

Celebrating the Gospel in Evangelism

Where: Seoul, Korea

When: 30 October 2025

1. Executive Summary / Abstract

This report summarises the key insights from the World Evangelical Alliance General Assembly plenary session titled, "Celebrating the Gospel in Evangelism," enriched with practical perspectives from assembly attendees. The panel discussion was moderated by Nick Parker, and featured four distinguished speakers. Their contributions explored a multi-faceted approach to contemporary evangelism, addressing its foundational principles, practical mobilisation, potential for global unity, and engagement with future technologies. Ben introduced "gospel formation," stressing that deep personal grounding in the gospel must precede cultural engagement. He reframed worship, proposing its primary expression should be witness, not just song. Jamie presented the work of 'Yes He Is,' which focuses on empowering "everyday believers" through supportive communities and digital tools. Attendee feedback powerfully illustrated this principle, detailing community-based strategies such as meeting tangible needs, removing social barriers through "casual Sundays," and moving services outside church walls to foster fellowship. Vanna Nachtigal delivered a passionate call to elevate Pentecost as a unified day of global witness, a vision that attendees from Africa affirmed is already resonating with their contextual methods of door-to-door and open-air evangelism. Finally, Heinz Overwalk provided a theological framework for navigating evangelism in an age of AI, urging the Church to act as the "embodied Body of Christ." This was grounded by participants from Benin and Kenya who confirmed the widespread use of social media alongside traditional outreach. Collectively, the session and its subsequent contributions painted a holistic picture of evangelism as an authentic overflow of a transformed life, nurtured in community, expressed in global unity, and courageously adaptive to the diverse cultural and technological landscapes of the world.

2. Detailed Summary of Plenary Content

The plenary session, enhanced by subsequent attendee discussions, provided a dynamic and grounded exploration of evangelism in the 21st century. Moderated by Nick, the panel brought together four leaders whose ministries are shaping different facets of gospel proclamation, from personal spiritual formation to global technological engagement.

Ben Jack: Gospel Formation and Worship as Witness

Ben Jack of The Message Trust began by drawing upon his 26 years of experience as an evangelist, which included a unique mission field as a professional DJ in Europe's nightclub scene. This work taught him two critical lessons. The first was the paramount importance of being deeply rooted in the gospel. He warned that without this profound grounding, any attempt to engage with culture risks that "culture will evangelise us rather than we that will evangelise into culture," leading to a compromised message that is "no gospel at all." The second lesson was that while tradition is an important anchor, it is not ultimate. He challenged the audience to question traditions that hinder missional opportunities, urging believers to "get over ourselves a little bit" to faithfully pursue the opportunities God presents.

Building on these foundations, Ben introduced Advance, an initiative focused on "gospel formation." Quoting the late Michael Green, who defined evangelism as "overflow," Ben described it as the natural outpouring of God's work within a believer's life. This shifts the perspective from

believers being merely "used" as tools to being active partners with God. He concluded with a provocative question: What if the Church's primary understanding of "worship" shifted from singing to witness? He suggested that if the world is to hear the good news, our worship must first become our witness, from which an authentic overflow of song will naturally result.

Jamie: Activating Everyday Believers Through Community

Jamie, representing Christian Vision's 'Yes He Is' initiative, addressed the challenge of Matthew 9:37: "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." The core mission of 'Yes He Is' is to solve this by equipping and activating "everyday believers" to confidently share their faith. He explained that while the organisation provides practical tools and courses, the key to its effectiveness lies in the vibrant community it has cultivated, particularly through social media, where stories are shared to build courage and a sense of shared mission.

The principles Jamie outlined were brought to life through the experiences shared by a session attendee. This participant described a highly effective, community-centric evangelism strategy that begins not with preaching, but with prayer and a "need assessment." By asking how their church can serve the community and meeting tangible needs, they cultivate genuine relationships. This act of love often leads to people asking about the church organically.

To further break down barriers, their church hosts a "Friends and Family Sunday," which is evangelism-driven but intentionally casual. The attendee noted that a common excuse for not attending church is, "I don't have clothes." To solve this, they instituted a "casual Sunday" where jeans are encouraged, removing the social barrier. They further enhanced this welcoming atmosphere by moving the entire service out of the church building and into a local recreation site, renting gazebos for the gathering. This event, centred on a clear gospel message followed by food and extended fellowship, proved "very effective," demonstrating a powerful, real-world application of building a faith-sharing community where everyday believers can invite their neighbours into a non-intimidating and relational environment.

Vanna Nachtigal: Reactivating Pentecost as a Global Day of Witness

Vanna Nachtigal from Germany brought a passionate and urgent plea to the assembly, fuelled by his experience of growing up in the land of the Reformation yet never hearing the gospel for 21 years. He cited the statistic that 93% of believers are silent about their faith and argued for a radical shift. His vision is to "elevate Pentecost to the same level as Christmas or Easter," transforming it from a mere date on the church calendar into an annual, unified global day of prayer, obedience, and active witness for every believer.

Vanna stressed that this is not a new programme but a call to reactivate a 2000-year-old biblical principle. An attendee from Africa powerfully affirmed the resonance of this vision within their context. He explained that their primary methods of evangelism in rural areas are highly active and personal: community outreach, door-to-door evangelism, and open-air crusades where many people gather to listen. He explicitly connected these efforts to the biblical mandate of Pentecost, stating, "it is starting in Jerusalem, it is where we are... and I believe that it will be able to reach to different villages." This perspective demonstrates how Vanna's call for a global moment is already spiritually and strategically aligned with the grassroots evangelistic work happening across Africa, where the concept of a unified, Spirit-empowered push for the gospel is a lived reality.

Heinz Overwalk: The Embodied Church in an Age of AI

Heinz Overwalk of Christian Vision pivoted the conversation to the future of evangelism, specifically addressing the role of emerging technologies like AI. He critiqued the outdated,

dualistic thinking that separates the "virtual" from the "real" world, arguing that our lives are now deeply intertwined with technology. To discern the path forward, he used an analogy from robotics, explaining that a robot cannot learn about gravity from code alone; it needs an "embodied" form to learn through real-world interaction.

He applied this metaphor to the Church, which the Bible calls the "Body of Christ." The Church learns and discerns not through abstract theory, but through embodied engagement. The only way to grapple with AI in evangelism is for the Church to bring its whole self—its creativity, ethics, and empathy—into direct interaction with these technologies.

This need to integrate technology with traditional methods was echoed by attendees from West and East Africa. Following the discussion on rural outreach, participants from both the Republic of Benin and Kenya independently confirmed that, alongside their traditional mission work, "social media" is a key platform they are using to preach the gospel. This on-the-ground reality perfectly illustrates Heinz's point. They are not choosing between the "virtual" and the "real" world; they are living and ministering in an integrated reality, using every available tool—from an open-air meeting in a village to a post on a social media platform—to bear witness to Christ. Their experience shows that the "embodied Body of Christ" is already learning to navigate this new frontier.

3. Main Topic and Core Message

Main Topic: The plenary session addressed the topic of "Celebrating the Gospel in Evangelism" by exploring four essential dimensions for effective witness: the personal foundation, the communal context, the global strategy, and the technological future.

Core Message: The central message, amplified by attendee contributions, is that effective, authentic, and sustainable evangelism is an overflow of a life deeply formed by the gospel. It is not a rigid programme but a joyful, Spirit-led responsibility for every believer. This personal witness is nurtured in supportive communities that actively remove barriers to entry; is catalysed by unified global moments; and manifests in diverse, culturally-specific ways, courageously blending timeless, relational methods with the technological tools of the present.

4. Primary Arguments, Key Principles, and Theological Points

- **Gospel Integrity Before Cultural Engagement:** The foundation of all evangelism is a deep, personal knowledge of the gospel. Without this, attempts to be culturally relevant will lead to a compromised message.
- **Evangelism as Overflow, Not Just Duty:** True witness is the natural outpouring of what God is doing *in* a believer, stemming from a life transformed by grace.
- **Worship Redefined as Witness:** The panel challenged the Church to consider witness as its primary form of worship, a profound offering of glory to God from which sung praise flows.
- **The Power of the "Everyday Believer":** The mission of the Church will be accomplished by equipping and activating the entire body of believers for witness in their daily lives.
- **Removing Barriers to Entry:** Effective evangelism actively identifies and dismantles cultural and practical barriers—such as dress codes or intimidating church buildings—by creating welcoming, casual, and service-oriented environments where people can experience Christian fellowship.

- **Contextualising Evangelistic Methods:** While the gospel is universal, its presentation is highly contextual. In many regions, such as rural Africa, traditional methods like door-to-door outreach and open-air gatherings remain highly effective and are now being supplemented by digital tools like social media.
- **Reclaiming Pentecost for Mission:** Pentecost is the theological cornerstone for Christian witness. There is a powerful opportunity to unify the global Church by reactivating this day for intentional, worldwide evangelism.
- **Theology of Embodiment for Technological Discernment:** The Church, as the physical Body of Christ on earth, is called to discern the proper use of new technologies not from a distance, but through active, embodied engagement, integrating them faithfully into its mission.

5. Conclusion and Main Call to Action

The panel, together with the assembly's participants, concluded by presenting a multi-layered and compelling call to action. It is a summons to move beyond passive belief towards an active, celebratory, and holistic engagement with evangelism, recognising that this work is already happening in powerful ways across the globe.

1. **A Personal Call to Gospel Formation:** Every believer is urged to prioritise being deeply formed by the gospel, ensuring their witness is an authentic overflow of Christ's work within them.
2. **A Local Call to Build Accessible Communities:** Churches are encouraged to create faith-sharing communities that actively serve their neighbours and dismantle social barriers, making the gospel accessible through relational acts of love and fellowship before a formal sermon is ever preached.
3. **A Global Call to Unite for Pentecost:** The leaders of the global Church are invited to stand together to elevate Pentecost as a unified day of witness, catalysing and celebrating the diverse evangelistic efforts—from open-air crusades to social media outreach—already taking place.
4. **A Forward-Looking Call to Embodied Engagement:** The Church is challenged to lean into the technological future with courage and wisdom, learning from those already on the front lines how to integrate new tools faithfully into its unchanging mission to make disciples of all nations.

Invitation for Further Contribution

Your voice is still a vital part of this global conversation. We invite you to add your reflections, insights, and questions to this discussion by visiting the following link: <https://weafeedback.com/thursday-30/>

1. Scroll down to the Panel session titles,
2. When ready, select 'Start Recording' and provide your input (responding to the questions below.
3. When done, select 'Stop'
4. No need to provide personal details
5. When ready, select 'Send'.

To engage with the report and contextualise the content for your ministry, access Spock.chat (if you have not yet registered, click here - <https://app.spock.chat/conference/wea>) It is highly recommended that you personalise your AI before engaging with the reports. To do so, select the 'Personalise your AI' agent in the Menu Bar and follow the instructions.