



## A Catalyst for Three Generations... and Counting!

Today is a special day for The Foundation for Evangelism as we celebrate moving into 71 years of being a catalyst. When the foundation began in 1949, its purpose was to help Christ's church, then the Methodist Church, remain true to its evangelistic calling through discipleship. As the church and our society has changed, the foundation continues to forge inroads to equip and impact the church's call to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

You might say the FFE was born with the "Baby Boomers," and like its human counterparts, the FFE values relationships – relationships built with you and told through your stories. We value your ideas about what the Church needs to be able to invite all people into a life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ. There's that word again – Relationship!

Throughout 2019 we celebrated with you how we've made a difference these last 70 years. You've heard about the E. Stanley Jones Professors of Evangelism (ESJ Professors), who since 1984 have helped train the leadership of the local church. And you likely know about, or perhaps have received, the Harry Denman Evangelism Award. Only the FFE created a way for every annual conference to celebrate lay, clergy and youth whose passion is talking about and inviting the people they meet to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. But these are just the



2019 Denman Award Recipients, (at right) José Tirado and Carrie Argro (Photo courtesy Eastern Pennsylvania Conference UMC)

tip of the iceberg!



Yes, the FFE was born in the time of the Boomers, but it joined the technological wave of Generation X by embracing the changes as they appeared on the horizon. We have been a catalyst at the beginning of some truly exciting efforts including Path1: New Church Starts, Refresh Campus Ministry Conference, the Web Empowered Church, Making Disciples on the College Campus, and VOMO (Awaken My City).

A Web-Empowered Church training in 2007

The Foundation for Evangelism expanded our focus beyond The United Methodist Church to the Wesleyan tradition family in 2012. Our purpose – to be a constant reminder and companion helping the church fulfill its purpose to invite all people into life-transforming relationship with Jesus – did not change. The relationships and conversations covered a broader spectrum, and we began learning from our brothers and sisters in denominations such as the Church of the Nazarene, the African Methodist Episcopal and African Methodist Episcopal Zion Churches to name a few.

Now the Millennials are leaders in our churches and show us that 21<sup>st</sup> century relationships incorporate innovation, ingenuity and independence. Their tech-savvy challenges us to reach out beyond physical boundaries and utilize tools that their parents and grandparents only dreamed of! I'm reminded of two recent webinar series that are reaching clergy and laity in the local church. "Evangelism for Non-Evangelists" online course led by Rev. Drs. Mark Teasdale and Heather Lear is giving clergy and laity in the local church a "ground-up" approach to evangelism. The FFE-sponsored "E Word" webinar picked up where the previous online course left off. Earlier this month we released a companion group study guide which makes it possible for a small group or congregation to use this three-part webinar to continue their transformation and remove barriers to inviting folks into relationship with God by talking about their faith.

We are only beginning to build relationships with Generation Z, yet we are listening to their stories, and learning that these disciples live their faith boldly and seek to make a difference.

There is still much more that God is calling us to do! We know that there are so many opportunities for spreading God's amazing message of love to a hurting world. We invite you as we continue on this journey called "Catalyst 2024" to join us in prayer, conversation, and support. Go to <https://foundationforevangelism.org/catalyst2024/> to see how you can be involved.

As we begin this year, and a new decade for the FFE, I'm looking forward to the "Catalyst Conversations" we hope to have with you and others like you who are passionate about spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ! It's a message of love that is so needed in our hurting world. Won't you join me?

Your Partner in Ministry,

***Jane Boatwright Wood***

President, The Foundation for Evangelism

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