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The Onramp and Offramp
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SGI 
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MISSION STATEMENT

Leading the United Pentecostal Church International to think strategically about future growth.

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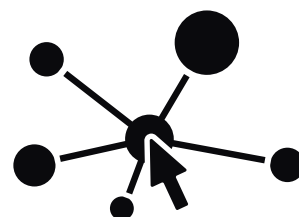
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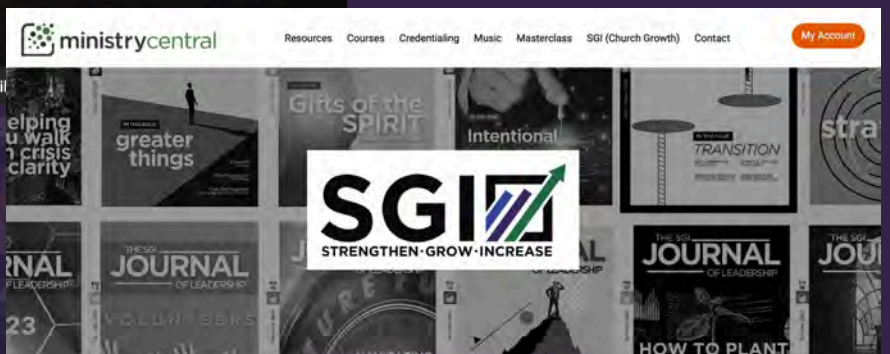
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Strategic Growth Initiative

The mission of SGI is to create a culture of health that produces spiritual and numerical growth in ministers, churches, and districts in the UPCI.

Church Health Check-Up

Welcome to the *Church Health Check-Up*. This evaluation is designed to give you a more clearly defined understanding of your church's overall health. With a better understanding, you, as a pastor, can move forward to make the proper changes necessary to either continue the growth process, begin to grow again after a period of non-growth, or restructure for growth after a period of decline. Click below to access the Church Health Check-Up.

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Now available for ALL! View this tremendous resource for pastors, districts, church leadership teams and those involved in the local church. This Church Growth Track will consist of eleven lessons, each taught by Apostolic leaders on the front lines of revival and growth. Please click VIEW COURSE for this free resource.

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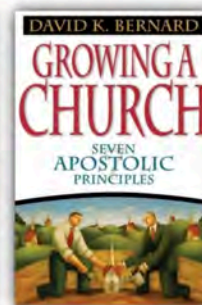
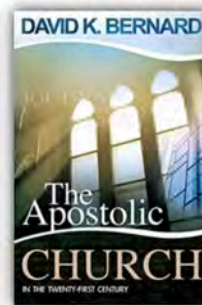
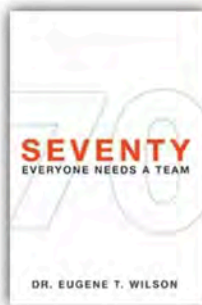
Strategic Growth Initiative (SGI) Resources



The Strategic Growth Initiative (SGI) was born in the heart of General Superintendent David K. Bernard as God gave him a vision for growing the North American church. The General Board of the UPCI approved the forming of SGI for the purpose of highlighting growth in the areas of the number of churches and ministers in North America. The four focus points of SGI are outlined below along with resources available through the Pentecostal Resources Group.

Multiply the number of churches

SGI will assist districts by providing promotion, planning, and training with the goal of enabling every district to at least double the number of churches (including preaching points, daughter works, autonomous church plants, multicultural church plants, integrate independent Apostolic churches, etc.) in one decade.



MAXIMIZING BIG SUNDAYS

Darrell Johns

IDEA IN BRIEF

Big events play a pivotal role in church growth by engaging larger numbers of people, enhancing morale, and providing exposure to the gospel.

While the primary focus remains personal evangelism and discipleship, well-planned events serve as tools for outreach, allowing churches to build connections with newcomers and creating lasting impressions. Success lies in thorough preparation, team collaboration, and intentional follow-up, making big events powerful investments in the church's future.

When I am asked to write on the subject of church growth, I'd much rather talk about church health and the numerical growth that results from that health. However, in our local church, big events have positively influenced incremental numerical growth. The contacts generated through these big events have contributed to our church's growth.

While most of our energy is focused on faithfulness to the fundamentals of evangelism and life-on-life discipleship, we have learned the value of big events.

How are big events valuable to our church growth plan? Big events enable us to involve a high percentage of our people, boosting morale and excitement. Big events expose large numbers of people to the gospel who might never attend a regular service. Attendance at big events is usually 25 percent above our normal average. When guests attend, they are impacted by the preaching of the Word and the moving of the Spirit. Big events also reinforce the value of teamwork and reveal the potential of our church. Big events make us better, and as a result, they make us bigger.

If we can draw large numbers of people for a special event, we have faith that it can eventually happen on a regular Sunday.

Jesus used big events. On two occasions, Jesus fed thousands of people, using the venue of a big event to spread His message. The Sermon on the Mount was delivered after multitudes gathered to hear Jesus. Following His sermon, the crowds continued to follow Him (See Matthew 4:25; 8:1).

While Jesus focused much of His time on training the twelve, the Gospel of Matthew mentions multitudes sixteen times.

Crowds followed Jesus, heard His teaching, and brought their needs to Him, expecting miracles. After witnessing or experiencing the miracles, the multitudes were convinced of His identity and became receptive to His message.

There is a vast difference between a crowd and a church. Sometimes the crowds walk away, as they did with Jesus in John 6:66. Crowds can provide a false sense of success. We must be realistic in our expectations of big events. Yet, despite these realities, we believe in big events.

We view every visitor at a big event as a potential disciple. We recognize that big events allow us to build bridges to people and create a door to the church for curious seekers.

In our church, we typically hold two big events each year—Easter Sunday and our Christmas service. We may add other big events on special occasions, such as holidays. Other special events to consider are “Appreciation Sunday,” “Pentecost Sunday,” and “All Nations Sunday.” By limiting the number of big events at our church, we are able to pace ourselves and avoid burning out our people.

To ensure excellence and impact, we follow a strategic process for planning and executing major events. Each step is designed to enhance preparation, communication, spiritual readiness, and guest engagement, ultimately fostering a memorable experience that aligns with our church’s mission.

Here is a step-by-step guide we have followed in the past:

- The big event is placed on our calendar well in advance to ensure proper preparation and avoid scheduling conflicts.
- A coordinator is appointed to take ownership of the event’s success. This person has direct access to a designated pastoral team member and has our full support.
- A team is assembled. The event is divided into major areas of management, and key leaders are recruited.

- Each event has a customized planning guide built from a template created specifically for big events in a project management tool (Basecamp.) It is detailed and continually updated.
- We approach every big event sincerely. Our goal is not simply to boost attendance but to genuinely minister to people.
- The event is given a high profile and ample exposure in the church. We inform the congregation early and often, sharing the vision from the pulpit, and promoting it through various social media and digital platforms. (Email, text, App notifications, Facebook, Instagram.)
- Spiritual preparation includes casting vision for the event and committing to a week of corporate prayer and fasting.
- The event receives our total support. We seek input from others to ensure no important details are missed. For example, if the event is an Easter service or a children's musical, multiple teams are involved, not just the music department.
- Regular planning meetings are conducted leading up to the event.
- The church campus is prepared, inside and out, often with a church workday and extra cleaning.
- Volunteer teams receive additional training and preparation. These teams include, but are not limited to, Parking, Guest Experience, Ushers, Altar, Baptismal, and Follow-up. We anticipate a larger number of guests by having the full team scheduled.
- Prior to the event, messages are preached, and lessons are taught to motivate and prepare the congregation. We remind the church of their role in making guests feel welcome and train them to minister to guests. With larger crowds, altar calls can be challenging, so we prepare our people to pray with guests in the seating area before coming to the altar.
- On the day of the event, we try to engage with our guests and enjoy the experience with them, expecting God's presence to impact their lives.
- Everything is designed with guests in mind. Our service schedule, announcements, songs, and message are focused on guests, not our church members.
- We strive to give our guests a taste of a typical Atlanta West worship experience. We want them to feel the presence of the Lord, experience the warmth of our people, hear the Gospel, and be impacted by their visit.
- After the event, we follow up with guests, inviting them to engage in a Bible study and to connect with our church.

- After the event, we do a complete review of the day with our pastoral staff to identify areas needing improvement. This information is saved for future planning.
- Key participants are thanked and honored.
- We publicly compliment the church and celebrate the success of the event.

Big events should be viewed as investments in the future of the church

Several years ago, a family with three teenagers began attending our church. Most of the family has now been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and received the Holy Ghost. Why did they come? A few years prior, they visited our church for a special service. When they became hungry for God, they returned to the place where a big event touched their lives in an unforgettable way. With careful planning, big events can effectively enhance church growth and advance the mission of the church.

Darrell Johns

Darrell Johns serves as pastor of Atlanta West Pentecostal Church, assistant general superintendent of the Eastern Zone, UPCI, and chair of the Strategic Growth Initiative Committee of the General Board.





The Onramp and Offramp to Big Events

Paul Records

In Acts 18:1-11, we find the apostle Paul navigating a pivotal moment in his ministry as he arrives in Corinth. This bustling city, known for its cultural diversity and commercial prominence, presents Paul with new challenges and opportunities. His initial efforts, preaching in the synagogue, met with resistance. What had worked before was now facing opposition, forcing Paul to pivot and adjust his approach. In response, Paul embraces what we might call the “house next door” principle—moving his teaching efforts to the home of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God whose house was strategically located next to the synagogue.

This shift demonstrates Paul’s flexibility and willingness to adapt his ministry strategy to fit the current context of his city.

In the midst of this transition, God speaks to Paul with words of encouragement and assurance: “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.” (Acts 18:9-10). This divine word offers two powerful truths: God’s presence and protection, and the certainty that He has already prepared receptive hearts within the city.

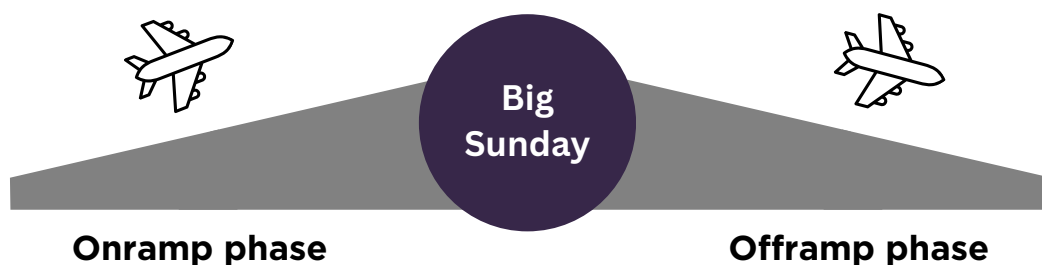
As pastors and ministry leaders, we must operate with the faith that God has unchurched people in our cities, ready for divine encounters. Big Sundays—focused, evangelistic efforts—can be the perfect occasion for such connections to occur.

- **Big Sundays can be pivotal moments in the life of a church.** They are the high-attendance Sundays that bring together regular attendees, occasional visitors, and newcomers who are testing the waters. Whether it’s Easter, Christmas, or a special community-focused service, Big Sundays offer a unique opportunity to make a lasting impact.
- **But what exactly is a Big Sunday?** It’s not just a day of high attendance. It’s an opportunity to reach more people with the gospel, engage your community, and strengthen connections that may lead to opportunities for long-term disciple-making.
- **Defining a Big Sunday.** A Big Sunday is more than a day of boosted attendance or a large special event. It’s a moment when your church intentionally reaches out to your community, creates welcoming experiences, and establishes connections that have the potential to grow into lasting relationships. Rather than just a technical marker on the calendar, they are strategic ministry opportunities.

Making the most of a Big Sunday can feel a lot like launching and landing a plane.

- The **onramp** is your takeoff—casting vision for the event, building excitement, preparing your team, and creating momentum.
- And then there's the **offramp**—when you have the opportunity to follow up with newcomers, invite them into deeper involvement, and help them feel like they truly belong.

It's not just about the event itself; it's about embracing the whole journey, from takeoff to landing. When you approach both parts of big event planning with care, you're setting the stage for substantial ministry impact.



The Onramp: Preparing for a Big Sunday

The onramp phase is the preparatory season that occurs anywhere from 3-6 months before a Big Sunday. Success in this phase depends on how well you cast a clear vision, engage in strategic marketing, prepare your team, and intentionally connect with those you are trying to reach.

Keys to Effective Preparation:

- **High-Level Intentionality:** Clearly define your goals and how you plan to achieve them. Be strategic about your outreach efforts.
- **Strategic Prayer:** Cover your efforts in prayer, asking God to guide your plans and bless your connections.
- **Plan with the End in Mind:** Begin your preparation for big ministry Sundays by clearly defining your desired outcomes. What do you want visitors to experience, feel, and do as a result of attending? Envision their journey from first-time guests to fully engaged members of your church family. Craft your entire strategy—from your marketing efforts to your service flow and follow-up process—with that end goal in mind. Ensure that every step of the visitor experience, from the parking lot to the pulpit and beyond, is designed to guide them toward deeper connection and involvement. Provide clear next steps for visitors to continue their journey with your church, such as joining a small group, attending a newcomers' class, or engaging with an upcoming sermon series.

The Offramp: Following Up After a Big Sunday

The offramp phase is the two to four weeks following a Big Sunday event. This is where many churches struggle. You've attracted new people—now how do you retain them and help them grow spiritually? Here are a few practical points to consider.

Keys to Effective Follow-Up:

- **Intentional Engagement:** Connect with newcomers in a way that makes them feel genuinely seen and valued, building relationships that extend well beyond their initial visit.
- **Establishing Clear Next Steps:** Provide clear pathways for involvement, discipleship, and community integration.
- **Strategic Follow-Up:** Implement a system for consistently checking in with newcomers and helping them become part of the church family.
- **Ongoing Prayer:** Continue to pray for those who attended, asking God to continue working in their lives.

It's natural to feel anxious about Big Sundays. After all, there's a lot on the line, and the stakes feel high. But God has called you to this work and will provide the inspiration and motivation you need. Like Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:1-11), sometimes what normally works isn't working. That's when you pivot, innovate, and trust God to lead you. As you plan big events, don't be afraid to try new approaches.

In Corinth, when resistance came, Paul redirected his efforts into new people groups. He didn't cling to what wasn't working; he sought God's guidance and adapted. This is your invitation to do the same. If a certain outreach strategy, event format, or communication method isn't bearing fruit, take a step back, seek God's wisdom, and try something different.

Experiment with fresh approaches, lean into your God-given creativity, and be willing to take risks for the sake of your city.

The goal isn't always to recreate past successes but to courageously follow where God is leading you today. Maybe it's a new kind of community event, a creative service format, leveraging digital platforms in fresh ways, or forming strategic partnerships in your city. Whatever it is, trust that God will guide and empower you and your ministry team.

Application Points & Discussion Questions

- **Define Success:** In practical terms, how would you measure a successful Easter Sunday or other Big Sunday? Is it about numbers alone, or are there other metrics that matter?
- **Preparation Benchmarks:** What specific goals and actions would define a fruitful onramp phase leading up to a Big Sunday?
- **Follow-Up Benchmarks:** What steps will you take to ensure effective follow-up in the weeks and months following a Big Sunday?
- **Equipping Your Team:** How can you as the pastor prepare or equip your team for each phase of a Big Sunday?
- **Improvement Opportunities:** What would it look like for you and your ministry team to be more intentional about your upcoming Big Sunday than you were last year?

As you consider the upcoming Big Sundays on your church calendar, take a moment to reflect on your approach. Every season provides new opportunities to learn, adapt, and improve. The onramp and offramp phases are not just tasks to complete but ongoing processes that refine your church's ability to reach people effectively. Pray over your plans, communicate clearly with your team, and remain open to innovation.



Paul Records is a church planter, author, and serves as the director of Grow Through Groups with the Pentecostal Resources Group.



Seedtime and Harvest

Doug Klinedinst

While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. Genesis 8:22.

When we speak of the harvest in a spiritual context, we are referring to the gathering of eternal souls. Evangelism is the process of reaching the lost by bringing the gospel to them. While we sometimes call the successful conversion of souls “Revival,” it is more accurately applied to those who have already been saved. Revival occurs when believers reach for God, while evangelism is about reaching for the lost.

Revival is characterized by renewed passion for God, a deepened prayer life, restored joy, and fresh repentance. Evangelism, by contrast, involves witnessing to the lost about Jesus, teaching Bible studies, inviting people to church, and leading souls to repentance, water baptism, and Spirit baptism.

God made a solemn promise concerning the harvest immediately after the great flood: “As long as the earth remains, seedtime and harvest shall not cease.”

This is an incredible and prophetic assurance—the harvest season will come.

Just as harvest is perpetual, so is seedtime. These are the two essential elements of reaching lost souls with the gospel: Seedtime and Harvest. The spiritual law of the harvest is clear: one cannot exist without the other. This truth offers both a powerful promise and a serious evangelistic responsibility.

Understanding Seedtime and Harvest

To be successful in evangelism, we must understand the uniqueness of both Seedtime and Harvest. Applying this knowledge will greatly increase the yield and maximize the efforts of those laboring in the field.

The law of sowing and reaping is simple to grasp: you will reap what you sow. My spiritual mentor, Rev. Billy Cole, used to say, “You can’t reap a harvest that does not exist.” Some churches are highly effective at preparing and reaping the harvest.

I preached a revival in Denham Springs, Louisiana, with Pastor Ray Johnson, who had labored in that field for over thirty years. During the meeting, over one hundred people received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. How did this happen? Before the meeting even started, the church was actively teaching Bible studies to willing participants.

Pastor Johnson himself taught many Bible studies and prepared his potential converts for the revival. By the time I arrived, there was a prepared harvest ready to reap. The revival continued for several weeks, with Bible study teaching, witnessing, and church invitations steadily bringing more souls ready for baptism and the Holy Ghost.

The Parable of the Four Soils

Jesus taught a valuable evangelistic lesson in the parable of the four soils: 25 percent of the soil is ready to receive the seed immediately, while 75 percent is not yet prepared. Preparing the soil requires work, but it is necessary to bring forth a harvest.

My observation is that, because of our great desire to reap, we often attempt to harvest souls that are not prepared. This can cause confusion, frustration, and even damage faith within the church.

Jesus Himself practiced preparing the soil. Contrary to the assumption that He simply showed up and crowds flocked to Him, Scripture reveals a deliberate strategy. Luke 10:1-2 states: “After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them, ‘The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’”

These seventy went before Jesus, witnessing of His miracles, His wisdom, and His power to heal. They prepared the soil by creating faith and expectation before Jesus even arrived.

Prepared vs. Unprepared Audiences

I have had the privilege of preaching to many prepared audiences at events we call “crusades.” These meetings are successful when believers bring their friends and family whom they have already been teaching and encouraging. For example, at the General Conference Crusade in Columbus, Ohio in 2006, we witnessed 1,108 people receive the Holy Ghost.

The harvest didn’t arrive by chance—it came through 126 buses filled with individuals who had been prepared through Bible studies and discipleship.

By contrast, I have also preached to unprepared audiences where proper preparation was lacking. The expectation of a great harvest without the necessary groundwork leads to disappointment. For example, some churches attempt to turn “Friend Day” into a crusade, hoping for mass conversions. While “Friend Day” is effective for introducing people to the church, it falls into the category of a seed event, not a harvest event. High-pressure tactics during these services often leave visitors feeling manipulated rather than ministered to.

Seedtime is as crucial as the harvest. We cannot have one without the other, and wisdom helps us understand the difference.

Recently, many churches have hosted block parties and community giveaways as outreach efforts. While these are excellent seed events, they should not be mistaken for harvest events.

Simply attracting large crowds through giveaways or promotions doesn't equate to a harvest.

True Christianity compels us to serve the poor and needy with compassion and generosity. However, offering material incentives without spiritual preparation often leads to confusion and disappointment. The homeless and poor in our communities need us to bring the gospel to them! Although true Christianity will do everything it can to assist them with food, and clothing etc. Gift cards and ipods should not be used to entice people to come to church. If you sow to the flesh you will reap corruption. Usually this type of crowd does not come back once the gifts have ceased and this creates much confusion and difficulty for the pastor. Of course we should bless the community, however it should be done in the true spirit of Christianity with no strings attached. As Mark 4:26-29 illustrates, the seed grows over time: "The earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

We have a promise of a great harvest. The prophecy of a last-day outpouring is upon us. However, if we attempt to harvest without adequate preparation—praying with people who have not repented or baptizing individuals who lack true conviction—we risk frustrating the laborers and damaging faith.

Let us not use the sickle until the harvest is ready. Until then, keep plowing, planting, and sowing the seed. In due season, the harvest will come, and the results will be glorious.

Doug Klinedinst

Doug Klinedinst serves as an evangelist with the United Pentecostal Church International.



Why You Should Consider Hosting An Appreciation Sunday Service

Michael Mitchell

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark 16:15.

Appreciation Sunday was founded on the belief that engaging our community by showing kindness and appreciation to men and women who play a role in its development is a crucial way to expose individuals to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

To fulfil the great commission, the Apostolic church must intentionally pursue God's agenda by implementing impactful strategies and building relationships for his glory.

As the director of Appreciation Sunday UPCI, my primary goal is to engage the entire ministerial body and provide support and information on this valuable tool to reach others so they may know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Appreciation Sunday is a successful strategy that has proven effective for New Life Tabernacle UPC. It was only fifteen years ago that we started this vital outreach strategy. But what is most memorable to me is that in September 2016, we invited Bishop Bernard to our Appreciation Sunday celebration that year. We honored seventy-five teachers, who brought with them three hundred family members and friends to celebrate their success, all in one day. Bishop Bernard was moved by the fact that so many individuals had an opportunity to hear about the oneness of God. He could see the vision.

Imagine five thousand UPCI churches honoring twenty individuals on Appreciation Sunday. And each of the twenty individuals brings ten guests. This would equate to one hundred thousand honorees and one million guests attending a United Pentecostal church in one day. The opportunities for the Kingdom are endless, so Bishop Bernard and the General Board embraced and endorsed this initiative for church growth to be employed by all UPCI churches. And the second Sunday in September was designated as Appreciation Sunday.

Over the years, we have developed six steps to a successful Appreciation Sunday celebration spanning over six months. For the purpose of this article, I will give a brief outline of three of these steps.

- The first step is to select a committee to plan and coordinate all activities for the day. Convene a meeting with your committee.
- Secondly, choose the group to be honored. After which, you will begin to announce and promote the event.

- Thirdly, start accepting nominations for processing. Once processing is completed, send invitations to the prospective honorees.
- For more information, the details can be found on our website at <https://appreciationsunday.upci.org>.

Another option is to scan the QR code at the end of this article, which will take you to the Appreciation Sunday website.

On September 15, 2024, New Life Tabernacle hosted Appreciation Sunday. We opened our hearts and arms to individuals who have been serving our community selflessly and show extraordinary commitment and leadership. This included individuals who provide essential services, positively shaping and uplifting many lives: Educators, environmental workers, sanitation workers, transit workers, and postal workers were among this group.

The atmosphere buzzed with excitement and anticipation as we started the day with praise and worship. There was a sense of harmony and gratitude as we worshipped God.

The award ceremony unfolded with much applause, and our distinguished guests, Assistant Borough President Rev. Kimberly Council, Assembly Member Monique Chandler-Waterman of District 58, and Council Member Farah N. Luis, of the 45th District, presented citations, proclamations, and certificates of honor along with heartfelt speeches.

All fifty-nine honorees were grateful as they received their awards of distinction. But what made the day even more successful was the message that was preached. The name of the Lord was magnified in our midst, which was signified by His rich presence. It stirred the hearts of everyone who attended the service. There is no doubt seeds of righteousness were planted in each stirred heart.





The day culminated in a joyous sound during the reception. Honorees, their family members, friends, community leaders, and the church assembled under an atmosphere of togetherness charged with love, gratitude, and honor—all in the name of Christ.

The lasting impact Appreciation Sunday has on an individual cannot be measured. But ever so often during your interaction with an honoree, you will get a glimpse of the extent to which they are moved and the depth of their gratitude for the experience of being honored by the United Pentecostal Church in their community. Relationships are formed because connections are made. This translates to repeat visitors, where we can introduce bible study, children's ministry, if they have children, youth ministry for their youth, and so on.

The Appreciation Sunday Ministry team of UPCI prays that upon reading this article, your heart will be ignited with God's fire to go. Go with the tools provided, reap a harvest for Christ, and build the kingdom of God. It is okay to start where you are and with what you have. Sow the seeds today to guarantee a harvest tomorrow.



**Click logo to visit the
Appreciation Sunday website.**

Micheal A. Mitchell is the pastor of New Life Tabernacle United Pentecostal Church in Brooklyn, New York. He also serves as the national director of Appreciation Sunday, a growth ministry of the UPCI.



The Evangelistic Value of Hosting an "All Nations Sunday"

Brocc Chavis

Pastors, imagine the impact of uniting your congregation under a powerful, singular purpose: reaching across cultural and language barriers to share the love of Christ. "All Nations Sunday" is a proven evangelistic initiative designed to mobilize your church for cross-cultural outreach, creating a welcoming environment for all people regardless of their background.

Held annually on the Sunday preceding United Nations Day (October 24), this special service is an opportunity to gather your church members to actively engage with individuals from diverse cultures within your community.

The foundational evangelistic value of "All Nations Sunday" lies in its deliberate focus on outreach beyond the church's existing demographics. By intentionally inviting individuals from various cultures and language groups, your church opens the door to a wider harvest. This initiative emphasizes evangelism that is not only intentional but also collaborative. Churches participating in "All Nations Sunday" are encouraged to establish clear, measurable goals for attendance, cultural representation, and conversions, all contributing to a purposeful and faith-driven effort.

One of the significant returns of hosting an "All Nations Sunday" is the momentum it generates within your congregation.

By organizing members into teams with designated leadership roles and responsibilities, everyone feels a part of the evangelistic mission. This team approach fosters unity, accountability, and excitement among members as they work together toward a common goal. Additionally, involving youth and children in this outreach effort further reinforces a church-wide commitment to multicultural evangelism.

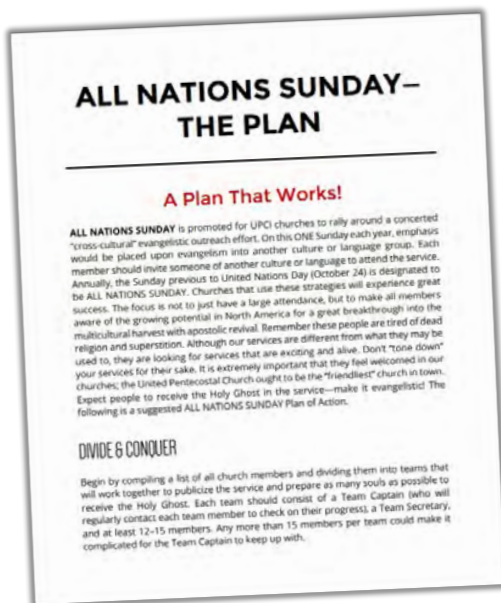
Preparation and follow-up are critical components of this initiative. Leaders are encouraged to utilize home Bible studies, altar training sessions, and outreach tools to prepare guests to receive the Holy Ghost. Additionally, trained altar workers and interpreters are made available to assist those from various backgrounds during the altar service. This intentional preparation ensures that everyone who attends has the opportunity to encounter God in a meaningful way.

The impact of "All Nations Sunday" extends beyond the initial service. Effective follow-up is emphasized to transform first-time guests into lifelong disciples.

This includes follow-up letters, phone calls, and invitations to home Bible studies and discipleship classes. Churches are also encouraged to celebrate the victories and testimonies from the event, reinforcing faith and encouraging further outreach.

Hosting an "All Nations Sunday" offers tremendous evangelistic value. It provides your church with an intentional strategy to break cultural and language barriers and reach the lost. It mobilizes your members to work together, creating an atmosphere of faith and expectation. Above all, it aligns your church's efforts with the biblical vision of reaching all nations with the gospel.

For a detailed, step-by-step guide on how to plan and execute an effective "All Nations Sunday," download the PDF resource document linked below. This resource includes practical tips, promotional strategies, and a breakdown of how to engage your entire congregation in this powerful outreach effort.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brocc Chavis".

Brocc Chavis was appointed by the UPCI General Board to serve as the Multicultural Ministries director in 2017. Originally from North Carolina, the Chavis' pastored in the City of Spring Lake, NC. Prior to full-time pastoral ministry, Brocc held a 14-year career in the finance industry. Brocc is a Native American, registered with the Lumbee Tribe, which is based in southeastern North Carolina. He and his wife, Randi, have 5 children. The Chavis family are veterans of multicultural church planting and ministry.

Click image to download the PDF resource file.



Ministry Through Teams

Dr. David K. Bernard, General Superintendent

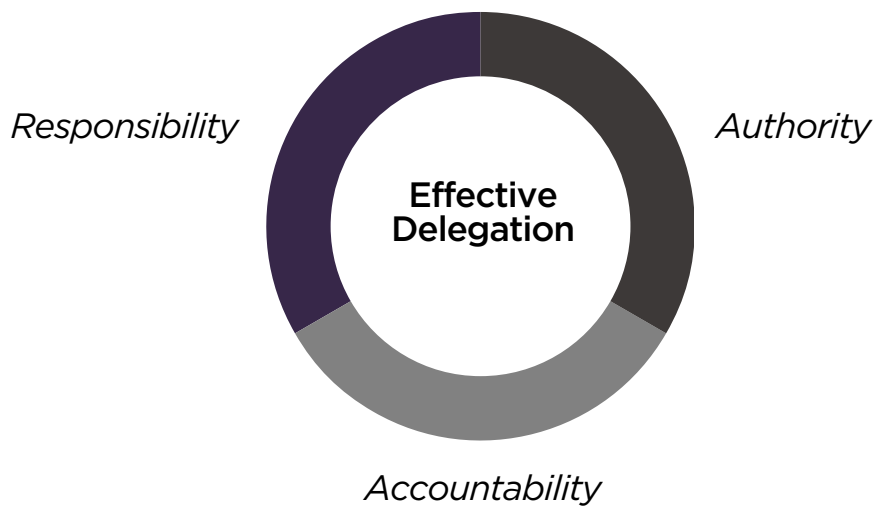
To work efficiently and effectively, we need to develop a team. A team approach involves delegation, which means sharing the workload with other people. Leaders should focus on doing what only they can do, while training others to assume responsibility and authority. For example, if the pastor is the only church employee, probably the best second hire is a secretary or personal assistant. In addition, a leadership team composed of volunteers is vital.

There are two main hindrances to delegation. The first is a fear that no one else can do a job as well as we can. That's probably true, at least initially. But the point isn't to find someone who can perform a task as well as we can, but well enough. Moreover, in the long run if no one has been trained to assume some responsibilities, this is a failure of leadership. The second hindrance to delegation is a fear that someone can do the job as well as we can.

We like the feeling of being indispensable, and our ego is bound up in our work more than we like to admit.

It can be difficult to give up responsibilities because doing so means giving up some authority and losing some control. In the long run, however, having qualified leaders is a credit to the senior leader.

There are three essential elements to effective delegation: (1) responsibility, (2) authority, and (3) lines of accountability. True delegation isn't just issuing orders but giving responsibility for a task and the corresponding authority to perform the task.



Authority must equal responsibility. When people have a job title but little responsibility, they will become dissatisfied. On the other hand, if they have responsibility but not the cooperation and resources to do their job, they will become frustrated.

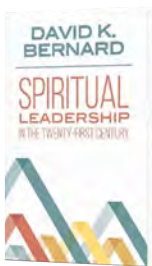
If a person's leader delegates but then micromanages or consistently overrules the decisions they make, they will be frustrated. In short, when leaders delegate, they should give guidance but also give some leeway for people to do the job their own way even though they may make some mistakes. The senior leader should be predisposed to approve and support the delegated leader's plans.

When people try to go directly to the senior leader without first consulting the delegated leader in charge of the specific task, the senior leader must redirect them back to the delegated leader.

The balancing factor is to establish lines of accountability. Delegation does not mean handing off a job and then placing blame if it isn't done well. The senior leader still retains ultimate responsibility.

When leaders delegate, they should establish an expectation of accountability by asking for such things as proposals, plans, and reports and by instituting deadlines and evaluations. When concerns arise, leaders can advise and suggest modifications but need to use this power conservatively. When they see a major problem it may be necessary for them to intervene, but most of the time they shouldn't consistently overrule plans or they will defeat the purpose of delegation. At first, there is a stronger need for training and oversight, but over time leaders can confer more responsibility and authority.

For delegation to be successful, people must feel they are trusted to do their job, but they will do a better job when they know their leader requires specific accountability.

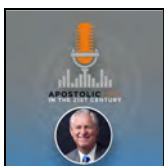


Recommended Resource

This article is adapted from my book, *Spiritual Leadership in the Twenty-First Century* (Pentecostal Publishing House, 2015).

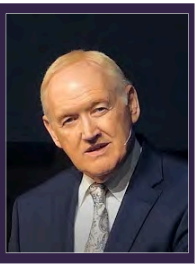
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David K. Bernard'.

Dr. David K. Bernard is the general superintendent of the United Pentecostal Church International.



Recommended Resource

[Click here to access *Apostolic Life in the 21st Century* Podcast.](#)



Sustaining Your Team for Long-term Impact

Tom Foster

If we were to open any engine or piece of heavy machinery, we would see a series of pistons, pipes, electrical circuits, and gears. When all of these various parts work together, synergy and firepower are the results. These parts can do more together than they can do apart. In fact, even if an individual part is fresh off the assembly line, its true purpose and function are revealed only when it is paired with the others. This concept has an incredible impact on ministry teams.

The various members of a pastoral or ministry team function like the gears of an engine. If they are turning or working in opposite directions, the church goes nowhere and tension is the result.

Most churches have a leadership team. However, many church teams are really just a band of people doing their own thing and have yet to experience the power that comes when they all pull in the same direction. Though each person may be passionate and run well in their individual lane, they don't realize how they fit into the overall vision of the church. On the other hand, those individuals who view themselves as part of a larger team and strive to complement the larger vision of the church are able to accomplish more in the long term.

The "wow factor" in a leadership team is apparent by a special bond or camaraderie that is felt. It brings a certain identity that shows how well the team members interact with each other. It is a charged atmosphere that affects everything they do.

The staff that has a quality connection has more in common than just doing ministry together. They do life together.

It is a partnership with a profound emotional bond that is committed to a certain vision. There is a connection and commitment to each other that cannot be faked. It is a shared presence and experience. This quality of leadership affects the whole church.

God shows up when two or three are gathered in His name. The team that excels above others does it together. Likewise, we cannot do it alone. We must share ministry. God wants us to be interdependent. The early church was an authentic community of like-minded people and they turned their world upside down.

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body. (1 Corinthians 12:12)

We all have a role to play. Each of us should do that in correlation with the overall vision of the church.

There must be a certain willingness to give and take on a leadership team. Members of the team are not to be in competition with each other; they are to be completing one another. There should be a desire to win together.

Chemistry is the harmonious interaction between people working together. We need chemistry with our team to accomplish the vision of the church.

Teams that have chemistry have success. Chemistry is not about everyone being the same, but everyone working together for the same purpose with openness and honesty. Let's look at some general factors that will bring chemistry to a leadership team.

1. Everyone must understand the vision of the church

Each individual member of a team must see how their ministry fits into the broad view of the church. They must know what they are building. People must be reminded constantly that they are doing something wonderful. Don't expect transparency and vulnerability to just happen. Find ways for them to bond over the vision that causes them to come together as a team.

2. Successful leadership teams know how to be real with each other

There is no room for hypocrisy or deception. The more real a team can be with each other, the more likely they will have strong chemistry. Openness and transparency are encouraged. If one is hurting, we all hurt. If one wins, we all win. We are family.

3. A team knows how to celebrate together

When there is a victory, a celebration is in order. Teams should look for reasons to celebrate. Personal victories like anniversaries and birthdays are good reasons to throw a good party. Wins in ministry should be remembered also.

4. A successful team will know how to settle conflicts

Working through contentions and remaining committed to each other is so important. Team members can say what is on their mind and resolve the conflict and walk out of the meeting with love in their heart for each other.

These are a few of the ways to come together as a team. When a team works together with chemistry, it allows common people to achieve uncommon results.

The next time your ministry team meets, read this article together, and then discuss the questions on the following page.

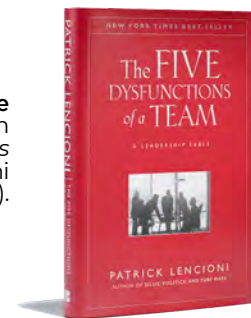
Application Points & Discussion Questions

- Does my leadership team have a "wow" factor?
- When is the last time I have spent personal time with fellow staff members outside of office hours?
- This week, how have I celebrated the "wins" of my team members?
- What can I do to improve the way I settle conflict?
- Is it easy or difficult for me to be authentic and express weakness to my team?

Tom Foster

Tom Foster serves as a church growth consultant and pastor of Dallas First Church.

Recommended Resource
A book I recommend on team ministry is *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni (Jossey-Bass, 2002).





ISSUE 26 TOOLBOX PRACTICAL TOOLS YOU CAN USE

BIG EVENT PLANNING WORKSHEET

A Guide for Pastors and Ministry Teams



This worksheet is designed to help pastors and their ministry teams prayerfully plan, execute, and evaluate a big event in their church. It guides leaders through practical preparation, spiritual preparation, and post-event reflection to ensure the event achieves its intended impact.

Part 1: Practical Preparation (6-8 months in advance)

Define the Purpose:

- What is the primary goal of the big event? (e.g., outreach, discipleship, community engagement)

- What message or theme will the event focus on?

Establish a Planning Timeline:

- What date is the big event scheduled for? _____

- What milestones need to be reached leading up to the event? (e.g., team recruitment, publicity, campus preparation)

- List key deadlines:

Recruit and Delegate:

- Who is the event coordinator? _____

- Who are the key leaders responsible for various aspects of the event? (e.g., worship, hospitality, follow-up)

- What teams or departments need to be involved?

Create a Planning Guide:

- Develop a detailed planning guide, building from a template or previous events.
- Outline areas of responsibility and set expectations for each team member.

Promote the Event:

- What communication channels will be used? (e.g., social media, mail, multimedia presentations)
- How will the vision and excitement for the event be shared with the church?

Prepare the Church Campus:

- What preparations are needed for the church campus (inside and outside)?
- Plan for a church workday or special cleaning, if necessary.

Ensure Support Teams Are Ready:

- Are ushers, greeters, and altar workers prepared for a larger-than-usual crowd?
- When will you hold training or review meetings for support teams?

Part 2: Spiritual Preparation (3-6 months in advance)

Prayer and Fasting:

- When will the congregation begin praying and fasting for the event?
- How will you encourage written prayer commitments from members?

Vision Casting:

- What Scriptures, messages, or teachings will you share to inspire the congregation's participation and faith?
- How will you remind the congregation of their role in ministering to guests?

Team Preparation:

- How will you spiritually prepare your key leaders and volunteers? (e.g., devotionals, prayer meetings, personal encouragement)
- What specific prayers will you pray over your teams?

Guest-Focused Ministry:

- How will you equip your congregation to pray for guests in the pews if an altar call is not feasible?
- How will you help your members show hospitality and genuine care to guests?

Part 3: Post-Event Reflection and Evaluation

Follow-Up:

- How will you gather contact information from guests?
- What follow-up strategies will you use? (e.g., personalized letters, calls, visits)

Debrief and Celebrate:

- When will you hold a debriefing meeting with your pastoral staff?
- What went well?
- What can be improved?
- How will you honor and thank your key players and volunteers? How will you publicly celebrate the success of the event with the church?

Measure Success:

- What metrics will you use to measure success? (e.g., attendance, guest engagement, spiritual responses)
- How many guests returned to regular services or became involved in discipleship programs?


Prepare for the Next Event:

- What insights will you carry forward into planning the next big event?



Apostolic Resources

Click the links and images below to discover more apostolic resources to help your church experience strategic growth.

 ministrycentral



Strategic Growth Initiative

The mission of SGI is to create a culture of health that produces spiritual and numerical growth in ministers, churches, and districts in the UPCI.

Church Health Check-Up

Welcome to the *Church Health Check-Up*. This evaluation is designed to give you a more clearly defined understanding of your church's overall health. With a better understanding, you, as a pastor, can move forward to make the proper changes necessary to either continue the growth process, begin to grow again after a period of non-growth, or restructure for growth after a period of decline. Click below to access the Church Health Check-Up.

[Click Here](#)

A Church Growth Track

Now available for ALL! View this tremendous resource for pastors, districts, church leadership teams and those involved in the local church. This Church Growth Track will consist of eleven lessons, each taught by Apostolic leaders on the front lines of revival and growth. Please click VIEW COURSE for this free resource.

[View Course](#)