

CREATING AN EVANGELISTIC CLIMATE IN YOUR CHURCH

Does the spirit of evangelistic expectancy permeate the church?

It has been said that evangelism is one of our highest values but also one of the least practiced. Two things are necessary to raise the evangelistic expectancy of your church:

1. Churches that are effective in reaching people with the gospel are intentional - Intentionality speaks of what a church does on purpose. In the simplest of terms, churches that are effectively reaching people with the gospel are trying to reach people with the gospel.
2. Churches that are evangelistically effective train Christians to share the gospel - There is a direct correlation between evangelistic results and evangelistic training. A recent national survey of Southern Baptist Churches found that less than half of members who attend church on a weekly basis had talked to someone about Jesus in the past year. It also found that only one out of every eight that attend church weekly had led anyone to Christ. The encouraging news from this survey is that those who had been through some kind of witness training were four times as likely to lead a person to the Lord as someone with no training.¹ Thom Rainer in his book, *Effective Evangelistic Churches*, shares the results from a survey of 576 of America's most effective evangelistic churches. It really came as no surprise that 76 percent of the pastors in those churches were strong advocates of evangelistic training.²

Below are some ideas that can help a church maintain an evangelistic atmosphere that will result in more people accepting Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior:

- Regularly calendar training for believers to be equipped in effective methods of sharing their faith.
- Annually challenge members to commit themselves to be a witness.
- Never miss an opportunity to extend an invitation to receive Christ during a worship service.
- Use special events to attract lost people.
- Encourage members to always have three people for whom they are praying to be saved.
- Use testimonies of witnessing encounters during worship services on a regular basis.
- Train Small Group (Sunday School) leaders to find creative ways of presenting the gospel at least quarterly.
- Leaders must seek to model evangelism for church members.

¹ North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, Research and Statistical Resource Division, *U.S. Congregational Life Survey: Conversion and Witnessing Among Southern Baptists* (Alpharetta: North American Mission Board, 2001), 3; available from <http://www.namb.net/root/research/stats/default.asp>; Internet.

² Thom Rainer, *Effective Evangelistic Churches* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 37.