain temporary task. Once the task was accomplished, they were no longer apostles, or sent ones, of the church. Epaphroditus in Philippians 2:25-30 and 4:18 is an example. Another is when the whole church in Jerusalem chose out and sent men to deliver a letter to the Gentile believers in Antioch (Acts 15:20-33).

2. New Testament prophets (same qualifications of an OT prophet): Present only for the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20). The qualifications were: (1) to have been called and gifted by God (I Samuel 3:10-15; I Corinthians 12:10, 13:8), (2) the Holy Spirit enables the impartation of special revelation to him which man could not have known otherwise (Deuteronomy 18:18; I Samuel 10:11-12; John 11:49-50), (3) some of his prophesies of future events must be precise and of the near future in order to see them fulfilled as they were given (Deuteronomy 18:22, Acts 11:28, 21:10-12).

3. Evangelist: Present throughout the history of the church only. But there are no known qualifications for a role specifically and uniquely called “the evangelist.” We can point to all the other roles: apostles, prophets, and pastor/teacher and locate a very specific passage which designates very specific qualifications for someone in that role to meet. These are deliberate lists and not just an accumulated gathering of traits from various passages. But there is none for the evangelist.

There are three possible conclusions to this. (1) evangelizing is the stated duty of the whole congregation collectively, and “the evangelist” is one appointed as overseeing that ministry as a

member (II Corinthian 5:17ff, Acts 6:3-7 of deacons, could be a pattern for choosing evangelists). (2) the responsibility of evangelizing is a dominant duty of another office he is directed as overseeing (Apostle, Acts 9:15; Pastor, II Timothy 4:5). (3) the role of an evangelist is a non-ordained role which evolves into another ordained office as the evangelizing brings a spiritual increase (pastor, thus a church planter, I Corinthians 3:5-9). i.e. He is sent to where there is no gospel and presents the message so the lost are saved and he organizes them into a local assembly, or others take over and organize it while he moves on to do the same thing elsewhere (Acts 8:5-8). Either way, the guiding objective is to plant a new church which will need a pastor from the beginning.

**4. Pastor - teacher:** Present throughout the history of the church and is the only ordained office of the church whose title includes the assumption of discipleship (teaching) AND leadership (shepherding). Here he is primarily identified as a pastor (leader) and teacher (instructor). Elsewhere the exact same office has the title of minister (I Corinthians 9:13), of preacher (I Corinthians 9:14), of bishop (I Timothy 3:1), of elder (I Peter 5:1-4), and of an angel (Revelation 1:20, 2:1, 8, 12, 18). His qualifications to be an ordained minister according to I Timothy 3:1-7 are that of a call (desires the office rightly, v.1), character (blameless, vv.2-7), and capability (apt to teach and rule his own house well, vv.2,4). Furthermore, his wife meets all the qualifications required of her (v. 11).

## II. The goal of an evangelist.

**According to Ephesians 4:12 an evangelist was given to the church in order to help perfect the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.**

**A. What is the meaning of this? Verse 11: εὐαγγελιστάς: Translated: “Some...evangelists.” It is declined as an Accusative (direct object), Masculine, Plural Proper Noun.**

**1. The root meaning.** The term literally means one who brings the Gospel. εὖ-: “good” and -αγγελίζω: “message.” But we never establish the entire framework of a role simply by the usage of its term itself making it as broad a role as its term. If that were the case, Angels from heaven, John the Baptist, and Jesus would qualify for the title of an evangelist (Luke 2:10, 3:1-4, 4:18-19). So, not everyone referred to as “an evangelist” or who brings good news to someone qualifies to be called: “an evangelist” as Ephesians 4:11 lists it.

**2. The shoot meaning.** Every instance that the term is used as a noun or a verb shows that the proclamation of the “good news” is to those who have never heard. Paul to the Romans in Romans 1:15, Philip to the Samaritans and then the coastal cities in Acts



8:5, 40. Paul's challenge to Pastor Timothy in II Timothy 4:5. In the case of its general usage, it is to impart new information of Christ to those who never heard of Christ before (Luke 2:10). In its standard usage, it is to impart the news of the saving message of Christ to those who have never heard the message of Christ before (Romans 10:13-15).

3. The full meaning. The purpose of evangelizing the lost who have never heard the gospel is that one or two things will happen. (1) The existing local body of believers is built up to evangelize the lost. This happens due to an appointed evangelist overseeing the cooperative ministry of evangelizing the community of the local church. The work of this kind of an evangelist perfects all the saints of the church for the work of the ministry of evangelism. But it doesn't consider the inherent concept of taking the gospel to those who have never heard. (2) In the case of the work of a missionary-type evangelist, a new body of believers in a formerly unreached land is planted and is perfected for the work of the ministry of evangelism by reduplicating the process.

Either way, if the evangelist is involved in perfecting the saints for the work of the ministry, he is doing so as an evangelizer—*adding* to a church new believers or establishing a church *with* new believers. If he is adding to an existing church, he has no authoritative role and is just a gifted "joint" or member (I Corinthians 12:14-15). If he is establishing a new church, he can only do so with local church authority and thus an ordained man into the ministry. (ἀποστέλλω-John 20:21) There is only ONE authoritative office given with such qualifications for ordination in the local church—the pastor (I Timothy 3).

Therefore, in this case, an evangelist is one who evangelizes a new area to win the lost to Christ so a local church would be established. He then baptizes them for a new identity in their community and teaches them all things whatsoever Christ commanded (Matthew 28:19-20). One who is ordained a pastor and hasn't yet pastored is ordained for the work of a pastor, but FIRST he is an evangelist doing the work of an evangelist. He has a goal to establish a church through evangelizing and transitions to the work of pastoring the new church and training up leadership to take it over.

### **III. The soul of an evangelist.**

**A. There is no spiritual gifting or calling listed in the Bible that we can point to which differentiates someone as being called "An Evangelist" and nothing else. So, what is the soul of evangelism?**

1. The list of spiritual gifts. There are only two lists. Neither of these lists identify any spiritual gift called "the gift of evangelism" (I Corinthians 12:8-11, Romans 12:3-8). The gift of teaching comes the closest, but there is no direct tie into the role of an evangelist proper. There is a tie directly into the role of a pastor (Eph. 4:11 "pastor/teacher," I Timothy 3 "apt to teach"). However, someone can have the spiritual gift of teaching without having any call to an office of pastoral leadership or evangelism. Stephen is a good example of this. He was a deacon and a witness who was martyred, but to our knowledge was not ordained as an evangelist or a pastor. A pastor

himself still must be apt to teach even if he does not have the spiritual gift of being a teacher. Because wisdom and understanding is commanded to be sought by all, and all have the ability to do so, the skill-set of teaching can be developed by anyone under the favor of the Holy Spirit (Prov. 7:1-4; 9:10; Colossians 3:16; James 1:5).

It makes more sense that an evangelist is one who (a.) possesses the spiritual gift of teaching and probably of faith, but (b.) has a specific burden for the lost and leading of the Lord to fulfill that role through proclaiming the gospel to those who do not yet know the Lord. Consider the Apostle Paul's three declarations: "For necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!...Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named...I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." (I Corinthians 9:16, Romans 15:20, II Timothy 4:7)

If a biblical evangelist, then, is a gifted believer with a distinct calling, it makes more coherent Biblical sense that the role of each member of the local church then is not an "evangelist," but is to be a "witness" (Acts 1:8). We know that every born-again believer has been given the spoken ministry of reconciliation according to II Corinthians 5:17 ff, and not merely one kind of specially called and gifted person in particular. It is a ministry for each member and therefore a ministry for the local church as a whole. When the local church cooperates through an evangelistic ministry of their church, the Bible typically identifies this as the work of evangelism. If members of the church spread the gospel individually on their own, this is normally not called evangelization, but simply being a witness (Acts 1:8).

Illustration i:

Church member sharing the gospel + individually spontaneously = witnessing

Local Church ministry + member cooperation = Evangelism proper

2. The list of spiritual roles. There is no list of spiritual roles connected to the list of spiritual gifts in Romans 12. However, there is one list of spiritual roles listed in I Corinthians 12. *None of the roles listed refer to the spiritual role of an evangelist.* Each role is set with ordinal numbers in the church in order of rank as, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that those who possess certain spiritual gifts aside from rank: miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

In the listing found in Ephesians 4:11, we must assign, then, these three ranks to the five labels listed: first: apostles to the apostles, secondarily: prophets to the prophets, and thirdly:

“teachers” to the last three: evangelists, pastors, and teachers. The Greek construct which combines “pastor and teacher” setting it apart from all others listed tends to the interpretation that they are two attributes yet one and the same. The use of the article “the” is repeated before all the other roles, but when it gets to the last two there is only one article that governs both nouns. Grammatically, this signals a change and expects us to see that “pastors and teachers” form a unit that is set off from the preceding series. Therefore, they are not three (evangelist, pastor and teacher), but two: evangelist and pastor/teacher.

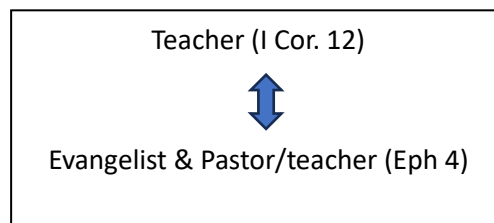
Yet, in the listing in I Corinthians 12:29-30 we must see the two: evangelist and pastor/teacher as being contained in the one role “teacher,” else both the evangelist and the pastor are excluded altogether in favor of the teacher. They are not. They are all represented with the one role—teacher!

That seems to make “and he gave...some evangelists” a distinct but not different designation from the pastor/teacher. By “distinct” I just mean that the label “evangelist” is not uniquely a pastor/teacher. By, “not different” I just mean that the label “evangelist” is still irrevocably tied to the other labels. While the evangelist is a part of the designatory term “teacher” in I Corinthians 12:29-30, it is still a lesser rank than apostle and prophet.

With them being grouped together not by a spiritual GIFT called “teaching” but a spiritual ROLE called “teacher” then we must conclude that all three roles are intricately involved with each other, but with two different recognitions: *one a church planter and one a church pastor*. This makes most sense in that sharing the gospel with the lost who have never heard doesn’t require meeting all the qualifications of a pastor, but going on to pastor that new flock does. Thus, it makes more sense that he is indeed one who evangelizes for the purpose of planting a new church who then becomes the shepherd of that group, therefore needing to meet all the qualifications of a pastor according to I Timothy 3. That makes the qualifications of a pastor the same qualifications of an evangelist, but not for a role which evangelizes only, but for a role which evangelizes with an intent to plant and pastor, or at least train up leadership to pastor.

Illustration ii:

<u>I Cor. 12</u>		<u>Eph. 4</u>				
Apostle	=	Apostle				
Prophet	=	Prophet				
Teacher	=	<table border="0"> <tr> <td rowspan="3" style="font-size: 2em; vertical-align: middle;">}</td> <td>evangelist</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pastor</td> </tr> <tr> <td>teacher</td> </tr> </table>	}	evangelist	Pastor	teacher
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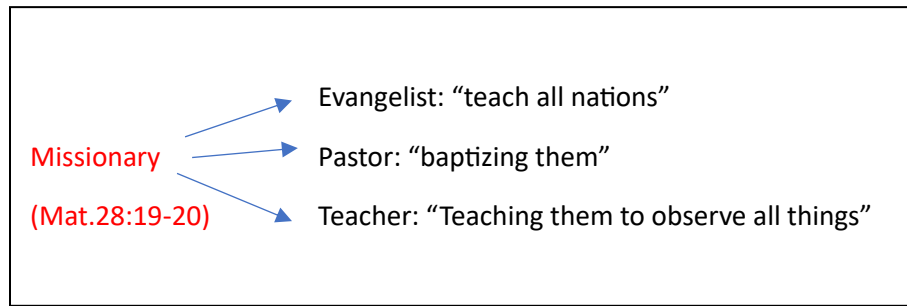


3. What is the 'soul' of an evangelist, then? — There is strong preference to the evangelist being an evangelistic church planter who then shepherds that new body of believers, even if he moves on to continue planting churches elsewhere after church leadership is established. This renders the role of “the evangelist” as to mean one which simply evangelizes for the purpose of building an already existing church highly unlikely. How is he different than any other church member who has been given the spoken ministry of reconciliation (II Corinthians 5:18-20)? Even if he is chosen by the whole congregation to lead and oversee this ministry in the local church, where are the qualifications for it like those given for those who oversaw the ministrations of the care for the widows (Acts 6:3)? Where is his specific gifting that makes his office a calling?

Therefore, I only see one consistent meaning which correlates all corresponding passages regarding “the evangelist.” He is an evangelistic church planting missionary. If he has a separate role and office in the local church, why don't we as Baptists believe in three ordained offices (evangelist, pastor, deacon) instead of two (pastor and deacon)? Why is he not required to “live of the gospel” as I Corinthians 9:14 states? “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” Where is the complete list of NT qualifications of an evangelist like we have for the pastor, the deacon, and even their wives? Where are the direct commands and the corresponding actions of an evangelist in the Bible apart from church planting? Why aren't there “Evangelistical Epistles” like there are “Pastoral Epistles,” “Church Epistles,” and “General Epistles?” There aren't “Deaconal Epistles” in my opinion because the authority within the local church lies between the pastor and the congregation, hence, pastoral and church epistles. If there were an authority based in the role of either evangelist or deacon, we would most certainly have their epistles as well. If it is an unordained office, why?

4. What about the Great Commission? As referred to earlier, the Great Commission of each and every local church cooperatively and her missionaries is to obey commands of her to “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, 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” (Matthew 28:19-20). The first part of going to teach all nations, literally to “make disciples” of the unreached, corresponds with that of the role of the evangelist. The second part of “baptizing them” corresponds with the beginning of the role of the pastor. Then, the third part of “teaching them to observe all things” corresponds with the continuing role of being the pastor and teacher. These three roles: evangelist, pastor, and teacher are all three grouped together in Ephesians 4:11, and assumed together in II Corinthians 12:28 where, as the apostles and prophets, so were the evangelistic church planters “set” in the church by the Holy Spirit deliberately as a gift by which all saints are to be perfected for the work of the ministry. All three are expected to be present in the Great Commission labors of the singular role of missionary targeting the lost and unreached nations of the world. This validates the duty of church planting as the focal point of the local church and the focal point of missions, as well.

Illustration iii:



Evangelist or Preacher?

There are different terms translated “to preach” or “a preacher” found throughout the New Testament epistles. Paul exhorts Pastor Timothy to “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (II Timothy 4:2). Here the term is the Greek word “κηρύσσω” which means to herald forth the truth. The context is clearly that of a pastor to his congregation, but it isn’t limited to the function of the preaching of a pastor to his congregation. In Romans 10:14 Paul argues that a preacher is needed to declare the Gospel message to those who have never heard. The same root word “κηρύσσοντος” is used as a proper noun to denote one who heralds forth the truth to those who have never heard. However, as noted previously, Paul also exhorted Timothy, the pastor who heralds forth the truth to his congregation, to “watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (II Timothy 4:5). So, Pastor Timothy, who exhorts with all long suffering as a pastor heralding forth the truth to his own congregation, also should be doing the work of an evangelist. Either that weakens the overall definition of our term “evangelist” as we have seen it, or it means that Timothy should not focus on his one location forever, but also be focused on making full proof of his ministry by looking to move on to new locations to preach the gospel in regions beyond where there is no Gospel witness.

Philip “went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them,” meaning he either established or helped establish the first Samaritan church (Acts 8:4). He was then led of the Spirit to intersect an Ethiopian Eunuch traveling where he “preached unto him Jesus” (v.35). Afterward, he was caught up (i.e. raptured “ἀρπάζω”) and then he was found preaching along the coast from Azotus (Ashdod) to Caesaria. The word for “preached” in verse 5 to the Samaritans, verse 35 to the Eunuch, and in verse 40 to all the cities is εὐαγγελίζω or “evangelized.” We have formerly established that the standard usage of εὐαγγελίζω in its contexts is *to propagate the good news of the Gospel of Christ to those who have never heard*. Philip the evangelist went about from city-to-city evangelizing with *this* understanding.

Was Philip building up churches that already existed? It can’t be since there were no churches or areas where there were believers along those routes in Acts 8. He had to be evangelizing those who had never heard for the purpose of establishing new churches the way that Paul would be doing on his missionary journeys. However, since he went from city-to-city and we do not see a history of those works as to whether they turned up any fruit of his labor, we cannot conclude anything doctrinally that would teach us, and we see nothing historically to guide us. It would



make logical sense that either a group of people believed, and Philip stayed with them only as long as was necessary (or until he was forced out by dissenters as what happened with Paul), or he saw no fruit and therefore kept moving on until he found himself settling in Caesarea. He dared not go back to Jerusalem, his home sending church, due to the persecution of the Sanhedrin, which was the reason for the scattering of saints to begin with (Acts 8:1-4).

Philip didn't need to go back to Samaria since the apostles from Jerusalem were establishing the work there (Acts 8:14). In Acts 11:19-22, we see that the believers who scattered abroad preaching the Gospel when they fled Jerusalem at the time Steven was stoned went to Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch to establish churches among the Gentiles. But we do not see Philip specifically being mentioned that he went to any of those areas. Furthermore, when a great number of people were believing in those areas, Philip's name is never mentioned, and when those believers needed further instruction, the Jerusalem church did not contact and send Philip. Instead, they contacted Barnabas who sought out Saul and went to Antioch. We learn in Acts 21 that Philip was closer than Luke and Saul to these churches in Casarea, but he did not aid them (Acts 21:8-9). Yet, there are three things to consider.

*First, Philip was an evangelist and still called an evangelist two years after arriving in Caesarea.* It would be unlikely that he would still be known as an evangelist if he was not evangelizing in Caesarea in a way which would have had the directive of planting a church. *Second, Philip had four daughters who the Holy Spirit had gifted with prophesying.* If there had been a church of believers, then there would undoubtedly been believers with the spiritual gifts for that church. Yet, the Spirit still gave his daughters that gift which meant that the goal of church planting was still present. *Third, Philip was right with God.* He was not one who quit the ministry and settled down somewhere. Luke and Paul knew where he lived and so did the prophet Agabus from Judea (he stayed in contact with the churches), and they stayed several days with him.

We can draw the conclusions from this information that Philip was an evangelistic church planter who found the probability of fruit in Caesarea to be better than Ashdod and other cities along the coast, yet he still had not seen the fruit of believers or the makings yet of a new church. Therefore, he must have still been in the stage of evangelizing, or the systematic and slow process of making disciples of the lost.

So, we see that an evangelist is a preacher whose message is that of the good news of Jesus Christ to the lost who have never heard for the purpose of planting a Great Commission church.

#### Evangelist or missionary?

Where did we get the term "missionary" if the Bible uses the term "evangelist?" [A study of the usage of the modern term "missionary" is underway. This section will be updated when it is completed]

#### **4. The World needs an evangelist.**

**When synthesizing all the evidence in the New Testament about the person who is called an evangelist, it seems most likely that he was an evangelistic church planting minister who targeted the unreached nations with the Gospel.**

The same need is still in our world today—we have unreached nations. Every nation outside of the believing Jews in Jerusalem after Pentecost were unreached nations. The Joshua Project records 7,400+ groups without a gospel witness among them. There is no body of believers and no bible among these groups. The same commission is on the church today—we have the unfulfilled Great Commission. With this in mind, we still have the same need for a Biblical evangelist today who will take the Gospel to the unreached for the purpose of planting churches. We have chosen the term “missionary” to describe what the Bible calls “evangelist” even though the description is the same.

Rise up, oh churches of the Lamb that had been slain for this purpose! Put your armor on! Advance those who would preach the Gospel unto the uttermost! Lose your life that you may find it in Christ and the Gospel! Seek not closets to hide in safely as if to weather a storm. Seek instead a protected pathway forward amidst the barrage of bullets and bayonets till you reach the regions beyond you with feet prepared with the Gospel of peace and a mouth ready to open wide and declare the good news among the heathen. The world needs the evangelist. The world needs the missionary.