

Why You Need to Rewire Your Evangelism

Jesus is one of the world's best-known brands. More than half the world knows His story to one degree or another. The church also has a brand—a story people tell about it.

In Western culture, the brand of Jesus is maintaining pretty well, but the brand of the church is suffering. Since God desires to bring people to Jesus through the context of the church, this is a problem for our mission.

Artie Davis wrote in his book *Craveable* that when someone introduces themselves as a Christian, what goes through the mind of a person outside the kingdom is often something like this: “Before me stands a judgmental, mean, ignorant, and intolerant person. Why should I listen to anything they have to say?” People perceive that the church has lost its way in the light of public scandals, personal rejection, and spiritual abuse. Our brand is hurting.

It is not possible to concoct a story about the church that is better than what people actually experience in the real world, but it is possible to tell the *right* stories and to tell them well. Part of flooding the online space with God's glory and with the gospel of Jesus is making sure the gospel is given a great deal of attention next to all the other stories being told. This has been our mission since the beginning, and we now have more tools than ever for getting it done.

How can social media save our brand? It can't entirely. If the story people associate with the church, as God's people, is to become a more positive one, it has to begin with our showing genuine love to one another and to the people living in proximity to us. Right now I sense another potential great awakening for the church that is less about creeds and more

about deeds. Church leaders are pressing forward with their congregations to show the gospel and to be the hands and feet of Jesus to those around us. This is all good, and social media gives us the opportunity to share this story well.

I am not an advocate of compromising the truth as we believe and teach it. When it comes to social issues on which the Bible speaks, we must clearly and boldly side with the Bible. But how we go about standing for truth makes all the difference. In the online world Christians are thought of as intolerant, judgmental, and belligerent about issues of faith and morality. Without changing what we believe, we can certainly change what we emphasize. Right now most of the culture thinks of Christianity in terms of what Christians tend to be *against*.

We have a chance to tell a different story—the story of what we are *for*.

For instance, my wife and I recently met with a staff member from a local pregnancy center called Loving Choices. She gave us some business cards to share with young ladies who find themselves unexpectedly pregnant. I noticed the slogan on the card “No labels. Pro Women.” The words *pro-life* and *pro-choice* incite a fight, but we’re all pro-woman, or should be. It’s a different and perhaps better approach for the gospel’s sake.

What if instead of being *against* gay people, we were *for* the dignity and respect of all people, regardless of sexual orientation? What if instead of being *against* liberals, we were *for* coming to a better understanding of how to help people in need in a way that makes sense? And what if instead of being *against* people with addictions, we were known for being *for* everyone’s recovery?

I love the stories I am hearing right now about the activity of the church in combating human trafficking and slavery, bringing healing to people with AIDS and HIV, working toward

giving every orphan a home, and bringing food and clean drinking water to everyone in the world. These are the stories we must amplify.

I live in suburbia—a neighborhood filling up with new houses in a community filling up with new people. Almost weekly I see in my mailbox a postcard from a church advertising an upcoming event or sermon series. Of course, there's value in designing promotional materials with excellence, but one of the ways we need to be rewired is to return to thinking about our promotional strategy as *creating and engaging the conversation around our church and the message*, which is the gospel.

We have better tools than ever for producing great graphics and nice materials, but at our core we should still give the priority of our thinking to the kind of evangelism that has happened in the church's history with or without the tools that technology affords us.

More than ever we need to keep our passion for Jesus, His truth, His church, new churches, new mission fields, unreached people, uninvolved believers, unforgiven sinners, the least, the last, and the lost. Pretty much everything else can be left behind.

✖ So do some rewiring, dedicate your life to telling the Good News using every means possible, and go be the relational bridge that brings someone into a right relationship with Jesus—even if it does mean jumping on the social media train.

The preceding was adapted from “Rewired” by Brandon Cox, copyright 2014, published by Passio, Charisma Media/Charisma House Book Group. This book will challenge you not to shy away, but to use social media as a means of sharing the gospel and to do what God intended all along: to be in relationships, have conversations, share our stories, and God's with each other. To order your copy, [click here](#).

Prayer Power for the Week of 5/12/2014

This week ask God to help you be the “hands and feet of Jesus to those around us.” Take part of your prayer time to just worship and seek His face and glory. Open your heart to receive more of His love and presence so that you are able to carry it wherever He leads you. Ask him for divine connections so you can join with others to bring aid to those victimized by recent natural disasters, crime and terrorism. Continue to pray for our leaders, our military and their families, the peace of Jerusalem, the persecuted church, and that believers would unite in prayer and purpose for worldwide revival and the extension of God’s kingdom. Matt. 28:18-20; Ps. 122:6