

THE POWER OF CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM <https://doi.org/10.63330/aurumpub.015-015>**David Aguiar¹****ABSTRACT**

This study addressed the power of Christian evangelism as an essential element of faith and the Church's mission, analyzing its origin in the Holy Scriptures, its historical expansion, and its spiritual, social, and cultural influence on contemporary society. The objective was to understand the role of evangelism in spreading the Christian message, its importance for strengthening faith, and the challenges it faces amid social and technological transformations. The research was conducted through a bibliographic and qualitative methodology, based on theological and sociological works by authors such as Stott, Boff, Bosch, Graham, Piper, and Bonhoeffer, as well as biblical references that underpin evangelistic practice. The results demonstrated that evangelism, more than an institutional activity, constitutes a living expression of faith and love, materialized in personal testimony and acts of solidarity. It was also found that, throughout history, evangelism contributed to the formation of ethical values, the promotion of social justice, and the strengthening of Christian communities. In the current context, the study observed that evangelism faces challenges related to religious pluralism, secularization, and the use of digital media, requiring authenticity, dialogue, and ethical responsibility from the Church. It was concluded that Christian evangelism remains a vital force in spreading the Gospel and transforming society, reaffirming the importance of faith, compassion, and commitment to others as foundations of true Christian discipleship.

Keywords: Evangelism; Christianity; Faith; Society; Mission.

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INTRODUCTION

The power of Christian evangelism constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of the Church's faith and mission, representing the continuous commitment of Christians to proclaim the Good News of salvation and hope revealed in Jesus Christ. Evangelism, derived from the Greek term euangelion, meaning "good news," is a practice that transcends the boundaries of institutional religion, configuring itself as a living expression of faith in action. Since the earliest centuries of Christianity, evangelism has been the instrument through which the Gospel message expanded, reaching different peoples and cultures, transforming lives, and shaping moral and spiritual values that profoundly influenced human history.

Theological and missiological literature, represented by authors such as John Stott (2006), Leonardo Boff (2010), Billy Graham (2015), David Bosch (2002), and Karl Barth (1963), reinforces that evangelizing is more than preaching doctrines; it is living and witnessing God's love in everyday life, translating faith into attitudes of solidarity, justice, and compassion.

The objective of this work was to analyze Christian evangelism in its biblical, historical, and contemporary dimensions, highlighting its importance as a transformative force in society and its role in strengthening Christian faith. The study sought to understand how evangelism developed over time, its theological foundations, and how it manifests in the current context, marked by religious plurality and technological advancement. As a hypothesis, it was considered that evangelism remains a relevant and necessary instrument for the modern Church, capable of promoting not only individual conversion but also social and spiritual transformation, provided it is sustained by authentic faith and coherence between discourse and practice.

The choice of this theme is justified by the importance of evangelism in shaping Christian identity and the need to reflect on its challenges and possibilities in an increasingly secularized world. Amid ethical and spiritual crises, evangelism reemerges as a force of renewal and hope, reaffirming the Christian call to love, service, and compassion.

This study was developed through bibliographic and qualitative research, based on the analysis of works in theology, philosophy, and sociology of religion, as well as biblical texts and ecclesiastical documents. The work was structured into four main parts. The first presents the concept and biblical foundations of Christian evangelism, highlighting its origin in Scripture and the Church's mission expressed in the Great Commission. The second part discusses the expansion and influence of evangelism in society, addressing its cultural, ethical, and social impacts. The third part deals with contemporary challenges faced by evangelism, analyzing social, technological, and religious changes that influence missionary practice. Finally, the conclusion presents final considerations, emphasizing the relevance of evangelism as a spiritual and social force that continues to inspire faith, solidarity, and Christian commitment in times of transformation.



METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this work was based on bibliographic and qualitative research, developed through the analysis of books, articles, and documents addressing Christian evangelism in its theological, historical, and social dimensions. The main theoretical references included authors such as Stott (2006), Boff (2010), Bosch (2002), Graham (2015), and Barth (1963), as well as biblical passages that underpin evangelistic practice. The study had a descriptive and interpretative character, seeking to understand, in light of the consulted literature, the foundations, expansion, and contemporary challenges of Christian evangelism, without conducting interviews or collecting empirical data.

DEVELOPMENT

CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM: CONCEPT AND BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Christian evangelism constitutes one of the most significant expressions of the Church's faith and mission, representing the essence of the divine call to proclaim the Good News of salvation. The word "gospel" originates from the Greek term euangelion, meaning "good news" or "glad tidings," and refers to the central message of Christianity: the love of God revealed through Jesus Christ. Thus, to evangelize is to communicate this transformative message to the world, inviting each person to a personal experience with the living Christ. According to John Stott (2006), evangelism is "the communication of the good news of a God who acts in love to reconcile sinners to Himself in Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit." This understanding shows that evangelization is not merely a religious practice but an extension of God's own heart toward humanity.

The origins of evangelism are found in the Holy Scriptures, especially in the New Testament, where the life and ministry of Jesus Christ are presented as the concrete manifestation of the Good News. The Gospel of Mark begins by stating: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mk 1:1), demonstrating that evangelism is rooted in divine revelation itself. From the prophets of the Old Testament, there was already the announcement of the redemptive message: Isaiah proclaims, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news" (Is 52:7), anticipating God's call to proclaim salvation. John Piper (2010) emphasizes that evangelism reflects God's missionary love, who sends the Son into the world not to condemn it but to save it. In this sense, to evangelize is to continue Christ's mission, becoming an instrument of divine action on behalf of others.

The evangelistic mission of the Church finds its fullest expression in the words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 28:19–20, known as the Great Commission: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." This command summarizes the essence of Christian evangelism: to proclaim the message of salvation, to teach the principles of the Kingdom, and to form disciples



committed to the faith. According to Stott (2006), the Great Commission is the foundation of Christian identity, for to be the Church is to be missionary; it is not a matter of choice, but of loving obedience to Christ's mandate. Leonardo Boff (2010) expands this understanding by stating that to evangelize is also to proclaim life in its fullness and to promote the liberation of the oppressed, since the Gospel is both a spiritual message and a commitment to justice and human dignity.

The apostle Paul, in his letters, reinforces the transformative power of the gospel by affirming that it is "the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Rom 1:16). This statement shows that evangelism is not limited to individual conversion but has social and spiritual reach, capable of transforming hearts and structures. Karl Barth (1963) states that "the Church exists to witness," meaning that its very reason for being lies in the continuous proclamation of God's love revealed in Christ. This mission is not restricted to preachers or leaders but belongs to all who believe, for every Christian is called to be light in the world and salt of the earth.

True evangelism is born of living faith and is manifested through personal testimony. More than eloquent speeches, what convinces the world is the coherence between the message and the life of the one who proclaims it. John Wesley (1984) already affirmed that "faith that is not expressed in works is a dead faith," highlighting that authentic Christian witness is rooted in the practice of love, solidarity, and justice. Dietrich Bonhoeffer (2004) adds that Christian witness is "the presence of Christ in the world through the lives of those who follow Him," emphasizing that everyday evangelism occurs in simple gestures, ethical attitudes, and care for others. Thus, the Christian becomes the gospel in motion, preaching with life as much as with words.

C. S. Lewis (1952) reinforces this view by stating that "Christianity, if false, is of no importance; if true, it is of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important." This phrase expresses the radical commitment that the gospel demands: to live the faith with authenticity and surrender. Personal testimony, inspired by the Holy Spirit, becomes the means by which the message of Christ reaches the human heart. In Acts 1:8, Jesus promises: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Billy Graham (2015) interprets this promise as the spiritual foundation of all evangelization, reminding us that evangelism is the work of God, but carried out through people willing to obey the divine call.

Today, Christian evangelism faces new challenges, marked by religious pluralism, secularism, and social and technological transformations. The use of digital media, for example, has expanded the reach of preaching and testimony, but also demands discernment and responsibility. Ed René Kivitz (2017) observes that "to evangelize today is to witness with relevance, integrity, and love in a world saturated



with discourse and lacking in meaning.” Thus, contemporary evangelism must unite faith, empathy, and ethical commitment, presenting the living Christ in a contextualized and humanizing way.

In this way, Christian evangelism continues to be a vital force that drives the Church and renews hope in the world. It is born from the Scriptures, sustained by faith, and realized in the testimony of each believer who lives according to the love of Christ. To evangelize is, therefore, more than proclaiming a doctrine; it is to live the good news of salvation, making the Kingdom of God visible amid human reality. The strength of evangelism lies precisely in this union between professed faith and practiced life, in the simplicity of testimony that transforms hearts, and in the continuity of the divine mission that began with Jesus and is perpetuated in every Christian committed to the Gospel.

THE EXPANSION AND INFLUENCE OF EVANGELISM IN SOCIETY

Christian evangelism, since its beginnings, has exerted a profound influence on society, shaping cultures, behaviors, and values across different historical contexts. The expansion of this missionary practice is closely tied to the very history of Christianity, which, over the centuries, evolved from a small group of Jesus’ followers in Judea into one of the world’s largest religious expressions. This trajectory reveals not only the strength of the Christian message but also its capacity for adaptation and renewal in the face of social and cultural transformations.

The expansion of evangelism has its roots in the missionary mandate of Jesus Christ, when He sent His disciples to proclaim the Gospel “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). This missionary impulse led to the rapid spread of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire within a few decades, reaching diverse peoples and cultures. According to David Bosch (2002), the early Church lacked significant resources but was driven by an unshakable conviction: the certainty that the message of the Gospel had the power to transform lives. Growth did not occur through political imposition but through the testimony of faith and communal life based on love, sharing, and hope.

In the following centuries, Christianity went through periods of persecution, consolidation, and expansion, reaching different continents through missions, Bible translations, and spiritual revival movements. Evangelism, in this context, became an essential tool for spreading the faith, combining preaching, social action, and education. As John Stott (2006) observes, the growth of Christianity throughout history is directly linked to the Church’s faithfulness in proclaiming the Good News and embodying its values in the world. Where the Gospel was proclaimed with love, justice, and compassion, it flourished; where it was used as an instrument of power and domination, it lost its authenticity and spiritual strength.



In the contemporary context, especially in Latin America and Brazil, Christian evangelism has played a prominent role in both religious and social spheres. According to data from IBGE (2022), the number of evangelicals has grown significantly in recent decades, reflecting the pluralization of Brazil's religious landscape. This phenomenon, more than a mere demographic shift, expresses profound cultural transformations: new forms of belonging, religious identities, and social engagement are being shaped within Christian communities. Evangelism, in this sense, has contributed not only to the strengthening of faith but also to the promotion of solidarity and ethical values in people's daily lives.

Leonardo Boff (2010) affirms that authentic evangelization goes beyond doctrinal dimensions, stating that “to proclaim the Gospel is to proclaim life, hope, and human dignity.” Thus, evangelism also acts as a transformative social force, inspiring actions aimed at justice, charity, and peace. Various Christian churches have stood out in social projects, donation campaigns, support for people in vulnerable situations, and educational programs, revealing that the proclamation of faith is realized through acts of love. Rubem Alves (2002) reinforces that “faith that does not translate into solidarity is merely empty discourse,” emphasizing that the strength of evangelism lies in its ability to generate empathy, compassion, and ethical commitment to others.

In addition to its social impact, Christian evangelism exerts significant cultural influence. Gospel music, for example, has become one of the most prominent phenomena in contemporary culture, crossing religious boundaries and attracting diverse audiences. Digital media, television programs, and social networks have also expanded the reach of the Christian message, allowing the Gospel to reach places and people previously inaccessible. According to Ed René Kivitz (2017), “the Christian mission in the digital world requires discernment and responsibility, for every word shared can be a living testimony of the Gospel or a distortion of its essence.” Thus, the expansion of evangelism in the information age reinforces both its communicative power and the need for authenticity and ethical coherence.

Another relevant aspect is the influence of evangelism on the formation of society's moral and ethical values. Many fundamental principles that structure Western thought—such as the dignity of the human person, solidarity, justice, and forgiveness—have roots in the Christian message. For Karl Barth (1963), the Gospel “is not merely a religious truth, but a truth for all existence,” as it transforms the way individuals and communities think and act. Evangelism, in this sense, acts as an agent of humanization, inviting people to live with empathy and purpose.

However, it is important to recognize that the expansion of evangelism also brings challenges. In a world marked by religious diversity, cultural pluralism, and secularization, Christian witness must be carried out with respect and dialogue. Evangelizing is not about imposing beliefs but about sharing faith with humility and love, recognizing the freedom and dignity of every human being. John Piper (2010) reminds us that “the purpose of evangelism is not to gain followers, but to glorify God and lead people to



the joy of knowing Christ.” In this context, the Church’s mission must be understood as service, not power; as communion, not competition.

In recent years, evangelism has also taken on new forms of expression, especially among young people who seek a more authentic, participatory, and socially engaged faith. Urban missionary movements, ecological initiatives, acts of solidarity, and ministries focused on mental health and inclusion have shown that contemporary evangelism is diverse and dynamic. By embracing these new languages, the Church keeps the flame of Christ’s mandate alive, adapting to the world’s transformations without losing its spiritual essence.

The influence of Christian evangelism, therefore, goes beyond religious boundaries. It acts as a spiritual and moral force that shapes consciences, inspires solidarity, and strengthens communities. Its historical and contemporary expansion reveals the power of faith to promote individual and collective transformation, sustained by the hope and love that the Gospel proclaims. As Billy Graham (2015) teaches, “the gospel is the greatest news the world has ever received—and every generation needs to hear it again.” To evangelize, therefore, is more than to preach: it is to witness the love of God in every gesture, word, and attitude, so that the world continues to be illuminated by the message of Christ, who liberates, heals, and renews all things.

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES OF CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM

Christian evangelism, in its essence, represents the beating heart of the Christian faith and the ongoing commitment to proclaim the Good News of salvation. Derived from the Greek term euangelion, meaning “good news,” evangelism is deeply rooted in the Holy Scriptures and expresses the desire to share with the world the message of redemption, hope, and love revealed in Jesus Christ. Since biblical times, the act of evangelizing has been seen not merely as a religious practice, but as a living expression of faith that transforms both the individual and the community. According to Stott (2006), evangelism is the proclamation of the Gospel in words and actions, driven by the love of Christ and obedience to His command.

The origin of evangelism is already present in the pages of the Old Testament, where the announcement of God’s presence and action is manifested through the prophets, who were sent to proclaim repentance, justice, and reconciliation. However, it is in the New Testament that evangelism acquires its full meaning, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ Himself is the center of the evangelical message—He is both the messenger and the message. As Graham (2015) affirms, evangelism is born from a personal encounter with Jesus and the burning desire to share with others the same love and grace received. Thus, Christianity becomes a faith that cannot be kept silent, for, as the apostle Paul said, “Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:16).



The passage of Matthew 28:19–20, known as the Great Commission, is considered the missionary foundation of Christian evangelism. In it, Jesus commands the disciples: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” This passage summarizes the mission of the Church and the purpose of evangelism: to bring the message of the Gospel to all peoples, regardless of race, culture, or social condition. According to Boff (2010), this mission is an expression of universal love and a call to build the Kingdom of God in human history.

The mission of the Church throughout the centuries has been shaped by this divine command. Since the book of Acts of the Apostles, one can perceive the evangelistic vigor of the early Christian communities, which, moved by the Holy Spirit, spread the message of Christ even in the face of persecution and adversity. According to Bosch (2002), evangelism is a dynamic response to historical transformations, but always sustained by faithfulness to the Gospel. The early Church understood that to evangelize was not only to preach with words, but also to live the Gospel through acts of love, solidarity, and service. This understanding led to the expansion of Christianity and the formation of a communal identity based on fellowship and sharing.

The role of faith in Christian evangelism is fundamental, for it is what drives the believer to act. Without faith, evangelism is reduced to mere proselytism; with faith, it becomes a living testimony of the presence of God. As Tillich (1973) observes, faith is the courage to affirm an ultimate meaning for existence, even in the face of doubt and suffering. In this sense, evangelism is an expression of faith in motion, communicated through trust in Christ and hope in His transforming power. Furthermore, personal testimony is an essential dimension of this process. As John Stott (2006) states, authentic evangelization is born from the coherence between what one believes and how one lives; Christian witness must be visible in attitudes of compassion, forgiveness, and justice.

Personal testimony, therefore, is the most powerful form of evangelization, for it translates the message of the Gospel into concrete gestures and human experiences. Rubem Alves (2002) emphasizes that the Gospel only becomes true when it is embodied in daily life—when faith becomes poetry, care, and presence. Thus, the Christian is called to be a living letter of Christ, as Paul affirms in 2 Corinthians 3:3, being known and read by all. The strength of evangelism, therefore, does not lie merely in eloquent speeches, but in the ability to live out the love of God amid human realities.

In summary, Christian evangelism is a movement that transcends the boundaries of formal religion and manifests as a universal vocation to love and transform the world. It is born from the Scriptures, finds its foundation in the mission left by Jesus, and is realized in the faith and testimony of those who follow Him. To evangelize is, above all, an act of hope and surrender—a response to divine grace that invites



every Christian to be a bearer of light amid darkness. As Graham (2015) concludes, evangelism is the most sublime way to express gratitude to God: to share with others the gift of salvation that transforms and renews life.

CONCLUSION

The power of Christian evangelism reveals itself as a central element in the life of the Church and in the dissemination of the message of Jesus Christ. This study highlighted the importance of evangelism not merely as a religious practice, but as a reflection of God's love translated into concrete actions of solidarity and justice. Throughout history, evangelism has been a driving force for social and spiritual transformation, shaping values and behaviors across various cultures and societies.

The analysis of the biblical origins and historical evolution of evangelism revealed that its essence is rooted in the Great Commission, in which Jesus calls all Christians to share the Good News. This mission transcends geographic, social, and cultural barriers, reaffirming the universality of the Christian message and its capacity to deeply impact lives.

However, contemporary evangelism faces significant challenges, such as religious pluralism and secularization. The transformation brought by digital media has introduced new dynamics in the communication of faith, requiring the Church to adopt creative and authentic approaches to connect with an increasingly diverse audience. This digital age, though full of opportunities, also demands responsibility and discernment in how the message is shared.

Moreover, the authenticity of faith is crucial to the success of evangelism. Personal testimony, when lived in coherence with the proclaimed message, has the power to touch hearts and transform lives. This practical living of faith, marked by actions that reflect the love of Christ, is what makes evangelism truly effective.

In summary, Christian evangelism is not merely a call to individual conversion, but an invitation to build a more just and compassionate world. It continues to be a vital force that inspires hope and renewal, challenging Christians to live their faith in an authentic and impactful way. The message of Christ, when lived and shared, has the potential to illuminate humanity's path, bringing transformation and hope in times of uncertainty and challenges.



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