

## **Seven Characteristics of Highly Evangelistic Christians. By: Thom Rainer**

For over twenty years I have been researching and studying churches, primarily those in North America. I had the joy of serving as senior pastor in four churches where God blessed with evangelistic growth. I have written over twenty books about the church in America.

I am not giving you my credentials to impress you, but simply to share that my life's passion has been leading and learning about evangelistic churches. At this point in my life and ministry, however, I realize that I have not given sufficient attention to one of the primary characteristics of evangelistic churches.

**The Great Omission:** It is so obvious. Indeed it is so clear that I am surprised at my neglect of this factor. Stated simply, the evangelistic churches that I have researched for the past twenty years have one or more highly evangelistic Christians. I know. The previous statement is no great revelation. It is almost stating the obvious. But, if it is reality, why are we not hearing more about these Christians who seem to have a passion for evangelism? Why are we not doing a better job of telling their stories? In this short article I hope to address this great omission.

**Seven Characteristics:** It is inevitable that, when we do research on evangelistic churches, we learn about one or more members in the church who, to use the book title by Charles H. Spurgeon, embody the traits of *The Soul Winner*. Often times one of those members is the pastor. But we have also seen many laypersons who are themselves soul winners. In our interviews with these people, or with those who tell us about the soul winners, we began to discern some clear patterns. We called those patterns "the seven characteristics of highly evangelistic Christians."

1. They are people of prayer. They realize that only God can convict and convert, and they are totally dependent upon Him in prayer. Most of the highly evangelistic Christians spend at least an hour in prayer each day.
2. They have a theology that compels them to evangelize. They believe in the urgency of the gospel message. They believe that Christ is the only way of salvation. They believe that anyone without Christ is doomed for a literal hell.
3. They are people who spend time in the Word. The more time they spend in the Bible, they more likely they are to see the lostness of humanity and the love of God in Christ to save those who are lost.
4. They are compassionate people. Their heart breaks for those who don't have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They have learned to love the world by becoming more like Christ who has the greatest love for the world.
5. They love the communities where God has placed them. They are immersed in the culture because they desire for the light of Christ to shine through them in their communities.
6. They are intentional about evangelism. They pray for opportunities to share the gospel. They look for those opportunities. And they see many so-called casual encounters as appointments set by God.
7. They are accountable to someone for their evangelistic activities. They know that many good activities can replace Great Commission activities if they are not careful. Good can replace the best. So they make certain that someone holds them accountable each week either formally or informally for their evangelistic efforts.

**The "Secret" of Evangelistic Churches:** The secret is really no secret at all. Ultimately evangelistic churches see more persons become Christians through the passionate efforts of highly evangelistic Christians. More than any programs. More than any church events. More than anything else, we are the instruments God has chosen to use. Sometimes we ask the question: What is my church doing to become more evangelistic? But the better question is: What am I doing to become more evangelistic? Charles H. Spurgeon was right. We need more soul winners. We need more highly evangelistic Christians.