



# Center for Church Growth & Leadership

A Division of David Wood Ministries Outreach

## Appendix A

### **Big Events Are A Rare Growth Opportunity But.... Three Reasons Why Big Events Are Ineffective in Most Churches (Copied from LifeWay Pastors)**

Tens of thousands of churches will have events to celebrate the Christmas season. The events will range from simple Christmas Eve candlelight services to major musical productions.

And most of them will fail their intended purpose.

When I speak with church leaders and ask them to describe how they reach their communities, many of them point with pride to a major event, such as those that take place at Christmas, Easter, or the Fourth of July. But when I ask them to assess how many people are currently a part of their churches because of past events, most often I get an awkward silence.

To be sure, not all church events are intended to be outreach events. But many of them, perhaps most of them, have that intention. And most churches do not fare well in that regard.

The church leaders often point to the large attendance of the event, to the hundreds of guest cards completed, or to the decisions noted by these guests. But when the same leaders try to assess how many people have actually become integrated into the life of the church, the reality is usually disturbing.

Why are church events typically so ineffective at truly reaching people and integrating them into the life of church? I've seen three common reasons.

Reason #1: The church was not outwardly strategic in its preparation for the event.

If an event is to have an outward impact, it should be strategically and prayerfully planned accordingly. Invitations should be made, particularly in the context of existing relationships. There should be an intentional strategy to invite people not in church. There should be concerted prayers to reach people through these events. The entire preparation of the event should be able to communicate the gospel in a powerful way to those who have no connection to the church.

Reason #2: The church was not strategic in its follow-up.

The majority of churches of which I am aware have zero follow-up to their events. They put so much time and energy into the event that they are too weary to do more. The event likely inspired many people; it just did little to make disciples.

Reason #3: The church does not have an outwardly-focused DNA.

This reason is the single most significant reason for ineffective events, and it is the issue where few church leaders have awareness. If a church is truly only focused outwardly for one or two events a year, the event could do more harm than good. The Great Commission cannot be limited to special holidays. The event should be only a part of an overall heart and strategy to reach people with the Gospel. This issue is much like churches expecting the stand-and-greet time during the worship services to make them a friendly church. Genuine friendliness is not limited to a planned moment. And genuine outreach cannot be limited to one or a few days a year. Do not plan to use the big events in your church for reaching people unless that is your church's consistent behavior.

So many church leaders are frustrated that their big events have expended so much of the church's resources with little fruit over the years. The reasons for this reality are easy to explain, but much more challenging to change.

Let me hear from you.