

A unique collection of insights,
worksheets and resource lists to aid
churches with Big Day Evangelism

Big Day Resource

e-book updated 1/26/15

Dr. Franklin R. Dumond

Throughout our history General Baptists have frequently adapted and revised our methodology without compromising our message. Within this plan book you will find a variety of suggestions related to Big Day Evangelism. Many of them are adaptations of the methods we have grown accustomed to using. Others will be more innovative as we call upon our people to focus their energies and efforts on particular days and events.

Because General Baptists are conservative by nature, adaptation and change can be difficult. Some will review this plan book and immediately opt out, since the plans call for intensive efforts in new or newly adapted enterprises. However, before disregarding these suggestions, ask yourself, “Do our current efforts win people to faith in Jesus Christ?” Be sure to count conversions, baptisms, and members received in the past year before answering.

The suggestions in this plan book are drawn from actual best practices and have resulted in large numbers of conversions, baptisms, and new members in those churches that have used them.

What has been included, however, are methods that are still being refined. The final answer about how best to do evangelism will never be discovered until that day the kingdoms of this world become the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ.

What we have done so far has gotten us where we are. If we are to progress, then we must engage in new efforts. Until then, please accept these plans.

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I. Planning for a Big Day

A Short List of Suggestions

1. Start Early! At the beginning of every calendar year pastors can look ahead to predict the most likely higher attended and lower attended days of the year. By planning ahead to accentuate the high days and mitigate the low days the overall average attendance may be increased and more and more people won to faith in Jesus Christ.

Identify the most likely High Days: Easter, Mother’s Day, time-change day in the fall, and the Sunday before Thanksgiving are all likely to be higher attended days. Other special event days built around VBS Sunday, Back-to-School Sunday, etc. may be developed.

What are my most likely higher attendance days? Look at the attendance records from last year on a line graph. When does your attendance spike? Why? Take a hard look at your current programming. There must be something in your congregational culture that brings these high points.

My most likely high days:

Deal with the most likely Low Days: Time-change day in the Spring, Memorial Day Weekend, 4th of July Weekend when July 4 falls on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday or Tuesday, Labor Day Weekend, the weekend after Thanksgiving, and the weekend after Christmas Day are all likely to be low attendance days.

Three of these are easiest to deal with by planning for some special added features which may “raise” the “low.”

1) Time-change weekend in the spring when we all spring ahead by adding an hour of daylight and loosing an hour of sleep lends itself to low attendance that might be mitigated by phone-tree reminders on Saturday and heavy promotion the week before (at church) and during the week (post cards/newsletters). Use a time theme for the worship service.

2) 4th of July Weekend lends itself to a Red, White, and Blue Celebration. Wear patriotic colors. Use a patriotic theme. Develop Christian and civic symbols by including a short history lesson on the flag, using the Pledges of Allegiance (Baptist assemblies should never use the Pledge to the American Flag without also including the Pledge to the Christian Flag), accent the Christian symbols of Communion and baptism. Plan a home-made ice cream social for the evening!

3) The Sunday of Labor Day weekend lends itself to a picnic celebration for the evening. Feature Buffalo Burgers grilled by the pastor or some other attention-getting menu item. Reserve the local park, set up on the church lawn, or go to someone's home if there is room enough to be outside. Bring your own lawn chair!

2. Add A Special Feature. How many people are usually involved in leading worship on a given Sunday? Add a special feature by which more people can be involved in meaningful participation and watch the visitors arrive...especially if you use the Children's Choir and its members rehearse for a few weeks in advance!

For Easter a wise pastor can plan for a Spring Baptism. Easter celebrates the new life of the risen Christ, which is also the Christian symbol of Baptism. The now secular tradition of new clothes for Easter can be traced back to the ancient church when Easter Sunday was Baptism Sunday and each baptismal candidate was given a new white robe.

Make Easter a fabulous family celebration with an Egg Hunt on the church lawn ***following*** Morning Worship. The beauty of the modern hen is that she lays plastic eggs so you don't have to worry so much about the eggs spoiling by being outdoors for a while. Be sure to plan for 500 or 1,000 or 10,000 eggs. Have the upper elementary grade children distribute them on the church lawn. (Note: While plastic eggs are undisturbed by warm temperatures, chocolate will melt if left in the warm sunshine for any length of time.) Let the participating children know how many eggs there are and then divide by the number of children present so that everyone gets the same number of prizes! Use one of the Resurrection Egg Sets from the bookstore to tell the story of Easter as part of the worship service with the children.

Is an added worship service needed? If Easter already brings the church to capacity do I need to double capacity by adding another service? The church already offering a 10:30 a.m. Morning Worship may be well served to offer a 9 a.m. Easter Worship, too.

Does Easter allow us to organize some really special music? The "Ready To Sing" series of cantatas and theme music can be of great help to the volunteer choir.

What special features might we add?

What will I need to do to ensure that these special features work well?

Develop specialized promotion. How will everyone know of the special day if you don't tell them? How will they realize what's going on if they only hear it once?

Newspaper ads and yellow pages listings do little to attract the unchurched. Consider a saturation mailing. You can develop your own material, but you may want to bring in the professionals for the first time or two. Check out the www.outreach.com website or thumb through its periodical for suggestions. If you use this plan be sure to include the cost of both the promotion package and the postage to send the cards. The good folks at Stinson Press (800-521-0354 or www.StinsonPress.com) can also help you with similar services to blanket your area with special invitations.

Keep in mind, however, that if you invite them you'll want to be able to offer what you've promised. Make it a special day.

- **Clean off the coat rack.**
- **Pick up the clutter.**
- **Dust the corners.**
- **Company's comin'! So make your worship service user friendly by**
 - **keeping the prayer list short and focused,**
 - **eliminating any announcement that does not directly impact at least half of the people present (remember small group promotion needs to be done in the small group not in the large group setting),**
 - **starting on time,**
 - **eliminating the dead time in the service,**
 - **preaching a positive message of hope and resurrection!**

3. Use the power of focus. Concentrate your effort. If you offer a Sunrise Service will your people really need a Sunset Service? If you make Morning Worship a real extravaganza, will you need to follow it with a low-key and low-attended Sunday evening?

Learn to do a few things and do them well! Focus on a few special days. Focus on one or two styles of worship and master them.

Focus on the family connection. Research continues to show that the most effective network we have to reach people is in the family arena (see Thom Rainer's **Surprising Insights from the Unchurched**). Develop a list of family members who should be part of your church with the rest of their family. Then be sure someone from the family invites them!

Focus on recent visitors. What has happened to those visitor cards? What has already been done with and to the folks who have visited in the last six months? Who are they? Where are they attending church now? What do you need to do to get them to attend this Easter? Mother's Day? 4th of July Weekend? Now you're getting the picture.

Focus on the larger congregation. If your church has an average attendance of 50 you probably have at least 100 people who are part of your larger congregation. The larger your church becomes the broader is its larger congregation of folks who attend infrequently but who do attend some. Keep a list for 6-12 weeks of all the folks who attend at least one of your services. Focus on increasing the frequency of attendance. If they attend once in 12 weeks, work with them until they attend twice. The unchurched population in America who become church attend church several times in the year before they come to faith in Christ and become part of His Church!

Do I know the full extent of my larger congregation?

How can I know them better?

Would attendance registration during the worship service help?

Do I need a crew of volunteers or a paid secretary to help track attendance patterns?

4. Pastors set the pace; but everyone needs to get involved! If you don't invite then your people will not invite. If you don't share your faith then your people won't share their faith. The unchurched who are seeking the church want brief but meaningful contact from the pastor. Develop a system that works in your location.

5. Be user friendly! Have some stranger visit your worship service and tell you how friendly the congregation was or wasn't, how easy it was to follow the order of service, how clean the building really was or wasn't, and how easy it was to find places in the building or how hard it was to do so.

Get ready for company. Encourage your people to "Park in the back. Sit in the front. Move to the middle. Speak to those around you."

II. The Communication Card

The Communication Card

by Franklin R. Dumond

In my early years as a pastor I quickly discovered the need to gather attendance information not only for first-time guests but also for regular attenders. In those days, however, many of our churches were resistant to a more formal process of registering their attendance, since the popular notion existed that everyone would surely know the folks who attended church with them. With a number of mainline churches routinely “taking attendance,” the absence of that formal process seemed to mean that we were more personal and more spiritual.

My quest to monitor attendance advanced beyond short-term memory when I discovered a blue notebook that was not being used. I spent an afternoon making a list and manually alphabetizing it so that a few hours later I was ready to type it up on pre-printed pages that contained columns much like the grade books teachers of that generation used. By carefully looking around and by eagerly greeting everyone and by quickly moving to my office after morning worship I found that I could keep a pretty accurate list of folks who attended as well as those who visited, since in those days I was the greeting team with a visitor card always nearby to share with our guests.

Later it was fairly easy to introduce attendance pads that were passed down the rows so “everyone present may write your name so we will have a record of your attendance and participation today. For those of you who are visiting for the first time, if you will include your street address we’ll send you a note in the mail telling you some of the good things the Lord is doing in our midst.” We often had mystery and celebrity guests like Darth Vader, Mickey Mouse, and Superman. One Monday my secretary showed up with an attendance pad that read, “God knows I’m here and that’s all that matters.” Since the ushers collected those pads one row at a time it wasn’t terribly difficult to determine who was in a bad mood that day!

While the attendance pads gave a great deal of information, there was little interaction with them. Responses and prayer concerns were almost never reported, in part because we registered our attendance early in the service and also in part because this was a public process where everyone on the row had access to what was written on the registration pad.

The current use of a communication card avoids the public revelation of private information and also allows more direct interaction between the worshippers and the next steps the worship service is designed to elicit.

As I have traveled to a number of churches, I have seen the communication card used in three very distinct fashions.

I. The Communication Card as Guest Registration Card

Some churches use the communication card as a guest registration card. The card is profiled in the welcome but it is targeted for guests. Generally these cards will be printed in a rather generic fashion with open-ended rather than directed responses. Open-ended responses will rely on blank space that will be completed by the respondent rather than directed responses that are listed and identified for the respondent to circle or check. When the communication card is used as a Guest Registration Card the cards will generally be collected early in the service.

This is a valid use of the communication card if the church has in place an effective means of follow-up and assimilation as illustrated by Nelson Searcy in his book *Fusion*.

II. The Communication Card as a Commitment Card

When used as a commitment card the communication card may not even be explained until after the message. Generally the emphasis is on the spiritual decisions being made as a result of the worship service. Unless someone is making a specific commitment there is little incentive to complete the card, and those who do complete it may feel awkward or singled out since most folks around them are not completing cards.

In our culture some type of directed response is very important, and the strength of using the communication card as a commitment card is that unchurched respondents can be taught how to make a commitment without the initial step of publicly coming forward during an invitation. If the unchurched non-Christian can be directed to make an initial private commitment then the public commitment can easily come later through baptism and membership.

III. The Communication Card as a Vehicle for Communication by All

The best use of the communication card is its use as a means for all present to both register their attendance and to take the next steps the worship service has been designed to elicit. To be used effectively the Communication Card should be mentioned or profiled at least three times.

First, the communication card should be explained as part of the welcome. This may seem tedious or repetitive for the pastor or worship leader who presents the same information week after week, but it must be kept in mind that the information is brand-new to the first-time guest. Thus, the most evangelistic thing the pastor can do is to gain the guest's participation by completing the informational side of the communication card with "as much information as you feel comfortable sharing with us."

Second, the communication card should be mentioned as part of the morning message so that next steps provided by the pastor might come to fruition at commitment time. By customizing the responses printed on the card or on the bulletin tear-off the pastor can weave the communication card into his message.

Third, as part of the commitment time the communication card should be profiled once again with the goal of capturing an attendance record of all who are present, allowing folks to take their next steps and providing an avenue for people to indicate their attendance at special functions.

IV. The Best Communication Cards

The best communication cards will include

1. An obvious way to respond to become a Christian.
2. A customized means of response to the day's worship service.
3. An opportunity to volunteer or sign up for special events.
4. An avenue to report prayer concerns and praise reports.

A collection process at the conclusion of the service even if the offering has been collected earlier will also enhance the response process.

III. Sample Forms

1. Communication Card Layouts. Sample Communication Card Layouts for simple documents easily produced from your work processor and printed in house. These formats are planned for three to a side type printing front and back.

Communication Card

Please check if information is new

Name: _____
Email: (Please Print) _____
Home Phone: _____ Cell: _____

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 st Time Guest
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 nd Time Guest
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular Attender

Address: _____
City: _____ ST: _____ Zip: _____
Please place this card in the offering at the conclusion of the service.

This space could be used for the church name and the mission statement/graphic
--

My Response

- I am giving my life to Christ.
- I want to be baptized.
- Please contact me about membership.
- I have questions; please contact me.
- _____.

Lord Jesus I know that I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I believe that you died for my sins. I want to turn from those sins. As much as I know how, I now invite you into my heart and life. I want to trust you as Savior and follow you as Lord for the rest of my life.
--

My Prayer Requests ____ Staff Only ____ Place on Prayer Chain

My Praise Report _____

On Easter why not do a spiritual survey on your communication card?

Spiritual Survey

- I have already accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior
- I am choosing today to believe & accept Jesus Christ as my Savior. God, I'm sorry for my sins. Right now I turn from my sins and ask you to forgive me. Thank you for sending Jesus Christ to die on the cross for my sins. Jesus, I ask you to come into my life and be my Lord, Savior, and Friend. Thank you for forgiving me & giving me eternal life.
- I am considering following Christ, but I still have questions. Someone from the church may contact me at (Phone # _____)
- I am not interested in following Christ at this time.

Remember we will not visit you at home unless you request it.

2. Invitation Worksheet. Help prompt your folks to extend invitations.

My List of People I Know Who Should be Part of our Church

Family Members

1. _____
I will pray for this family member daily starting _____.
I will invite them on _____
2. _____
I will pray for this family member daily starting _____.
I will invite them on _____
3. _____
I will pray for this family member daily starting _____.
I will invite them on _____
4. _____
I will pray for this family member daily starting _____.
I will invite them on _____
5. _____
I will pray for this family member daily starting _____.
I will invite them on _____

People I Come into Contact With During the Week

1. Someone at work _____
I will pray for this person daily starting _____.
I will invite them on _____
2. Someone at a store _____
I will pray for this person daily starting _____.
I will invite them on _____
3. Someone at a restaurant _____
I will pray for this person daily starting _____.
I will invite them on _____
4. Someone who calls me on my phone _____
I will pray for this person daily starting _____.
I will invite them on _____
5. Someone I call on my phone _____
I will pray for this person daily starting _____.
I will invite them on _____

People in My Neighborhood

1. Someone who lives across the street _____
I will pray for this person daily starting _____.
I will invite them on _____
2. Someone else who lives across the street _____
I will pray for this person daily starting _____.
I will invite them on _____
3. Someone who lives next door _____
I will pray for this person daily starting _____.
I will invite them on _____
4. Someone who lives a few houses away _____
I will pray for this person daily starting _____.
I will invite them on _____
5. Someone I meet unexpectedly in my neighborhood _____
I will pray for this person daily starting _____.
I will invite them on _____

3. Follow Up Letter. Follow up letter to be mailed immediately following distribution of Who Do You Know worksheets.

Dear Friends,

Sunday was certainly an exciting day! We had sunshine and the promise of Spring after a long, long winter. With guests for both morning and evening services our attendance rebounded somewhat from the doldrums of snow and ice that have plagued us this winter. Most everyone stayed for lunch and several folks took opportunity to check on the progress of the new building addition.

With Easter soon approaching we have an excellent opportunity to welcome several new guests to our services. Most of them will not come, however, unless someone invites and encourages them to be with us for worship.

That's why on Sunday I began passing out simple worksheets to help each of us organize to invite people to come to church. Who do you know who should be part of our church? Just in case you received one of the blank pages that got mixed into my stack I've included an additional sheet for your use.

I hope you will take advantage of this tool to identify people by name that you will invite and that you will commit to praying for them as indicated on the worksheet.

For those of you who have joined our intercessory prayer team or for those who will commit to spending some special prayer time for our church here's a prayer guide that I think will be helpful. As you offer intercessory prayer for our church this Easter please pray

- That we may delivered from the Evil One
- For the powerful advancement of His Church
- For the powerful, effective proclamation of His Word
- The careful protection of His Servant/s, especially those who will be planning and leading our services.
- That the Lord would raise up workers for the ministry tasks that come with Easter, Matthew 9:37
- That our congregation can discern where God is working and join Him there, John 5:17.

Thanks for all you do to advance the cause of Christ!

4. Announcement Letter. Announcement letter to be mailed just prior to or just after Invite Card distribution.

Dear Friends,

Wasn't Sunday exciting? I'm sure that at least one feature of our worship service will stay with you all week long.

As we are getting ready for our special Easter Celebrations, I wanted to be sure that you had supplies to use as you invite folks to attend with you.

Last week we started making out our lists of people who could be part of our church. This week I am providing you with several Invite Cards so you will have a tool to use as you extend your invitation.

Some of the cards I have included are post card size. You can add postage, addresses, etc. and use them as personal invitations you will mail. All of them can be used as personal invitations handed to folks you meet over the next couple of weeks.

One creative use of the business card sized invitations is to use one of them every time you make a purchase.

There will be additional supplies of the cards available at church Sunday but I just wanted to be sure you had a few in advance of our group distribution.

5. Invite Card. Be sure you have clear, easily read text along with date and location on your invite card. Do you need to include a map? Website? Phone?



The Cross is empty!
The Savior lives!
Let's Celebrate!

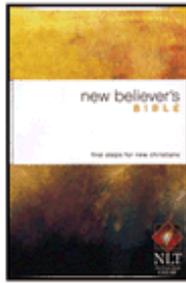
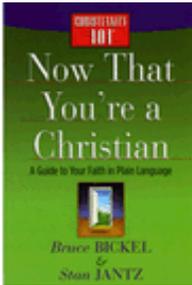
**Somewhere General Baptist Church
1601 West Main Street
Anytown, USA 62837**

**Sunday, April 5, 2015
10:00 a.m. Easter Worship**

IV. New Believers Follow-Up System

Seven Elements of Your New Believers Follow Up System

1. Congratulations e-mail within 24 hours.
2. Printed letter from pastor.
3. Church Brochure



4. New believer's booklet (Include it with your pastor's letter.)

5. New Believer's Bible (Include a coupon for it in your pastor's letter. Make it available to be picked up the next Sunday after the letter is received.)

6. Baptism Brochure.
7. All information to your church database.

Remember: *Having freshly redeemed people around the church does something to the church. Are you ready, in advance, for these gifts?*

V. Worship Service Survey

Worship is the primary product of the church. Here's a simple survey to help improve your product.

Worship Service Survey

This survey is being sent to several members of the congregation in an effort to gain helpful, positive feedback from today's worship service. Please be gentle but honest and specific and return your completed survey before you leave church today. Thanks in advance for your help and for your positive service in the life and ministry of our church.

1. What do you appreciate most about today's worship service?

What were its strengths? Please list three or four items.

What are one or two aspects of today's worship service that need improvement? Where are we weak? Please list one or two items.

2. Where would you suggest we focus as we seek to improve the worship experience? Please list one or two items.

3. On a scale of 1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10
(Help!----Weak----Average---Strong-----Super!)

How would you rate the worship services...?

Now _____ 2. One year ago _____

For additional comments or feedback, use the back of this form.

VI. Double Your Attendance in One Day

Big Day Evangelism—Double Your Attendance in One Day

by Clint Cook, Next Level Coaching

Editor’s Note: These notes and text originate from Next Level Coaching as presented by Pastor Clint Cook. Originally designed as a presentation to a group in an interactive setting, they have been adapted to a manuscript format for this plan book. Two background texts for this section will provide similar but much more detailed information for the user.

Nelson Searcy, *Ignite: How to Spark Immediate Growth in your Church*, Baker Books, 2009.

Nelson Searcy, *Fusion: Turning First Time Guests into Fully Engaged Members*, Regal Books, 2007.

Defining the Big Day

Nelson Searcy defines a Big Day as “an all-out push toward s single Sunday for the purpose of breaking the next growth barrier and setting an attendance record in order to reach as many people as possible for Jesus” (Ignite, p.26).

Two important features of this definition stand out. One, this is an all-out push. This means that the congregation and its leaders will work toward the Big Day with an intentional plan, organized efforts and prayerful dependence. Second, this push is to reach people for Jesus. This means that the programming must be attractive to unchurched or dechurched people. This also means that our invitations must be directed toward folks who are not currently involved in a church.

Because this outreach activity intends to connect with unchurched individuals then the effective church leader must have a plan to further the process of evangelism and discipleship beyond the Big Day. The Big Day then becomes a starting point.

Churches that have intentionally engaged in Big Day Evangelism have generally seen consistent growth. Even if the fledgling efforts of the church do not gain the results that were anticipated, practice makes perfect. With the passage of time a congregation can learn what connects with unchurched folks in the community. When that lesson is learned, evangelism becomes a natural and a continual activity of the church.

The Power of Friendship Evangelism

While there are any number of ways to gain a crowd and any number of ways to convey the gospel to the gathered crowd, Big Day Evangelism offers a mechanism that helps insure that a crowd once gained is retained. Big Day Evangelism is dependent on people inviting people. It just doesn’t work otherwise. Since personal relationships are key factors in retaining first time guests, Big Day Evangelism offers a natural way to consolidate the gains of that high attendance Sunday.

This invitational witness allows ordinary folks who love the Lord and His church to simply say “Come and see.” They need not be able to discuss the full theology of the

church, nor do they necessarily have to show a dramatically transformed life. They simply need to be able to use the tools provided by the church and the opportunities provided by the Holy Spirit to invite people to come with them.

The Power of Change

Big Day Evangelism also allows the church to adapt and change to meet the needs of the day. Improvements long needed will be identified and addressed in preparation for this special day. Opportunities long overlooked will be viewed more favorably in preparation for this special day.

Many times the motivation for positive change will surface as a congregation recognizes the need to prepare for guests.

The Power of Spiritual Warfare

This act of faith on the part of a local church to intentionally engage in community outreach will have several levels of impact. It will attract attention in the community. It will build momentum. It will build confidence. But it will also generate spiritual opposition. Sometimes this will be overt and direct. Other times this will be covert and indirect.

Some of the signs of spiritual warfare are dissension, second-guessing, doubt, anger and other negative emotions. Some of the signs of spiritual warfare are also hardness to the gospel or a reluctance or hesitance to engage in evangelism. In its most extreme cases spiritual warfare results in active occult opposition targeted toward the congregation making new attempts to reach out to its community.

The Big Rocks of Conducting a Big Day

1. Set your date.

- Nothing happens automatically!
- Beware of natural lows
- Take advantage of natural highs
- Allow adequate lead time
- Always consider "Will this date best reach the unchurched?"

Because nothing happens automatically if we are to successfully conduct a Big Day then we must first look to the calendar to select a date. But church leaders are not just selecting one day when a Big Day is scheduled. While we of course must give priority to that Big Day, we must also give priority to the weeks preceding and succeeding that day. To effectively conduct a Big Day means that adequate lead time is necessary to prepare. To effectively conduct a Big Day means that adequate follow-up time must be allowed after the event.

The Big Day, then, is not just an isolated incident in the life of the church. It is rather a focal point for on-going evangelistic and discipleship activity.

A few dates on the calendar should always be avoided. Some of these are printed on the calendar and labeled as holidays, usually with a three-day weekend. Others of these will not be printed on the calendar but will be obvious to the church leader who knows

the traditions in the community. For example, in many communities factories shut down for maintenance and require most of the production staff to take vacation at the same time. Spring break in the public school system is often so embedded in the framework of our communities that even Easter is impacted by it.

On the other hand there are some natural high attendance seasons for most churches. Generally this will follow the pattern of a spring surge somewhere around Easter or Mother's Day followed by a fall surge sometime prior to Thanksgiving. Sometimes it is easier to begin Big Day Evangelism with one of the natural high attendance seasons in mind. That is why Easter 2012 has been selected as a day of primary emphasis for Big Day Evangelism among General Baptist churches.

Whatever the date selected allow adequate lead time. In the Planning Calendar included elsewhere in this plan book nine weeks is suggested as the time needed to prepare for the event. Some groups may choose a longer preparation period; others will only need 4-6 weeks, but everyone will need some time to prepare.

When selecting a date always consider how that date impacts the unchurched. It is foolish to select a date that fits the folks at the church and yet does not fit the unchurched audience. For example, an older congregation with few children may not understand the implications of a Big Day scheduled around spring break.

My Planning Notes for Setting a Date:

2. Set your sermon series.

An important feature of Big Day Evangelism is the sermon series selected. For effective connection to the unchurched this needs to be an attractional series. While other types of sermons will be used over the course of the year, this is not the time to engage in those kinds of sermons that cannot be easily understood by the unchurched audience. Attractional sermons will primarily be life application sermons with practical help and sympathetic answers to real life circumstances.

On your big day you will want to challenge your audience to join you for the next few weeks as you preach these topics.

Series preaching is the art of crafting several sermons that address different aspects of the same topics. Generally series preaching will divide the topics into 3-6 messages. These messages are inter-related in that they do not stand alone but rely on the strength of multiple avenues to communicate the message.

One strength of series preaching is that with the modern tendency to 'miss church,' even those folks who do not attend every Sunday will be exposed to aspects of the series

theme. Another strength is that series preaching allows greater depth since the topic is visited a number of times rather than dealt with once and then forgotten.

Series preaching that is attractional will be even more attractive if it is solidly based on the Bible. If life application lessons are drawn only from secular sources, the pastor has missed the opportunity to share how God’s Word has powerful application to life situations.

For the pastor unfamiliar with series preaching there are several sources of sample materials that can be reviewed or even adapted to each local setting. David Mains through www.sundaysolutions.com provides a helpful series of worship services, sermons and small group studies built around specific themes. Originally designed around Lent and profiled as 50 Day Spiritual Adventures, many of these resources remain readily adaptable to the current day.

Other help can be found at www.outreach.com. An especially useful tool is available in their “God Questions” series. Each of their series generally comes with a book, other related resources and accompanying artwork that is marketed through their web site and through their seasonal catalogs.

My Planning Notes for Setting a Sermon Series:

3. Coordinate your efforts/theme

- Use invite cards
- Introduce communication cards
- Use bulletins and banners
- Create a church brochure

To connect with an unchurched crowd these days the church often needs to give careful attention to the way everything looks. By planning in advance it is relatively easy to coordinate all your Big Day promotional efforts so that the same graphic or theme appears over and over again. This branding provides identity and continuity.

An essential tool for Big Day Evangelism is the invite card distributed widely among current attenders. This is often a business size card with the theme picture/graphic, series titles, location of the church, and Sunday schedule. By distributing these 2-3 weeks prior to the Big Day current attenders will have ample opportunity to invite their family, friends and acquaintances.

One suggested strategy from Bill Easum’s *Go Big* is to provide at least two invite cards per worshipper. Have them inserted in the weekly bulletin or hand them out. At the conclusion of the service ask everyone to hold one card in their left hand. As they hold it up high lead a prayer that will ask the Holy Spirit to put in their paths the people

who need to receive an invitation. Ask them to take the second invite card in their right hand and lead the same kind of prayer. This kind of activity makes the routine of inviting someone to church into the spiritual experience that it is.

For the Big Day use bulletins and banners that carry the theme. Some of these are available commercially. Others can be easily designed and printed and easily customized for you. Stinson Press in Poplar Bluff, Missouri can assist you (www.stinsonpress.com). For small orders of post cards or business cards many churches use www.gotprint.com. The drawback to on-line printing is that you must have the ability to do your own design work using the templates the company has available. If you choose this route be sure to double check your work because once you approve it you are committed.

Many churches that do not use bulletins and banners on a regular basis find it refreshing to use them for the weeks following their Big Day. This introduces change on a limited scale and also introduces new features in a very cost effective fashion.

While you are designing features for your Big Day take the time to design and print a church brochure. You will be able to use this brochure long after the Big Day is over. Be sure to include contact information, scheduling, staff introductions, and ministry descriptions.

My Planning Notes for Coordinating My Promotion:

4. Promote Your Goal

- Inside promotion: use numbers
- Outside promotion: use themes/relationships

While Big Day Evangelism plans for record attendance, a note of realism must also be introduced. A Big Day goal of doubling the current average worship attendance may not be the highest attendance ever recorded in the church but it is still an aggressive goal. Often the goal that is set a bit high encourages more activity in an attempt to reach the goal. By the same token, however, a goal that is set too high discourages efforts to reach it because it seems to unattainable. Prayerfully ask the Lord to lead you to a goal that is both challenging and realistic. Then as you work toward that goal use the old adage: Work as if everything depended on you; pray as if everything depended on the Lord!

Inside the church the promoted goal should be about numbers. The reason we use numbers is that numbers represent people. Plaster the facility with simple signs that have a bold number on them. Make it a matter of announcement and prayer to keep the

number in front of the people. We count people because people count. Of course to be able to reach the goal means that we need everyone on board. We all must do our parts.

Outside the church and especially on the Big Day the promotion should be about themes and relationships. No one wants to come to church because they will be number 199. They will, however, come to worship because a friend invited them. In that case they may be number 199 to walk through the door that day but they are there with a friend not because a number was assigned. In the same way unchurched and dechurched folks will respond to a theme when it promises an answer to felt needs. God Questions from www.outreach.com or Toxic Baggage from Real Life Church in Springfield, IL are attractive themes. So those attracted to the themes may be person number 199 but they are not coming because they are a number, they are coming to find an answer to their felt needs.

Consider what budget resources you will need. See the Planning Calendar section for some suggestions on raising funds for mailing.

My Planning Notes for Promoting My Goal:

5. Unleash the power of prayer.

- First name prayer list
- Intercessory Prayer Team
- Add wings to your prayers

Big Day Evangelism is often view simply as a means of attracting a crowd. Political campaigns do it. Community service organizations are always looking for folks to do a 5K run or walk or a festival of some sort. The church, however, is not just another organization that is powered by its ability to organize. The church is an organism that is empowered by its ability to be in touch with its head, which is Christ.

Big Day Evangelism puts us in the forefront of spiritual warfare. We will lose that battle if we undertake it with weapons of this world. We must engage this battle with

weapons that are spiritual weapons. When confronting the real presence of evil the Lord Jesus admonished that evil is only defeated by prayer and fasting.

Corporate prayer is important and should be included in our public worship. Prayers in our small groups and classes are important and should be part of those meetings. Personal prayers should be prayed by leaders and followers as we engage this battle.

One special kind of praying that many churches use as they prepare for Big Day Evangelism is the construction of a First Name Prayer List. This list is submitted by the folks of the church to indicate by first name the people they intend to invite. There is no need for a last name because that could turn the prayer session into a gossip session. There is a need to pray for these folks to ask the God who loves them to intervene in their lives. They are on this list because they are separate from Christ and His church. Lost children need to be found. See the plan book section on prayer and evangelism for some more details.

Every church also needs an intercessory prayer team that regularly prays for church leaders, especially pastors. These prayers should always address

- Deliver us from the Evil One
- The powerful advancement of His Church
- The powerful, effective proclamation of His Word
- The careful protection of His Servant/s
- Strategic Intercessory Prayer for workers, Matthew 9:37
- Strategic Prayer to Discern Where God Is Working, John 5:17

Be sure to add wings to your prayers by following the Lord's prompting to extend your invitation to your friend to come to worship with you on the Big Day.

My Planning Notes for Unleashing the Power of Prayer:

6. Prepare for your guests.

(This section provides a very brief overview of the excellent assimilation system describe by Nelson Searcy in Fusion. Be sure to read the book for more specific information.)

- Communication cards
- Greeter training
- Hospitality teams
- Be User friendly: park in the back—move to the front—scoot to the middle
- Plan for follow-up
- On-site
- Notes and gift cards

Note: Remember, regardless of music performance or message deliverance, a person must be welcomed into the church in a friendly and helpful way or the first impression of the church will be a negative one, and it will be unlikely that the guest will ever return a second time

DURING THE SERVICE: Communication Card

1. Everyone fills out a Communication Card every week.
2. Everyone places the Communication Card in with the offering.
3. Everyone has a next step to take every week

Note: Whether or not a church uses a Connection Card, it is imperative that it finds an effective and non-threatening way to collect the contact information of all first time guests. Otherwise, follow-up is impossible.

POST SERVICE GIFT: Free Book

Immediately following the service, all first-time guests with potential to return to our church are offered a free gift, usually a book, as a sign of our appreciation for their attendance.

How Good is Good Enough?, Andy Stanley (This resource can be purchased in multi-copy packages from www.Christianbook.com)

POST SERVICE INFORMATION

Guest Table/Welcome Center/Foyer Greeting

At the Guest Table in the lobby, a first time guest who made a decision during the service or who has questions about the church or Christianity can find a knowledgeable person to talk to, more resources, and information about the church. The table also displays free resources such as information on becoming a Christian, baptism, membership, the church's beliefs, and new believer's Bibles.

POST WEEKEND: Follow-Up

36 Hour Response via email (Optional)

96 Hour Response via mail

One Month Follow-Up via mail

Note: Be creative in what gifts you might be able to give first time guests that would "WOW" them and encourage them to visit your church for a second time.

Step #2: From Second Time Guest to Regular Attender

DURING SERVICE: Communication Card to distinguish 1st from 2nd time guest

POST-WEEKEND: Follow-up
36 Hour Response via email
96 Hour Response via mail

POST-WEEKEND: Engagement Opportunities. How can we further connect?

WHY SHOULD I ASK SECOND TIME GUESTS TO SERVE?

- One, it makes that person feel alive.
- Two, it provides a personal sense of ownership in the church.
- Three, it provides an opportunity to build relationships with other people in the church.

Step #3: From Regular Attender to Member

A regular attender says: "This is the church I go to."

A member says: "This is MY church."

DURING THE SERVICE

- Service Opportunities
- Teaching on Baptism and Membership
- Signing up for Baptism and Membership Class

Note: Why such a fast response time with follow-up? We cannot over-emphasize how valued a first time guest feels when contacted the day after visiting a church for the first time. They recognize that they are a priority to the church and are more likely to come back a second time.

My Planning Notes for Preparing for My Guests:

7. Improve Your Worship Service

- What do we do well?
- What is confusing or threatening to guests?
- What is goofy and needs to be changed?
- What needs to be updated?
- Is there a growth barrier you are facing?
- Do you consider the first time visitor to be a guest?
- Is your worship dynamic small group or large group?

Since worship is THE entry point to almost every church these days, what we do in worship will set the stage for our success or failure to reach people.

It is always nice to lead with your strength. So honestly ask yourself “What do we do well in our worship?” By asking that question you must also determine what you do not do so well or what you do poorly.

What is confusing or threatening to guests? We who are part of the church often have difficulty with this question for we know the drill. Others do not. Spontaneous, verbal responses are often threatening to guests. The fear of public speaking is widespread and to be in a setting where the leader calls on people without advance notice to pray or to sing or to share a testimony is frightening.

The way we use our Bibles is often confusing to the unchurched. They have no clue about its page organization or about the handy way we use chapter and verse divisions to locate sentences.

What is goofy or easily misunderstood by unchurched attenders and needs to be changed? One element that almost never makes sense to the unchurched is the tendency of those who are part of the platform leaders to be seated in the back of the room. That dead time while someone walks slowly to the platform can be used by the devil to distract. The old protocol that one person cannot begin the next part of the service until the previous leader has been seated plays right into the devil’s hands.

What needs to be updated? Is there an attendance board posted in plain sight for all the world to see? Put it in the back hallway so those who need to know can know! Is the building in poor repair? Is the building dusty, dirty and full of clutter? Take a look from a first time guest’s point of view.

Are the restrooms clean and freshly decorated? The women’s restroom and the nursery must be clean, fresh and well supplied.

Are you facing a growth barrier? If attendance peaks and declines every few years there is probably a reason that if addressed or corrected could put the church on the path of sustained growth.

Is the first time visitor just a visitor or are they considered guests? Think about how well you treat guests in your home compared to folks that have stopped by before. Make the same special efforts at church because every first time guest is a gift from God.

Does your worship service function as a large group setting or is full of small group dynamics? Often our smaller churches remain small because they continue to act like a small group. Verbal prayer requests, verbal announcements, impromptu appeals from the

audience, and the celebration of birthdays/anniversaries are all small group experiences that should be shared in Sunday School or other small group settings. Remember a worship service is designed to be The Worship of God not the celebration of our life together as a social network.

My Planning Notes for Improving Our Worship Services:

8. Get it settled: “We’ll do whatever it takes to reach people!”

Be honest. Is it about me, them or Him?

Pastors must take ownership and responsibility for the growth of the churches placed in their care. Every church leader must take ownership and responsibility for the growth of the church in which the Lord has placed them.

My Planning Notes for doing my part:

9. Prepare for growth

- What would it take to function as a church twice our size?
- Do we have the right kind of room/space?
- Do we have the right kind of décor, signs and equipment?
- What about dust and clutter?

My Planning Notes for Preparing for Growth:

10. Dare to dream, plan and work!

According to your faith. It's a principle from the Old and New Testaments. Can you imagine what could be if the Lord wrote the Ministry Action Plan for your church?

Can you dream of the day when the dead and dying churches of our land became vibrant places of worship and evangelism?

Can you develop a plan to reach more than a few neighbors and instead reach a neighborhood? a city? a county? a state? a nation? a world?

God has such a plan. He plans to reach the world for Jesus Christ in and through and by the local church. There is no Plan B. If we fail then the whole enterprise fails.

It's time to dream God-sized dreams!

It's time to develop God-honoring plans!

It's time to work for the night is soon coming!

The dreams, plans and work the Lord is leading me to:



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