

stuff you wish they taught in seminary



5 Large Churches

WHO DEFY THE "EVANGELICAL" LABEL

RICH BIRCH

5 LARGE CHURCHES WHO DEFY THE "EVANGELICAL" LABEL

It's presidential election season again and the conversation on cable news is about what will happen to the "evangelical vote." This conversation drives me crazy! "Evangelicals" have been my tribe for the majority of my ministry career. It's the group that I call family — not a demographic. The nuance that's missed by so many in the press is that this slice of the Christian community has a much broader make-up than you'd think after listening to the pundits.

Increasingly, if people ask me if I'm an evangelical, I answer, "If you mean someone who takes the teaching of Jesus very seriously and wants other people to as well ... then yes, I'm an evangelical. If what you mean is some narrowly defined meme that includes TV preachers and big hair... then no, I'm not evangelical."

We're a big family with a wide variety of folks in our tent. Here are a few churches that defy the typical "evangelical stereotype," while making a huge impact on the communities they serve.

- **Multicultural & Urban // New Life**

Fellowship, Queens, NYC // Led by Rich Villodas, this vibrant church is making a huge impact in its incredibly vibrant community. Unlike so many churches across the country fleeing cities as communities shift and change, New Life embraces and celebrates the diversity in its pews ... it's a strength that draws the church together.

- **Peacemakers // Woodland Hills, St. Paul, Minnesota** // Woodland Hills represents a breed of new-Anabaptist or Mennonite evangelicals that are rediscovering the values of peace, simplicity and community. This church is radically Jesus-centric and makes a difference in its community.

- **Compassion-Driven // Northland, Orlando, Florida** // This church of 20,000 people has built its community reputation on getting out

of the seats and into the streets. They've been internationally recognized for the way they've mobilized resources and people to serve the last, the least and the lost.

- **Thoughtful // Redeemer Presbyterian Church, NYC** // The hallmark of this church is its teaching, which welcomes and engages skeptics. A church for city dwellers by city dwellers, this community represents a thoughtful and measured approach to the Christian faith.

- **Young // Experience Life, Lubbock, Texas** // Often, we think of mega-churches as being led by and having the attitudes of boomers, but this is not the case with Experience Life. Led by a 30-something leadership and teeming with energy, this church is a model of next-generation ministry.

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