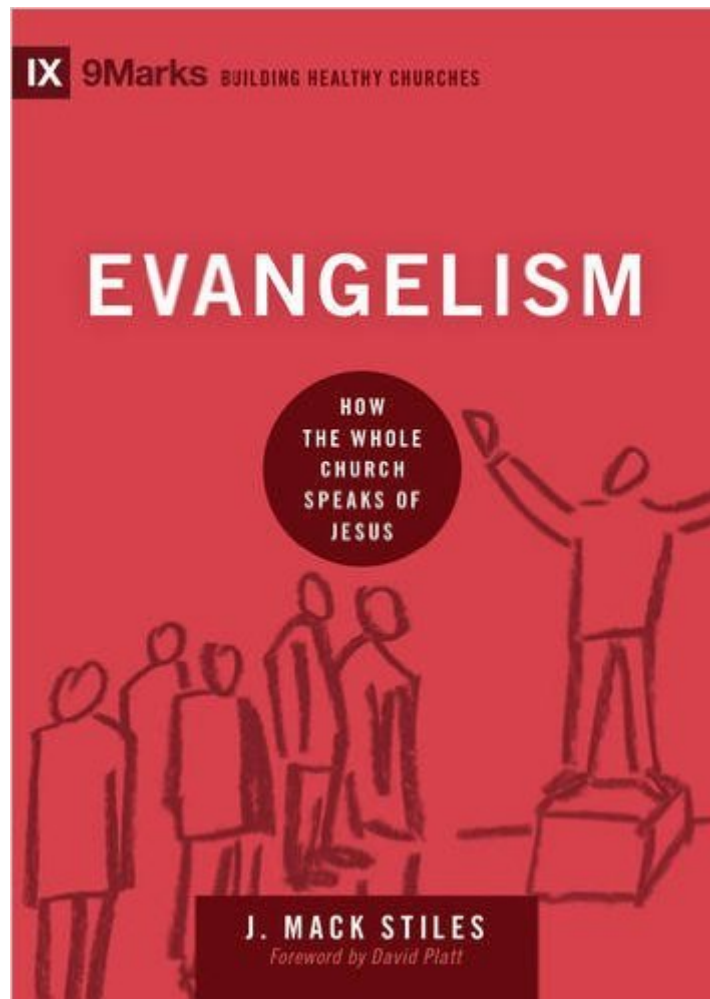


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# Evangelism: How The Whole Church Speaks Of Jesus (9marks: Building Healthy Churches)



## Synopsis

Evangelism is more than a program. Every few years, churches jump into the latest evangelistic fad. Leaders administrate the new program, and members go on a raid. But picture a church where evangelism is simply part of the culture. Leaders share their faith consistently and openly. Members follow, encouraging one another to make evangelism an ongoing way of life. Such is the way of evangelism presented by this brief and compelling book. No program here. Instead, it just might give your church a new way to live and share the gospel together.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Our church has always been very clear on stressing the need for evangelism. Whenever our local missions pastor preaches, it almost always turns into a sermon on evangelism (especially when heâ€™s trying not to). We have a local missions team that goes out every week to open-air preach and interact with individuals on the streets of our city, sharing the gospel at every opportunity. But then, about a year ago, we did something really bold: we took all of our small groups through a personal evangelism workshop. And the response? \*crickets\* I was a small group leader at the time, taking my group through the course. It was really challenging material, but presented in a way that took a lot of the fear out of evangelism. But despite its initial "failure," the impetus behind offering this training is a good one: a desire to create a healthy culture of evangelism, one where itâ€™s seen as a normal part of the Christian life. I have a hunch Mack Stiles would stand up and cheer if he knew this was something our church attempted (and continues to nurture). Why? Because thatâ€™s exactly what his latest book, *Evangelism: How the Whole Church Speaks of*

Jesus, is all about. If there's one thing Stiles wants you to understand, it's this: evangelism is not about programs or events. It's not a technique or a specific kind of response. Many of our problems creating a healthy culture of evangelism stem from a lack of a biblical foundation. We count declarations of faith, hands raised, cards put in a bag, people walking down aisles | but do these things really mean anything? Maybe, but maybe not.

The word, "evangelism" strikes fear in the hearts of many Christ-followers. But nothing could be more backwards, for the people of God possess the greatest news in the universe. A holy God sent his Son, the Lord Jesus to die in the place of every person who would ever believe. Sinners may receive the hope of eternal life by banking all their hope in Christ and the benefits he purchased for them on Calvary's cross. J. Mack Stiles helps Christians develop confidence in the responsibility to tell the nations about Christ in his excellent little book, *Evangelism*. The author rightly responds to churches who turn the evangelistic endeavor into a mere program. Rather, he encourages the church to develop a "culture of evangelism" which is "built on people filled with the power of God's Spirit proclaiming the gospel of God's grace in the context of their everyday lives and relationships." The main theme, then, is built around an entirely different paradigm; a mindset that can and should dominate every local church. Stiles endorses a modified definition of evangelism that I rather like: "Evangelism is teaching the gospel with the aim to persuade." Such a definition works well in the pulpit, classroom, local park, and coffee shop. Francis of Assisi may have been well-intentioned when he quipped, "Preach the gospel, and if necessary use words." But wordless evangelism is no evangelism at all (no offense to *The Wordless Book* " which actually uses words, in the final analysis). Stiles speaks emphatically, "There is no evangelism without words." Such a gospel should include important words that include God, man, Christ, and human response. The culture of evangelism that Stiles favors emerges clearly in chapter two.

Evangelism is something I have always been passionate about and I have put a great deal of thought into it. The first chapter in the book, *Evangelism* by J. Mack Stiles, reminded me so much of my own journey that I was literally answering the book out-loud with, Yes! and That was exactly my experience! I came to faith in a church that evangelized in ways I would now reject. I have often beat myself up for my own faulty evangelism in those early years of new-found faith in Christ. Stiles rejects evangelism driven by a desire for instant results. Yet, I agree with him when he says, "I feel for one will take people practicing evangelism the best they can over those who forgo evangelism until they have perfect practice." I went from being a zealous witness for Christ in my

early days (however misinformed and misdirected) to being overly concerned with getting it wrong. This excellent and relatively short book has summed up how to cultivate the discipline of evangelism and create a culture of evangelism in the church, while encouraging the readers not to take confidence in programs, techniques, or gimmicks but rather in the gospel alone. I love the definition that Stiles gives for evangelism: Evangelism is teaching the gospel with the aim to persuade. He expounds upon this definition in the first chapter, and reminds the church of the risk of getting evangelism wrong – “the death of the church. He then explains how to create a healthy church culture of evangelism in the following chapters. Stiles moves the focus away from merely personal evangelism and demonstrates how a faithful, healthy body of believers in the local church has more to offer than evangelistic programs and events.

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