

Evangelism: The Continual Task

Perhaps no term elicits more varied responses among Christians as does “evangelism.” As director of Biblijski Institut, Zagreb, I am extremely pleased that Kairos has devoted this issue to the topic of evangelism. Serious discussion needs to provide a better understanding of the Biblical meaning of the term and the reasons for the contemporary reactions that differ so strongly among Christians. Ask ten members of protestant or evangelical congregations, “What is evangelism?” and there may be as many different answers. Doing or not doing evangelism has been a major cause of the disunity among congregations as well as among individuals within congregations. Is evangelism something one “does” or something one “is”? These and other questions which surround the idea of evangelism need to be thoughtfully discussed between persons of good will who take the challenge of Jesus seriously, the central teaching of the Bible, and the “post-Christian” society in which we live.

Not only is there a wide variety of understandings of the basic meaning of the term, the different “methods” of evangelism are often identified with the activity itself. “Evangelism” often conjures up visions of an American “TV Evangelist” or a street preacher condemning all who pass by. Some want to see “more evangelism from our churches” by which is meant special assemblies to which are invited non-members where they might hear spirited music and preaching that might cause one to “join the church.” There are serious Christians who run from any idea which addresses evangelism because they are embarrassed by the ways evangelism has been expressed by well meaning individuals or churches.

Although written over thirty years ago, the classic, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, by Michael Green provides insight that challenges both academia and the church of the 21st century to seriously address the privilege and challenge of evangelism in the world of our day. I am excited that Biblijski Institut might be a catalyst through *Kairos* for future discussion and activity. I am especially thankful for Dr. Stanko Jambrek, our editor, and those who have produced the articles for this edition.

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