

WHAT THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CAN LEARN
FROM OTHER MAINLINE CHURCHES ABOUT

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EVANGELISM TODAY

Why no number on the above Colloquy? Because the subject is only a proposal, in hope that someday soon....

EVANGELISM is the effective communication of the Word to the unconvinced. **Effective:** If you try & nobody's converted, it wasn't evangelism. **Unconvinced:** How now, in America, convince "the unchurched" (erstwhile, "unsaved")?

Not that the UCC is doing nothing about evangelism. Eg, the BHM Division of Evangelism & Local Church Development produces excellent printed evangelism materials. But we can learn from others, too, & need intimate dialog with some representatives of theirs. I'm not suggesting the spectacle churches like the Glass Cathedral, whose minions run around (unwittingly) discouraging the unspectacular, which includes 99.99% of mainline-church leadership. In between a spectacle church & a church adrift is a focused church such as Community Church of Joy, ELCA (16635 N.51st Av., Glendale AZ 85306), whose senior pastor, Walt Kallestad, says "We committed ourselves to bringing the good news of the gospel to nonreligious, unchurched people in our community. We celebrate our [Lutheran] tradition, and we blend it with new methods, new styles, new structure, new music, new models, and new strategies to bring God's Word into the lives of all people in a meaningful way" (p.94, THE EVERYDAY, ANYTIME GUIDE TO CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP (Augsburg/94). Church growth has been a secondary aim, but in 16 years the church has gone (it claims) from 87 to more than 3,000. It's "Joy Academy" runs conferences* on "Reaching the Unchurched: New Evangelism Models for Mainline Congregations." The academy's 6-p. flier says "The majority of those joining the church come from a non-churched background. This phenomenal growth is attributed to Joy[church]'s willingness to shape the ministry around the needs of irreligious people."....Here's a p. of the flier:

A Conference includes
an excellent Workbook & other materials.

Catch the Joy

"Reaching the Unchurched," is a four day conference filled with dynamic worship and workshop experiences.

General Sessions Include:

- Worship and the Unchurched
- Reaching the Baby Boom Generation
- Total Quality Ministry
- Developing Growth-Minded Leadership

Workshops Include:

- A New Look at Adult Education
- Music, Worship, and the Performing Arts
- Funding Your Vision
- Prayer and Evangelism
- Growing Through Small Groups
- The Pastor's Spouse
- Fired Up or Burned Out?

--- More than 20 workshops will be offered!

Special Worship Services

On Monday evening a Spirited-Traditional service will be modeled.

On Tuesday evening, experience a Contemporary, Outreach-Oriented service.

On Thursday Morning, the conference concludes with Communion and individual prayer for each participant.

What, no **criticism** from Willis? Impossible! (1) Up-with-people feeling: "unconditional, non-judgmental love" (p.17), with hat-tipping to positive-thinking preachers. I'm not allergic, but suspicious. (2) While the first "leadership mentor" he mentions (p.9) is Lyle Schaller, whose down-to-earth, single-sheet news/commentaries for local churches are widely promoted in the UCC, I'm troubled by the naive (not, I think, cynical) formula of discovering, & then meeting, the "needs" of the nonreligious.