



*A resource from the City Gospel Movements team, a ministry of the Luis Palau Association
Celebrating & accelerating collaborative gospel work in cities around the world.*

Elevate the Conversation on Evangelism in Your City

*Learn what led us—the Luis Palau Association—to pilot an evangelism team in
Portland, Oregon and how we're hoping to inspire other cities.*

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Gospel Movement (noun)

A united, holistic, sustainable effort by the citywide Church to seek the peace and prosperity of their city. Common union found in Jesus Christ provides the foundation for relational trust on which all collaborative efforts are built.

United: the united citywide Church working together with other sectors of society

Holistic: living out and proclaiming the gospel in word and deed

Sustainable: long-term vision and commitment to the city





Elevate the Conversation on Evangelism in Your City

“Communicating the message of the gospel in culturally relevant ways is necessary to the flourishing of our cities. We’ve experienced a renewed conviction and enthusiasm for sharing the gospel in our own city of Portland, Oregon. Through passing on what we have been learning, we hope to elevate the conversation on evangelism in citywide movements.” – Kevin Palau, President of the Luis Palau Association

A LITTLE CONTEXT

Our participation in the Portland, Oregon gospel movement sparked in 2008 when we led a citywide evangelism [festival on the city's waterfront](#). 50,000 people gathered on the hot August weekend to hear the gospel message and celebrate the united effort of 600+ churches who had participated in community service initiatives leading up to the festival weekend.

Over 10 years have passed since the festival during which services initiatives continued and new ones were birthed. Churches continued to build relationships with the city and local believers mobilized to serve in lasting ways. Because of this powerful “Portland Story” hundreds of communities have been inspired to ask: “What is God doing in our city? And, how can we join?”

The Portland Story is still being written...

In 2017, we gathered with leaders who have played key roles in the movement to reflect on the last decade. We celebrated the unity amongst the pastors and the community service that was making Portland better. However, one of the weak areas that was identified was evangelism. We had not been nearly as intentional about sustainable, citywide evangelism as we had been about our efforts to serve the community.

We don't regret the last 10 years of service work, especially because of the way that showing up and following through on commitments has forged strong relationships of trust with leaders across the city. But as the Luis Palau Association—whose organizational mission includes proclaiming the gospel of Jesus—we sense a unique responsibility and hopeful opportunity to ensure evangelism is an integral distinctive of gospel movements—starting in our own city. As we step into this exciting new chapter of the Portland Story, we commit to putting more intention towards citywide evangelism all the while continuing to serve the Portland-area with passion.

Not only have we sensed this shift in Portland, but in speaking with 250+ leaders of gospel movements¹ from San Francisco to New York City; Ottawa, Canada to London, England; Chennai, India to Sydney, Australia, we get the feeling that we are not alone in this renewed conviction to prioritize evangelism in gospel movements.

This short resource describes the steps we have taken since our 2017 retreat to prioritize evangelism in our city's movement. We'll share:

- **The Why:** the theological and practical motivations for prioritizing evangelism in gospel movements.
- **The What:** the actions we have taken to intentionally prioritize evangelism in the Portland, Oregon gospel movement.
- **The How:** some practical ideas you can adapt to prioritize evangelism in your city.

¹ Includes 250+ in-person meetings, video/conference calls, and surveys conducted by the City Gospel Movements team during 2017-2018. Ongoing research and relationship building continue to be our top priorities.

THE WHY

the motivation for prioritizing evangelism in gospel movements.

“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation...he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.”

2 Corinthians 5:18-20

THEOLOGICAL + PRACTICAL MOTIVATIONS:

- **City transformation must include both word and deed if it is to be holistic and truly transformative.**² Jesus proclaimed the gospel *and* did acts of healing and justice which further expressed the saving desire and power of God. The Church followed suit by courageously communicating their beliefs, while also working for city flourishing through counter-cultural living.³
- **It is the reason most of us got started in gospel movement work**—we want to see lives and cities changed through Jesus Christ. Our lives were transformed by the power of God and we believe God has a plan not only for individuals but for entire societies.⁴ In the Bible, God spoke directly to cities through the prophets. Cities are living characters with personalities and sins to whom God is calling to repentance.⁵ Cities are not ambiguous entities too big to grasp and too hard to save. On the contrary, God has a passion for cities and we determine to seek His vision for our cities and join Him in this God-sized city transformation mission.
- **Citywide efforts are too massive to go at alone.** A vision as large as creating a culture of sustainable citywide evangelism cannot be realized by one organization or a few churches. We know we need to combine our efforts in strategic, humble ways in order to see a culture of evangelism developed. As we reflected on the last decade, we knew it was not accurate to say evangelism had not been happening since the 2008 festival. Churches and organizations have been faithfully preaching the gospel and sending laborers into the harvest field. Going forward, we have a renewed conviction to put more thought and strategy towards connecting local evangelism efforts as we have already been doing with local service efforts.

² James 2:14-25; Rom. 10:14-15; 1 Tim. 4:1-3

³ Acts 2:14-47; 4:18-22

⁴ Jonah 4:11

⁵ Jeremiah 46-51; Obadiah

- **People often don't verbally share their faith by default.** We assumed project volunteers and church goers would share their faith by default as they were serving their city, but the vast majority do not. Hurdles include: debilitating social fear,⁶ poor experiences with past gospel sharing methods, doubt that meaningful spiritual conversations are possible in today's increasingly secular cultural climate, and the mindset that sharing the gospel is for a "special" group of particularly passionate or gifted evangelists. These hurdles may seem tall, but we believe God is inviting His Church into more.

There are leaders, communities, and resources⁷ around the world that are helping change the culture of evangelism through relevant evangelism trainings, current testimony videos, and reminders to all believers of the adventure it is to participate in sharing the gospel. You don't even have to consider yourself a vocational evangelist, extrovert, or a "super-spiritual" Christian.

- **Leaders are unsure how to prioritize evangelism.** In talking to 250+ leaders of gospel movements (including non-profit leaders, pastors, volunteers, business professionals, etc.), the City Gospel Movements team at Palau learned evangelism is an area leaders want to prioritize but don't really know how to. Leaders may be unaware of what evangelism activity is already happening in their city, unsure of what evangelism resources are most applicable to their context, or feel like their evangelistic fervor is not strong enough to lead this conversation. (In the *2018 Focus Area & Organization Structure Survey* conducted by the City Gospel Movements team, evangelism ranked 2nd out of 18 focus areas on which leaders would like additional support).

Cities are not ambiguous entities too big to grasp and too hard to save. On the contrary, God has a passion for cities and we determine to seek His vision for our cities and join Him in this God-sized city transformation mission.

⁶ Mark 16:6-8

⁷ Check out the list at the end of this document for a list of resources.

THE WHAT

steps we have taken to prioritize evangelism in Portland, OR.

We knew that in order to prioritize evangelism in Portland, we needed to form a team whose sole purpose was to bring evangelism forward in the movement conversation. **So, we formed an evangelism team.** It was our greatest joy to see how eager leaders were to be with others who shared the same desire: elevate the conversation on evangelism.

WHAT IS AN EVANGELISM TEAM?

A group of strategic leaders (including pastors, non-profit leaders and other people of influence) in a city that are passionate about evangelism and act as a catalyst to keep evangelism a central part of the gospel movement through many different means.

The great news for us—and we believe for every city—is that God is already working through individuals and organizations to shape a culture of evangelism in micro and macrocosms. We need to first recognize where God is already creating momentum and prayerfully brainstorm how we can come alongside to support. Energy rises when evangelistically passionate communities are connected and bridge their collective enthusiasm, experience, and obedience to share the gospel citywide.

WE ASKED THESE QUESTIONS TO FIND THE RIGHT LEADERS:

- **CHURCHES:** What churches in our city are bursting with new believers and creating a regular rhythm and culture for evangelism?
- **NON-PROFIT:** What are the organizations present in our city that exist to share the gospel and train others to share the gospel?
- **OTHER:** What are other communities of influence with the capacity to host, fund, or inspire evangelism efforts (e.g. Christian universities, local businesses)?

CORE VALUES OF EVANGELISM TEAM LEADERS:

- Demonstrate **Passion** for Evangelism
- Exhibit Evangelistic **Fruit**
- Lead with **Integrity**
- **Think** Long-Term
- **Create Cultures** of Gospel Conversations
- **Committed to Collaborative Action**

See “**HOW TO FORM AN EVANGELISM TEAM**” for a step-by-step guide to form a team in your area (see page 15).

WHO IS ON THE PORTLAND EVANGELISM TEAM?

We made some phone calls, sent some emails, ordered some lunch, and in the winter of 2017, we gathered for our first meeting. Here's who is on the Portland Evangelism Team:

6 Key Senior Pastors:

- Daniel Fusco, Crossroads Community Church; Daniel Fusco Ministries
- Marc Estes, Manna House
- Josh White, Door of Hope
- Jose Zayas, 26 West Church; Jose Zayas Evangelism
- Gabe Kolstad, Westside Community Church; Christ Together
- James Gleason, Sonrise Church

Key Leaders from Evangelistic Non-Profit Organizations:

- Alpha
- CRU
- Interspersity
- Fellowship of Christian Athletes
- Youth for Christ
- Young Life

Other People of Influence:

- Dr. Paul Metzger, local seminary professor and director of New Wine, New Wineskins
- Paul Pastor, local and national writer
- Local business leaders passionate about evangelism



Energy rises when evangelistically passionate communities are connected and bridge their collective enthusiasm, experience, and obedience to share the gospel citywide.

Left: Kevin Palau introducing several members of the Portland Evangelism Team.

THE HOW

some practical ideas you can adapt to prioritize evangelism in your city.

Once the Portland Evangelism Team was formed, we committed to meeting quarterly to:

- Get to know one another.
- Share what is already working in evangelism.
- Discern our city's evangelistic season and temperature.
- Shape a plan to celebrate and accelerate evangelism in our city.

Read on to learn how we practically accomplish each of the objectives above.

WHAT DOES AN EVANGELISM TEAM DO?

- **Build relational capital.**
 - Relationships are the foundation of working together toward a common mission. Getting people with the same heart in one room is a simple and effective catalyst to genuine friendships and collaboration.
 - Learn what unique strengths and focuses each evangelism team member brings to the citywide Church. Listen to one another's background—what incited and fuels their passion for evangelism?
 - Share networks to recommend other local evangelists and leaders to be a part of the team or help champion local evangelism efforts.
- **Share what is already working in evangelism.**
 - God is already moving. Sharing these stories raises faith and uncovers opportunities for collaboration.
 - We regularly ask: What current stories around evangelism are you personally experiencing or hearing?
- **Discern your city's evangelistic season and temperature (see p. 12 for more details).**
 - Pray and dialogue about how evangelism/gospel conversations are viewed in your city's churches and in your city. Is evangelism viewed in a negative light? Positive light? By whom?
 - Who are the people or organizations that are already working to increase the frequency and depth of gospel conversations in your city? What fruit are they seeing? What hurdles are they facing?
 - What factors shape a culture of evangelism in the churches/communities that are represented on the evangelism team?

How are people being equipped in evangelism?⁸ What opportunities are presented for people to practice sharing the gospel? What would be helpful in increasing the number and depth of gospel conversations? What are best practices and stories from these churches that could be shared with other churches/communities?

- **Shape a plan to celebrate and accelerate evangelism in your city.**
 - After discerning your city's evangelistic temperature, pray and identify 1-3 clear goals to pursue as a team. Then dialogue about which leaders, organizations, and resources could help your city move toward those ends. For example:
 - Inspire and equip pastors to present the gospel in their churches with clarity and regularity through annual citywide pastors' trainings. The Portland Evangelism Team hosted [Show & Tell—a live training with evangelism thought leaders. We recorded these TED Talk-style videos for everyone to access.](#)
 - Increase the number and depth of gospel conversations across the city by doubling the number of [Alpha](#) groups running in churches in the next 3 years.
 - Build a citywide culture of celebrating gospel conversations by regularly creating and circulating video testimonies of people coming to Christ in churches across the city. These videos could be shared across churches'/organizations' social media, in church services, and at training events. [We love testimony videos from here](#)—you can add yours too!

By simply having a conversation with pastors about evangelism, we're shaping a culture of evangelism.

⁸ Eph. 4:11-13

HOW TO ASSESS THE STATE OF EVANGELISM IN YOUR CITY

In order to build a plan to elevate the conversation on evangelism, it's important to learn about the evangelism activity that is currently happening (or not happening). Here are two ways we're assessing the state of evangelism in our city and helping other leaders get a read on their city.

1. In-person interviews

- The Portland Evangelism Team is conducting 50 in-person interviews with lead pastors across the city. By conducting these interviews collaboratively, pastors understand we're not coming with a secret agenda. Rather, we're coming to listen and learn how the Evangelism Team can support their church's evangelism efforts. These interviews also allow us to uncover ways evangelism is flourishing so that these stories and resources can be shared widely.

These interviews are strategic but also relational. We drive to meet these pastors at their church for a 60 – 90 minute face-to-face conversation. These pastors feel heard and valued. Some have even commented: *"This is the first focused conversation I have ever had about evangelism in my church."*

By simply having a conversation with pastors about evangelism, we're shaping a culture of evangelism.

TIP: Don't have time for 50 interviews? Start with three! We guarantee these face-to-face interviews will change the way you think about evangelism in your city. [Feel free to use the questions we ask during our interviews—click here to access.](#)

2. Digital survey with the City Gospel Movements team

- The City Gospel Movements team created a digital survey that can be sent to pastors and ministry leaders in a city to paint a picture of the state of evangelism in their context. Ideally 50 or more leaders participate in the survey. The City Gospel Movements team will craft a report for local leaders. This report acts as a conversation starter for leaders who desire to form a local evangelism team.

Interested in learning more about digital surveys? Contact lizzie.burke@palau.org.

OTHER DETAILS TO CONSIDER WHEN SHAPING A CITYWIDE EVANGELISM PLAN:

- Determine a meeting rhythm for the evangelism team (In Portland, we meet quarterly. Other cities meet more regularly.)
- Discuss how to equip both pastors/leaders *and* the everyday believer. For example, host a luncheon tailored to equip local pastors and an evening training event available to the public.
- Understand the importance of training pastors to identify individuals in their congregation with the gift of/unique passion for evangelism. (See CORE VALUES OF EVANGELISM TEAM MEMBERS on page 8 for ideas).
- Consider when to organize a medium/large scale, public gospel-sharing event.
- Use a portion of your regular meeting time to plan and prepare for upcoming collaborative trainings/gatherings, dialogue about how to promote evangelism events, and recap past events.



By conducting these interviews collaboratively, pastors understand we're not coming with a secret agenda. Rather, we're coming to listen and learn.

Left: Josh Chen (CRU), Daniel Fusco (local pastor) and Kirk Petersen (Alpha) after an interview about evangelism in the Portland-area.

LEARN WHAT OTHER CITIES ARE DOING TO PRIORITIZE EVANGELISM:

We're on the journey with other cities to ensure evangelism is a central component of gospel movements. The list below describes other cities who are working to prioritize evangelism. Check out the [map on our website](#) to see gospel movements worldwide.

- **Columbus, Ohio:** [Mission Columbus](#) (in partnership with [Mission Increase Foundation](#)) hired an "Evangelism and Discipleship Missionary" to identify citywide objectives, provide workshops and trainings, and track progress with clear metrics.
- **Washington State:** [Saturate the Sound](#) is a region-wide collaboration of churches and ministries working to ensure every individual in their region experiences Jesus daily in word and deed.
- **The Bay Area, California:** [Transforming the Bay with Christ](#) (TBC) is hiring a staff person to focus on church planting and evangelism initiatives.
- **New York City:** [Redeemer City to City](#) hired an Evangelism Coordinator to research the state of evangelism in NYC and create learning cohorts for pastors to strengthen evangelism in the communities they lead.
- **New England:** [New England Alliance](#) is a regional network of city movements prioritizing evangelism through their [multi-faceted evangelism strategy](#).
- **Kansas City, Kansas:** Several organizations and networks formed an evangelism cohort to organize collaborative evangelism activity every two months. [Love KC](#) and [Bless Every Home](#) are participating organizations.
- **Liverpool, England:** [Together for the Harvest](#) is strategizing to reach every individual in the Liverpool region with the gospel in the next 10 years.
- **Swansea, Wales:** 12 churches unite for a monthly prayer gathering and a week of beach outreach, street evangelism and family fun called [Shine Swansea](#). They hope this weekly outreach develops a culture of evangelism.

We are eager to learn alongside other gospel movements as we all seek to communicate the gospel in clear, loving, and consistent ways. As you can see by the growing list above, other cities are prioritizing evangelism in variety of ways. We hope our story inspires you to consider ways you can elevate the conversation on evangelism in the gospel movement in your area.

Questions? Comments? Send us a note: info@citygospelmovements.org.

Additional Resources for Citywide Evangelism:

Receive training and equipping through:

- [Alpha](#) is a series of video and discussion sessions exploring the Christian faith. Each talk looks at a different question around faith and is designed to create conversation. Alpha is run all around the globe, and everyone is welcome.
- CRU's [evangelism resources and training cohorts](#) are specific to city contexts.
- [Christ Together](#) coaches church networks to share the whole gospel with the whole city.
- [Take the City](#) trains groups of churches in everyday evangelism. Take the City is also a holistic city gospel movement in Columbus, Georgia.
- [Time to Revive](#) works with groups of churches to equip the saints to boldly declare the gospel and make disciples.

Consider citywide events and initiatives like:

- [Organic Outreach](#) evangelism training event to equip local pastors – we hosted one in Portland, Oregon [here!](#)
- [Dare2Share Live](#) trains and mobilizes thousands of youth on one day to share the gospel.
- [Palau festivals](#) unite and mobilize hundreds of churches to serve their city and share the gospel – like in [Grand Rapids, Michigan](#).
- [Explore God](#) provides videos and resources for citywide media campaigns to encourage spiritual exploration.
- [Groundwire](#) innovative media initiatives share the gospel with millennials and younger generations.
- [Next Generation Alliance](#) (a ministry of the Luis Palau Association) is a relational network of evangelists around the world who partner with local leaders to share the gospel. [Explore evangelists in your area](#).

Ready to form an evangelism team?

[Use this step-by-step guide.](#)

Or go to: <https://citygospelmovements.org/resource/forming-evangelism-team-city/>



NOTES:

"The newly formed evangelism team in Portland was a huge encouragement towards our Good News Today outreach in Hillsboro. Something special happens when you have a team of like-minded leaders praying, networking, and serving together."

José Zayas | Lead Pastor, 26 West Church

“The Good News is for everybody. No one church or organization can share with everyone. It’s great to be on a team of like-minded men and women who love the gospel, love the city, and realize if we chip in together, share best practices, and stimulate one another, more Jesus followers in our city are going to share the gospel.

And that’s the goal, every person in the city who loves Jesus sharing Jesus regularly and with confidence.”

José Zayas | Lead Pastor of 26 West Church

“Being a part of a group of pastors specifically speaking about evangelism keeps the gospel at the forefront of my mind. I need that inspiration every few months to be reminded of who I am and what my community is called to be.”

Josh White | Lead Pastor of Door of Hope



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