

What works: common denominators



Have you ever noticed someone else's lawn and said to yourself, "Why doesn't mine look like that? What are they doing differently?" Beautiful lawns don't just happen, they take work! Besides, they need the touch of the Creator who alone can give life. The same is true of evangelism. In most cases it doesn't just happen. Watch for these three clues:

Evangelistic leaders are in place

In all of the cases where congregations are growing through conversions, at least one influential leader is deeply and sacrificially committed to evangelism. These individuals are not necessarily gifted as evangelists, but they passionately believe that effective evangelism is a top priority of the church and they cannot be satisfied without seeing ongoing evidence of the Gospel at work. Their methods vary. Their commitment does not.

Vision Ministries Canada is looking for ways to help and encourage evangelistic leaders. Since the decline of the Gospel Meeting as an effective outreach, many assemblies have embraced the concept that we "gather to teach and scatter to reach". Such a view is helpful, yet the need for evangelistic leadership must not be overlooked. If you are deeply concerned about reaching people in your community we'd like to communicate with you personally.

Common denominators are showing

The vast majority of those coming to Christ, do so through someone they already know, a friend or relative. Home Bible Studies, followed by counselling, are the second and third most frequent means of introducing people to Christ in Canada. Special events, regular church programs and a variety of other means also contribute to the success of evangelism.

Hard questions are being asked and answered.

Where evangelistic leadership and fruitful

common denominators are lacking courageous questions must be asked:

1. What steps could be taken to address our needs?
 - Specific prayer for a designated time.
 - Invite someone to relocate to your area.
 - Give leadership roles to those with vision and a desire to work.
 - Arrange for teams of summer workers to help.
 - Invite people from groups who have been effective to share their ministry with your fellowship.
 - Plan special evangelistic meetings or events.
 - Send members away for training so they can return and help.
2. What sacrifices would we be prepared to make?
 - Give freedom to lead to those gifted to do so.
 - Try initiatives that are new to us.
 - Give
 - Overcome fear by training, faith, and obedience.
 - Be persistent, keep on, in spite of apparent failures.
 - Invite someone to come for a defined period of full-time ministry.

Full time workers are not the answer to evangelism unless they are deeply and actively committed to it.

Consider the "Hawkesville experience". After 10-20 years of limited evangelistic harvesting, the elders were concerned. Will we die without having reached our community for Christ?

In the early sixties, they took two initiatives which were new to them, but which opened

Their methods vary. Their commitment does not.

Gord Martin

doors to fruitfulness.

1. They invited Allen Weber, previously commended to P.E.I. to do evangelistic visitation in their rural community.
2. They began a weekly "Drive-In Church Service",

It took courage to try something new. It also took time, prayer and persistent dedication.

Why are some lawns so beautiful? Why are some churches more effective in evangelism? It doesn't just happen!