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This special study examines the different evangelists of the New Testament church, the qualifications of evangelists in the New Testament, and the duties of evangelists for today’s church.

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THE
EVANGELIST:
A Biblical Study

by Gareth L. Reese

Special Studies in Scripture
INTRODUCTION

A. Absence of detail

The absence of any detailed account of the organization and practical working of the Church of the first century leaves us in some uncertainty as to the functions and position of evangelists, elders, deacons, etc. On the other hand, there is enough information given specifically and by implication that we are caused to question some of our old established beliefs and practices. This is certainly true when it comes to a study of the word “evangelist” in the New Testament.

B. The name Evangelist -- Its Meaning.

“Evangelist” is a word which occurs three times in the New Testament (Acts 21:8; Ephesians 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:5), but which does not occur in the LXX or other Greek versions, in the Apostolic Fathers, or in the Didache, and not in classical Greek usage. It is a translation of euangelistēs, and it is from the same root as the words translated “gospel” (Grk. euangelion) and “to preach” (Grk. euangelizō). “If angelos signifies a bearer of a message, then euangelistēs means a bearer of a good message. . . . The word is not to be understood of a person who occasionally bears a good message, but one whose business, or work, is to deliver good messages. . . If John, the Baptist, means John whose business it was to baptize; then Philip the Evangelist means that Philip whose work it was to evangelize, or publish a good message.”

General meaning of the word

The term simply means “a proclaimer of good news” and has general application to all Christians. Each Christian is held responsible to “let [his] light shine,” to be the “salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13-16) and should realize that God has given him the task of reflecting the light of the Christ; of permeating the earth with the teachings of the Lord. Acts 8:4 -- early Christians, scattered, went everywhere preaching.

1A. Campbell, Millennial Harbinger, 1855, p.376,377.
Specific meaning of the word in the New Testament
In a specific sense the term “evangelist” has reference to one of the offices in the church of Christ. “And on the morrow we departed, and came unto Caesarea: and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him,” Acts 21:8. “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,” Ephesians 4:11. “But you (Timothy), be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry,” 2 Tim. 4:5. In this verse, “evangelist” is not preceded by an article in the Greek. “When that is the case, character, quality, or nature is stressed. The idea is, Let your work be evangelistic in character. Always be a bringer of good news. Be ever reaching out for lost souls in your teaching and preaching” (Wuest).

In Romans 10:14-15 the term “preacher” (kērxu, or kērussō) is used in a sense that this writer conceives to be synonymous with the word “evangelist.” And there are times that the word “minister” (“servant”) seems to be used of the same office or task in the church (Archippus, Col. 4:17; Timothy, at 2 Tim. 4:5; Tychicus, Col. 4:7; etc.)

For the specific meaning of “evangelist” in post-apostolic writings, two quotations from Eusebius' Church History are significant because of the way he refers to “evangelist” in both. The first quote talks about evangelists being present in the period immediately following the close of the apostolic age, i.e., early second century, as well as being used as a title for the “writers of the four Gospels.”

Among those that were celebrated at that time was Quadratus, who, report says, was renowned along with the daughters of Philip for his prophetical gifts. And there were many others besides these who were known in those days, and who occupied the first place among the successors of the apostles. And they also, being illustrious disciples of such great men, built up the foundations of the churches which had been laid by the apostles in every place, and preached the Gospel more and more widely and scattered the saving seeds of the kingdom of heaven far and near through the whole world. For indeed most of the disciples of that time, animated by the divine word with a more ardent love for philosophy, had already fulfilled the command of the Saviour, and
had distributed their goods to the needy. Then starting out upon long journeys they performed the office of evangelists, being filled with the desire to preach Christ to those who had not yet heard the word of faith, and to deliver to them the divine Gospels. And when they had only laid the foundations of the faith in foreign places, they appointed others as pastors, and entrusted them with the nurture of those that had recently been brought in, while they themselves went on again to other countries and nations, with the grace and the co-operation of God. For a great many wonderful works were done through them by the power of the divine Spirit, so that at the first hearing whole multitudes of men eagerly embraced the religion of the Creator of the universe. But since it is impossible for us to enumerate the names of all that became shepherds or evangelists in the churches throughout the world in the age immediately succeeding the apostles, we have recorded, as was fitting, the names of those only who have transmitted the apostolic doctrine to us in writings still extant.²

In another place, Eusebius makes reference to Pantaenus (fl. AD 180-190).

About that time, Pantaenus, a man highly distinguished for his learning, had charge of the school of the faithful in Alexandria. A school of sacred learning, which continues to our day, was established there in ancient times, and as we have been informed, was managed by men of great ability and zeal for divine things. Among these it is reported that Pantaenus was at that time especially conspicuous, as he had been educated in the philosophical system of those called Stoics. They say that he displayed such zeal for the divine Word, that he was appointed as a herald of the Gospel of Christ to the nations in the East, and was sent as far as India. For indeed there were still many evangelists of the Word who sought earnestly to use their inspired zeal, after the examples of the apostles, for the increase and building up of the Divine Word. Pantaenus was one of these, and is said to have gone to India. It is reported that among persons there who knew of Christ, he found the Gospel according to Matthew, which had anticipated his own arrival. For Bartholomew, one of the apostles, had preached to them the writing of Matthew in the Hebrew language, which they had preserved till that time.³

Theodoret, 393-458 AD, was the first to restrict the term to itinerant preachers.⁴ Ecumenius was the first to use the term “evangelist” for one of the writers of the four gospels. At a later time, the name of

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² Eusebius, H.E. iii.37.
³ Eusebius, H.E. v.10.
“evangelist” was given the writers of the four gospels because they tell the story of the gospel and because the effect of their promulgation at the beginning was very much like the work of a preaching evangelist (ISBE). In later liturgical language, “evangelist” was the name given to the reader of the gospel for the day. The evangelist became an appellation of the anagnostees (the reader of the gospel) who also had to be diegetikos, capable of explaining it. We may further recall that Philip explained the prophet Isaiah to the eunuch (HDB).

EVANGELISTS OF THE CHURCH

A. Philip, Acts 21:8. He was one of the seven chosen to care for the widows of Grecian Jews (Acts 6:1-6).

What did Philip do as an evangelist? Read Acts 8:4-13 and 26-40 and note the following: (1) Upon being scattered with other Christians he went to Samaria and proclaimed unto them the Christ, Acts 8:4,5. (2) He confirmed his word by signs, Acts 8:6,7. (3) He baptized believers, including Simon the sorcerer, Acts 8:9-13. (4) Following the instructions of an angel and the Holy Spirit, he met, taught, and baptized the treasurer of the queen of Ethiopia, Acts 8:26-39. (5) He preached in all the villages of the Philistine Plain until he came to Caesarea, where he remained for 10 years or more, Acts 8:40 and 21:8.

B. Timothy, 2 Tim. 4:5. He was a young man who was converted through the ministry of Paul during his first missionary journey, about AD 45. We would suppose Timothy was in his late teens at the time. When Paul came to Lystra and Iconium on the second missionary journey, he found that Timothy had a good reputation among the churches. Paul wanted Timothy to join the travelling group of missionaries. The time is about AD 51, and Timothy is in his early twenties. Evidently at this time the elders from the churches of Lystra and Iconium laid their hands upon Timothy and ordained him to the office of evangelist. Paul probably gave him spiritual gifts at the same time (Acts 16:1-3; 2 Tim. 1:6; 1 Tim. 4:14). Timothy accompanied Paul on the rest of the second missionary
journey, when it took him to Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth. Paul sent Timothy to work with the newly planted church at Thessalonica, 1 Thessalonians 3:2. Timothy accompanied Paul on the third missionary journey, AD 54-58. When Paul was in Ephesus in the midst of this tour, he sent Timothy and Erastus on missionary business to Macedonia and Corinth (Acts 19:22; 1 Cor. 4:17, 16:10). Timothy was with Paul a short time later, and joined with him in sending greetings to Corinth in the 2 Corinthian letter (2 Cor. 1:1). In Romans 16:21 Tim. sends greetings to the church at Rome from Corinth. From Corinth Timothy accompanied Paul to Jerusalem with the offering for the saints (Acts 20: 4). Timothy was with Paul when Paul was a prisoner during the first Roman imprisonment (Phil. 2:19; Col. 1:1). Timothy was left behind at Ephesus after he and Paul visited the church subsequent to Paul's was release from that first Roman imprisonment (1 Tim. 1:3). He will stay at Ephesus for 3 or 4 years, until the instructions given to him in 2 Tim. reach him; then he will depart for Rome to visit Paul there during Paul's second Roman imprisonment.

*What did Timothy do as an evangelist?* The answer to this would depend on what time in his life one is talking about. His duties on the second missionary journey seem not as weighty with responsibility as the duties later at Ephesus. Let it be observed that Ephesus, where Timothy was evangelist, was a church that had elders before Timothy was sent there (Acts 20:20,28 and 1 Tim. 5:19ff). Let it be observed that Timothy's evangelistic work on a permanent basis with a local congregation like Ephesus (as contrasted to his activities during the second missionary tour) is undertaken by a man in his mid-30's (as far as age is concerned). (He is still a “young man” -- for by the mid 60's AD, some twenty years after his conversion, he would be in his mid to upper thirties, agewise.) Alexander Campbell, *Millennial Harbinger*, 1855, p.378,379, has succinctly summarized Timothy's duties as specified in 1 and 2 Tim.:  

1. Let it be noted that Timothy is recognized by Paul as an evangelist.  
2. He was to have the charge of inexperienced and subordinate
teachers, and to see that they taught the same doctrine which the apostles taught. “I besought thee to abide still in Ephesus ... that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine” 1 Tim. 1:3.

3. He was to direct that prayers be made for all men, for the reasons assigned, and for the object proposed; to teach where the men should pray and teach, and the relative position of women. chap.2

4. He was instructed whom to appoint as superintendents (episkopoi) or overseers, and (diakonoi) ministers, ch.3:1-15. To the end that he might discharge these duties, the apostle told him to “give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to (didaskalia) teaching, ch.4:13, and to connect therewith meditation, v.15. He was to take heed to himself, and to the teaching -- to continue in this that he might save himself and his hearers, v.16.

5. It was his business to reprove, under proper circumstances, although but a youth. It was not the privilege of his age, but a duty of his office.

6. He was to see that the widows were properly cared for, and that the elders were properly compensated, 5:1-18.

7. He was to hear accusations against elders under proper circumstances, and rebuke them publicly when they sinned, that “others might fear.” This was to be done impartially, 5:19-21.

8. He was to teach the servants who were under the yoke how to esteem their masters.

9. He was to charge the rich to do as required in 5:17-19.

10. He was to hold fast the form of sound words, and keep the good which had been committed to him.

11. He was to make other evangelists; and not entangle himself with the affairs of life, 2 Tim. 2:2-4.

12. He was to put the brethren and all others in remembrance of the cardinal proof of the Messiahship of Jesus Christ the Son of David; namely, that he was “raised from the dead,” v.8, and that if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.

13. He was to make it the business of his life, “rightly to divide the word of truth” and show himself a workman who need not be ashamed, but approved of God, v.15.

14. He was to shun profane and vain babblings, and to “deprecate (paraitou) the dull (moros) and (apaideutous) silly (zeteseis) enquirers,” knowing they beget strifes, v.23.

15. He was to continue in the things which he had learned, and been assured of, knowing who had been his great teacher, ch. 3:14.

16. He was to “announce the word” (keruxon ton logon) -- “to be on hand (epistethi), conveniently [and] inconveniently (eukairos akairos), ready to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, (en pase
makrothumia) in all patience and (didaske) instruction.”

17. In order to sum up the whole the Apostle says to Timothy, “be sober (nephe) in all respects -- endure afflictions -- accomplish an evangelist's work ... -- carry out fully the ministry.”

C. Titus, Titus 1:5-9. As near as we know he was a convert of Paul (Titus 1:4), and perhaps a native of Antioch. Evidently, he was another of the young men who Paul constantly challenged to travel with him and serve in the gospel of Christ. We first meet him at the Jerusalem Conference, when he is used as a “test case” of how converts from among the Gentiles should be treated, Galatians 2:3. Next we see him sent to Corinth in an attempt to correct some of the problems that congregation was having, 2 Cor. 7,8. Then, we see him left on the island of Crete, after he and Paul had visited it. The epistle to Titus was addressed to him, giving him instructions as to his task while on the island. Finally, we see him sent to Dalmatia, 2 Tim. 4. Tradition has it that after his ministry to Dalmatia, he returned to Crete, where he served as evangelist until his death at age 94.5

What did Titus do as an evangelist? We know about a few of his activities at Corinth and on Crete. We presume that his duties are the same as those given to Timothy at Ephesus. (May we say that Titus' area of service was a whole island, while Timothy's was but one church, or one city?) Each was to appoint elders, each was to reprove, rebuke and exhort, each was to see that none taught anything contrary to sound doctrine. Special attention should be paid to Titus 1:5 where some of Titus' duties are specified. “For this reason, I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you.” The epistle begins by reminding Titus of his commission which had been given by word of mouth before Paul departed from Crete, leaving Titus behind. Who started the churches on Crete? When? Paul and Titus together, after Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment? If so, Titus' responsibilities would seem to be

5 Eusebius, H.E., iii.4.; Apost.Constit., vii.46.
similar to what was done at the close of the first missionary tour when elders were first selected in the new churches just recently planted, Acts 14:23. Someone else, at some time before Paul and Titus visited the island. If to be qualified for elder, a man is not to be a novice Christians, perhaps the churches are older than 1 or 2 years.

What are the “things lacking” that need to be “set in order”? The compound “set in order” implies that it has been done up to a certain point before Paul had to leave, but more was needed. Titus is to supply and give a finishing touch to these things. We surely may suppose that what is included in the remainder of Titus specifically names some of the things high on the agenda. (1) Appoint elders in every city, \( \text{katastēsēs \ kata \ polin \ presburterous} \). ‘Ordain’ is too strong a translation, and has a technical meaning. What Titus is to do is arrange for the selection and see that it is properly carried out. Titus 1:6ff -- when Paul was on Crete, he had stated the qualification of elders. He now repeats them. There is no satisfactory evidence that the elders were imposed on the churches without the consent of the individual congregations (Meyer). City by city -- elders plural in every city singular. There were 100 cities on the island. Christianity has spread widely on the island, it seems. These ‘shepherds, guardians, overseers’ were needed because of the presence of false teachers in the area, whose doctrines would ruin the churches, if not opposed. If we may add what was learned in Ephesians 4:11ff about the need for such offices in the church, it is that the saints may be equipped for service. (2) Conduct among church members, chapter 2. Another thing needing attention was the conduct of older men, younger men, older women, younger women, slaves. Titus was also to emphasize the basis of all Christian conduct (v.11-5). (3) Conduct of church members in the world, chapter 3. The nature, reason, and encouragement of proper conduct are stressed. This is part of an evangelist's job.
D. Luke.⁶ - He is a travelling companion of Paul on the second missionary journey, Acts 16. He is the one designated as ‘Famous for the gospel,’ 2 Cor. 8:18, i.e., a good preacher of the gospel, and this before he began travelling with Paul on the second missionary journey. He was present with Paul during both of Paul's Roman imprisonments, Col. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:11.

What did Luke do as an evangelist? He was the preacher with the newly established congregation at Philippi for 5 years (as seen by the “we” passages in Acts 16:40 and 20:6). He not only wrote a history of the early church (Acts), but he also wrote the third Gospel. (Tradition has it that Luke wrote what Paul had been preaching. Luke 1:1-4 tells us Luke made historical inquiry as to the factuality of what he recorded.)

E. ‘St. Paul's Bible College’ or the school of the evangelists. - A number of young men are named in the epistles. They would seem to be doing activities similar to those specifically recorded of Timothy and Titus. These young men are likely “evangelists” in training. Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater are named in Romans 16:21. Tychicus is named in Ephesians 6:21. He evidently came to Rome from the province of Asia and was being sent back to fill the Asians in on how things were going with Paul. He is also named in Col. 4:7, with the information that people at Colossae, too, will learn more about Paul from the lips of this man. Tychicus will be sent to Crete (or perhaps it will be Artemas) to relieve Titus, and then Titus is instructed to report to Paul at Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). A “true comrade” and “Clement” are named in Phil. 4:3. Aristarchus, Mark, Jesus Justus, Luke and Demas, are present with Paul when he writes Colossians (4:10ff) and the letter to Philemon (v.24). So is Epaphras, a native Colossian. From Col. 1:5-8, we learn that Epaphras has recently come to Rome from Colossae, and that he was the evangelist from whom that town had heard the gospel. In his absence, Archippus has been carrying on the ministry in Colossae, Col. 4:17. Philemon 2 indicates that Archippus is a

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fellow-soldier (preacher?), and that he is involved with the church that meets in Philemon's home. In the letter to Philemon (v.23), Epaphras also sends greetings back to the congregation where he had been preaching. Erastus is again at Corinth (2 Tim. 4:20) while Trophimus was left behind at Miletus because he was too sick to travel (2 Tim. 4:20).

What did they do? This writer has always had the impression these young men were ‘internists’ or ‘apprentices’ -- learning from Paul how to be preachers -- until their age and experience warranted them being sent out on their own, with less and less supervision from the apostle. During Paul's second imprisonment, we read that one of the young men (Demas) apparently quit the ministry. But the others were still faithfully at it, 2 Tim. 4:10-12. “Crescens has gone to Galatia (France?), Titus to Dalmatia (Yugoslavia), Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus (if this is an epistolary aorist, then Tychicus has been sent to replace Timothy as evangelist in that place).” Luke is with Paul. Mark is somewhere between Ephesus and Rome, and Timothy is to bring him along when Timothy himself comes to Rome.
LESSONS AND APPLICATIONS LEARNED

A. Evangelist is a permanent office in the church.

Arguments that the office was temporary for the early church:
(1) Evangelists were “personal agents or representatives” of the apostles. When apostles ceased, there would be no more such personal agents. (Whose agent was Philip?)
(2) They were charismatically endowed. (Philip, Acts 8; Timothy, 1 Tim. 4:4; 2 Tim. 1:6.)

True, the first evangelists were thus gifted; and so were the first deacons, the first elders, the first teachers. In this sense elders and teachers were as much given (supernaturally endowed) as were evangelists. Yet teachers we must have, so long as it is needful to learn; pastors [elders] we must have, so long as there is a flock to feed; evangelists we must have, so long as there are sinners to whom it is needful to preach the gospel. It is nowhere implied, that fitness to preach, baptize, teach, and set in order churches, cannot be obtained otherwise than by supernatural bestowments; nor is it ever hinted, that, obtaining the required fitness by miraculous agency was a pre-requisite to the work and designation.7

It might be well to give some reasons for concluding that there is such an office in the church today. The following are taken from Robert Milligan, Scheme of Redemption, p. 313,14).

1. The nature of the work assigned to the evangelist makes the office a perpetual one. Their job was to convert sinners, to feed the flock of God, to teach the ignorant. While time endures this will be necessary. Therefore, the job must be perpetual.
2. Evangelists from the beginning received their commission from churches, and not directly from Christ (as did the apostles), or from apostles.8 This can be shown in the case of Timothy in which the hands of the eldership were laid on him, Acts 14:1-3; 1 Tim. 4:14. The imposition of the hands of the eldership

7D. King, Memoir of D.King, p.272.
8A possible exception to this statement might be the 500 brethren who were given the Great Commission as recorded in Matthew 28:16-20.
(probably of Lystra and Iconium) was for the purpose of setting him aside for the work upon which he was embarking. Paul laid his hands upon Timothy (2 Tim. 1:6) to impart to him those miraculous gifts which in that age were necessary in order to enable him to fulfill the commission. Since we still have local churches after the order of those of that day, we have the prerogative of setting aside evangelists.

3. Paul told Timothy to choose certain faithful men and commit to them what Paul had committed to Timothy (2 Tim. 2:2). This hardly needs comment; it is only necessary to ask, what was the work of Timothy, and then realize that he was to commit that work to others, and then they in turn were urged to commit the work to others. If this admonition was followed by Timothy and those who succeeded him, we have the permanence of the office assured.

4. The office has actually been continued from the beginning to the present day. That evangelist was the name by which these servants of the church were usually designated in primitive times seems evident from the testimony of several of the Christian fathers. Eusebius, for instance, the learned Bishop of Caesarea, AD 315-340, thus speaks of evangelists who lived and labored during the reign of Trajan, AD 989-117. “Bishop” in the Christian literature from the second to the fourth centuries was none other than the “evangelist.”

B. Evangelist is similar to today's preacher, and is not the same as the office of elder.

J. W. McGarvey has made a contribution to the Restoration Movement's church polity. Before McGarvey's time, “evangelist” was an itinerant preacher, a circuit rider, who did not work with any one congregation for any extended period of time. Alexander Campbell wrote, “evangelists constitute the living itinerant ministry of the church, sent abroad into the world and sustained in their labors by the church. They preach the word of life. They convert

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9Eusebius, H.E. III.37
the world. They institute churches and set them in order.”

Influenced by Presbyterian polity -- with its ruling elders and teaching elders -- early Restoration Movement preachers had the idea that preaching and teaching for the settled congregation should be the work of the elders. McGarvey defended the permanent service of an evangelist within a local congregation. He maintained that “preachers” were better identified with the New Testament evangelists than with New Testament elders.

C. Duties of the Office of Evangelist

1. PREACHING

   Where did New Testament evangelists preach?

   (1) Unevangelized places (like Gaul and Dalmatia). In this, the evangelist who serves as a ‘state evangelist’ for an area men's fellowship, would serve in a similar capacity.

   (2) In towns where there already was a church with elders (Timothy at Ephesus, Titus at Corinth, the “true yoke-fellow” at Philippi). The Christians are encouraged and urged to do all things necessary for the maintenance of their spiritual life. “Exhort” is an action word. It is one thing to tell a person what he must do, it is quite another to so speak as to create a desire on his part to do as he has been told.

   (3) In towns where churches had no elders yet (Philip? Titus on Crete?). The Christians must be made aware of the need and the qualifications for such servants.

   (4) To crowds of people (Philip in the city of Samaria), and to a few individuals (Philip and the Ethiopian).

   (5) Some evangelists were itinerant (Philip), and some were ‘located’ ministers (Luke at Philippi, Philip at Caesarea, Timothy at Ephesus).

   (6) Sometimes a whole number of churches constitute an evangelist's field of service (Titus had responsibility for a number of churches on Crete; Archippus served three congregations in the Lycus River valley, namely Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis.) Care must be exercised here. Paul's instructions to Titus hardly constitute “the germ of the episcopal office” as Pulpit Commentary suggests.

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11Alexander Campbell, Millennial Harbinger, 1853, p.481.
Titus is evidently not the bishop over a number of other evangelists already on the island. Nor is he the bishop over a number of congregations, who must submit to his authority even in the matter of selecting local elders. Like any evangelist, whose field of service is not limited to one local congregation, Titus may go into any of those towns, and preach for any of the congregations, and by presenting the Word and will of God, lead the people in the right paths.

*What was the message, the content, of their preaching?*

The gospel or good news was the one message. The “gospel” has been outlined as facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed, warnings to be heeded, and promises to be enjoyed. As one preaches he charges, reproves, and rebukes. The evangelist is to refute, counteract, and correct false and vain teaching (1 Tim. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:14; Titus 1:13,14). Those listeners to the gospel preacher, who trusted in riches, were urged to transfer their faith to God, 1 Tim. 6:17. Admonishing and warning are also a part of gospel preaching. Christians are notified of their faults and of approaching or possible dangers.

*What was the purpose or the aim of their preaching?*

The ultimate purpose was the salvation of mankind, thus the preaching to the unevangelized. Some intermediate steps toward that ultimate goal are to inform, instruct, move to action, confirm, convince, and set right.

2. **TEACHING,**

   Sinners are informed of their sinful and lost condition and instructed regarding salvation and what they must do to be saved (Philip). The Christians are given a knowledge of their relationship to God and of the things that He expects of them as His children. The backslider learns of his condition and what he must do to be restored again to the divine family (Simon the sorcerer). Those who suffer are comforted

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12“Teaching” is implicit in the allusions to “sound doctrine” in the letters to Timothy.
through the hearing of God's word and promises.

3. SEEING THAT ELDERS ARE APPOINTED IN EACH CHURCH.
   Before there were evangelists (Titus 1:5), this is something the apostles themselves did (Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 5:22). It likely will require working with the newly-converted men, training them to do the task they will one day be selected to do. (Some evangelists hold “Elders and Deacons Clinics” to accomplish this needed training.)

4. SETTING THE CONGREGATIONS IN ORDER.
   Evangelists help troubled churches. See Titus' work at Corinth, where there was a lack of discipline of a habitual and unrepentant sinner (Titus 1:5).

5. EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY.
   The evangelist, by reason of his office, must of necessity do some of the same tasks that constitute the work of elder, of deacon, and of teacher. Leaders “equip the saints for the work of ministry” (Ephesians 4:11ff.) The higher office includes the lower. He will therefore often find himself doing the jobs the lower (later) offices do -- as well as teaching those newer workers how to do the job they have been set apart to do. Especially is this true in a new congregation where there are no Christians qualified to be elders or deacons.

6. REPRODUCING HIMSELF IN OTHER EVANGELISTS.
   The evangelist has the privilege of looking out and training other men to be evangelists (2 Tim. 2:2). This might be done through internships. It might be done as an older evangelist in a given area has a ‘fatherly’ oversight of a number of younger, learning, evangelists.
D. Qualifications and Ordination of the Evangelist

There is no list of qualifications in one passage of Scripture, like those given for elder and deacon in 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1. DeWelt has given a 15-point list in his *The Church in the Bible* (p.94,95). He divides them into two categories, stated and implied.

**Stated qualifications**
1. He must be a man of righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness, and peace. (1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22)
2. He must be a man of purity. (1 Tim. 4:12c; 5:22b)
3. He must be a diligent student of God's Word. (2 Tim. 2:15)
4. He must be gentle and apt to teach. (2 Tim. 2:24)
5. He must be a man of contentment. (1 Tim. 6:6-10)
6. He must be one who avoids foolish questions. (2 Tim. 2:16,23; Titus 3:9,10; 1 Tim. 6:3-5)
7. He must be one who will conscientiously fulfill all his duties. (1 Tim. 4:15,16; 6:12,14,20; 2 Tim. 4:5)
8. He must be one who is not ashamed of the testimony of the Lord (2 Tim. 1:18).
9. He must be willing to suffer hardship. (2 Tim. 2:3; 4:5)
10. He must be an example in all things. (1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7,8)

**Implied qualifications**
1. He must first of all be a Christian of the highest type.
2. He must be a speaker who is capable of delivering in a clear, forcible and becoming manner the whole counsel of God.
3. He must have strong burning convictions regarding his message. (Titus 3:8)
4. He must be as wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove. (Matt. 10:16)
5. He must meet all the character qualifications of an elder. The duties of an evangelist and elder are similar and overlap each other to some extent; it therefore seems logical that his qualifications should exceed or at least be equal to those of an elder.

It might be possible to summarize this list under two or three points. The would-be evangelist should be of good report in the church that ordains him (Timothy). The candidate for evangelist should have a good knowledge of the Scriptures (the gospel), again like Timothy who knew the Scriptures from childhood. 2 Tim. 2:2 tells Timothy what kind of men to look for -- faithful men (whom
he may teach and entrust the gospel message heard from Paul), who will be able to teach others also. There are some common sense skills that could be studied and developed (while the young men are interns or apprentices); management skills (Timothy is the example); people motivation skills (Titus); personal evangelism skills (Philip).

What about ordination?

The call and ordination of Timothy furnishes an instructive example... Paul found him in Lystra, and learned of the faith of his mother and grandmother, and that from a child he had known the holy Scriptures. He learned also that he was well reported of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium. He would have him to go forth with him (Acts 16:1-3). Paul gave him an evangelical education, and taught him all the details of the important work to which he had been called (all this followed his ordination service). There was an ordination service (1 Tim. 4:4; 2 Tim. 1:6). There was a prophecy that suggested to Paul that Timothy be set aside for the ministry. Evidently, elders from two local congregations united in this installation service.

They represented the churches in a special service of official recognition. (Common sense suggests that all the churches ... who become obligated [by ordaining a man to the office of evangelist] for his support, should have some voice in his selection and ordination.) All Christian communities on earth, however numerous, constitute but one church of Christ. ... in all cases where public officers are to be chosen, and especially evangelists who are to be regarded as officers of the whole body, a concurrence of a plurality of churches ... should be regarded as necessary. Ordination involves the proving of the fitness of the candidate by competent testimony, or by a personal examination, to the satisfaction of a fairly representative body of men in the church, and the formal approval of him by prayer, fasting, and the imposition of hands by such a body. Then from this formal and real induction into office, there flow certain natural and important consequences. Of course, the main facts of such an ordination will be recorded and the record should be carefully preserved. A certified copy of this record is the evangelist's credential to the churches.... In case of an ordained man's falling into sin, a similar representative body will be the proper authority to inquire into his standing, and, if found unworthy, to withdraw the church's approval from him as an evangelist.13

13 Hayden, *Church Polity*, p.41-43.
E. Elder-Evangelist relationships

Younger evangelists likely are still under the supervision of the one who encouraged the churches to ordain them. Older evangelists are given greater responsibility over churches and areas. Perhaps evangelists rule until the congregation is established with duly chosen elders, then turn the congregation over to the authority of the elders.

*What about an evangelist also being selected to serve as an elder?* This writer has no objection, if he meets the qualifications given in Scripture for elder. But the writer would also ask the evangelist why he wishes to be selected as elder. That limits his field of service to the congregation that selected him as elder. The evangelist also must be careful lest he wants to become an elder just so he has more “voice” in the affairs of the congregation to which he ministers. Until recently, this writer had never once heard of an “evangelist” desiring to be selected to the office of “deacon.” Why? What is there about “elder” that is so desirable, and “deacon” that is so undesirable?

*What about the subordination of elders to the evangelist?*  

One reason given to Titus why elders ought to be able to convict the gainsayers, is, that “there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake.” These were unruly evangelists, and the only way to stop their wide mouths was to convict them as gainsayers -- not convince them; for such fellows can never be convinced; but to convict them, which means to convince the brethren as to who they are, and thus stop their mouths by depriving them of hearers.

Again, the elders of the church at Ephesus were put on the watch of all evangelists who might visit their flock, and required to stand guard against any who were unworthy. (Acts 20:29-31). And Revelation 2:2 says they did it: “they tried those who claimed to be apostles and were not ...”

The first innovation on this apostolic order of church government, which is traceable in history, consisted not in the displacement of the eldership, or in a
change of its character and functions, but in subordinating it to the resident evangelist, making him the chief ruler, and ascribing to him alone the title *episkopos* “bishop,” which had hitherto belonged to every elder. The certain existence of this order is first found in the writings of Irenaeus, who wrote in the last quarter of the second century; unless we admit the genuineness of the Ignatian epistles, which were written, if genuine, in the first or second decade of that century. In three of the fourteen Ignatian epistles, we find that Ignatius may be regarded as the first advocate of this innovation, if not the originator of it. He presses the subject of obedience to the bishop with vehemence, often dragging it in without regard to the connection of thought, and thus he betrays the untempered zeal of a convert to an innovation. Doubtless the other eleven epistles, if genuine, in which are still more allusions to this subject, were written in great part for the purpose of emphasizing an order of government which at the time of their date, had become common, but which still seemed to need the support of authoritative names. As such names were not found among the apostles, or among men like Clement of Rome, Polycarp and Justin Martyr, all of whose writings indicate the continuance of the apostolic order, Ignatius was seized upon as the single man of the first half of the second century whose authority could be plausibly claimed for separating the bishopric from the eldership.

No! says DeWelt in *1 & 2 Tim. and Titus*, p.279-283.

As in the case of apostles and elders and their relationship, there is a relationship between elders and preachers that must be observed strictly if both are to do their work properly and scripturally. The work of elders and preachers is different; although one might be an elder and a preacher at the same time. He can do things as a preacher that he cannot do as an elder, or do things as an elder that he cannot do as a preacher. For instance, he may preach for several congregations but he cannot exercise oversight of an overseer in any congregation. Or he may exercise the oversight as an elder in a certain congregation, but he cannot exercise the oversight of several congregations at the same time.

Preachers sometimes try to dominate elders. Preachers often ignore the eldership. Young preachers sometimes try to do their work without elders, thinking that they can better carry out their ideas and plans without the restraint of the eldership to check them. Many think they know more than the elders, and the sad part is that they sometimes do, but this does not authorize preachers to usurp control of the over-sight.... Most of the men who have been made elders get little encouragement for the efforts they make. They are looked upon by some preachers and many members as sort of a necessary useless sort of men. Some of us will accept the advice of a man who was never chosen by anyone to oversee, rather than follow the counsel of a properly
Many preachers act as sole judges of who is and who is not qualified to be elders in a certain place, disregarding the Bible qualifications. We can all go to the Bible and determine who is and who is not a qualified elder. But when preachers say, “That is not necessary to be an elder,” when speaking of some qualification, “so I'll just appoint him anyway,” that is going too far. Sometimes a preacher refuses to appoint, or allow to be appointed (as if he were the only judge), a qualified man to the eldership by giving some point of qualification that the Bible does not give.

Preachers claiming the position and authority of elders when they begin regular work at a place. A few preachers are so careless in the Scriptures as to claim to be an “Automatic Elder” when they move to a certain place to begin regular work there. They argue this way: The elders labor in word and doctrine (1 Tim. 5:17); the preacher also labors in word and doctrine, and since the preacher always labors in this field, and it is the work of elders, it follows that the preacher is automatically an elder where ever he labors. ... There are some things wrong with this idea. It completely disregards the qualifications for an elder given in the Scriptures.

Preachers exercising oversight in the place of the eldership. Some preachers follow the practice of denominationalism to make themselves THE PASTOR of the congregation where they preach. Why do they do this? (1) Sometimes the elders are irresponsible and do not perform their work. This necessarily leaves the duties upon the shoulders of someone else, usually the preacher. He begins little by little to assume their work until finally he is acting as the eldership, even though he did not seek it from the beginning. (2) In some places there are no men qualified to become elders, and either the membership places all responsibility and authority upon the preacher, or the preacher thinks he must assume the oversight in order for the work to go forward. (3) In some places the elders insist that the preacher take the leading part and make most of the decisions for them.

Preachers exercising oversight over the elders. This is the most extreme claim toward popery we have found to date in the church of Christ. It is contended that preachers are not only EQUAL to the elders in the oversight, but are ABOVE them! ... Imagine a preacher claiming oversight over several bishops ... it makes him sort of an ARCHBISHOP! ... The Bible teaches that the elders have the OVERSIGHT of the flock which is among them. If the evangelist is among the flock he is under the oversight of the elders. ... Titus was told to “rebuke with all authority” (Titus 2:15), but that is a far cry from “oversee with all authority.” The authority of an evangelist is toward the preaching of the word.
Elders exercising too much authority over preachers. Many times elders will keep placing their own responsibilities upon the preacher until he is actually trying to do all the work of the eldership. Christ did not give the elders authority to delegate their responsibilities to others. They may assign certain work to others to do, but the OVERSIGHT and responsibilities for such can never be assigned to another. ... Then some elders try to control a preacher when he is beyond the bounds of their authority. Some have asked, “Do the elders of one congregation have the oversight of a preacher who regularly works with them but goes away for a meeting in another locality? Are the elders still over him while he works there?” The answer is, NO. And the simple reason is that the elders cannot over see ANY WORK beyond the local church of which they are elders. A congregation may send a preacher into a new field of labor and support him, but they do not exercise the oversight over him or those converts where he is preaching in that work. They may discipline him for an unchristian conduct while away in a meeting after he returns, or they may withdraw their support from him, and mark him as a false teacher if he does not continue true to the word while at some other place preaching, but this is the extent of their authority over an evangelist whom they may be supporting when he is not laboring among them.

No! say others. The evangelist is not over the elders. Are you going to have a young man, still in his twenties, giving directions to elders, when it comes to church administration? (What about when the Evangelist is 50 or 60 years old? May he then give direction and leadership?)

Yes! say others. Appeal is made to 1 Tim. 5:19,20, where the evangelist is to discipline the elder who has been accused of sin by two or three witnesses. Is it possible that it is not the elder who is rebuked, but the sinning people who brought accusation against the elder. Note that “them” is plural, whereas “elder” is singular. I. C. Nance in the Gospel Broadcast of Feb. 24, 1949, p.141, wrote:

Whereas it cannot be shown that either Titus or Timothy, evangelists, were ever under any eldership after they began their work of evangelism, it can be definitely shown that both of them were over the eldership of at least one (and that's enough). Timothy was placed over the eldership at Ephesus by apostolic authority. And Ephesus was an old, large, and established church which had had elders for years when this happened. Titus, on the other hand, just a plain evangelist, was placed by apostolic authority over all the churches
in Crete.... Since an evangelist is given power to exercise “all authority” over a number of churches and, whereas, an elder has only partial authority in only one congregation, it follows that the authority of the evangelist supersedes that of the elder or the eldership. Hence, Titus was over any eldership you might name in Crete. If not, why not?

The elder's area of responsibility or field of service is limited to the local congregation, whereas the evangelists is not so limited. The evangelist's position is best described as an outside advisor to the elder. That is Timothy's position at Ephesus.
CONCLUSION

An “evangelist” is one who is well acquainted with the good news and makes it his business to share it. He encourages men to regulate their lives so they are in harmony with the Gospel. He recognizes and refutes wrong “doctrine” by how it harmonizes or fails to harmonize with the gospel. The writers of the Gospels are called “evangelists” because they did what evangelists do -- they were telling the story (oral tradition). “Tell me the story of Jesus!” is our appeal to those who would be evangelists. Do the work of an evangelist! Set the churches in order with your great preaching! Reproduce yourselves as you recruit young men for the office of evangelist!

Fulfill your ministry! Don't quit the ministry! Keep on!

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