

SIMPLE WAYS TO MAKE THE CHURCH KNOWN
Fred G. King

**If we expect people to visit our church, or even make an inquiry,
they must first know the church exists.
Now, isn't that just simple logic?**

Question: How do people know about our church? Yes, hopefully, some of our members will tell them, but there are some other techniques that work very well.

There are many media methods we can use to make the church known, but this paper deals primarily with just a couple things that work.

Ask any successful realtor and he or she will tell you that the number one thing that sells a house is real estate signs. People drive by, pause, take a look and call the realtor if the house seems to fit their idea of that which they are seeking. Not only do successful realtors place their signs on the front lawn but they place signs at intersections and along main streets directing people to the home they wish to sell.

Of course, just having some attractive signs that assist people to find the church does not mean they will actually come inside. It could be that the very name of the church is a turn-off. Always ask, "*To whom does the name of our church appeal?*" If it is a name that only committed believers, knowledgeable of Scripture, will recognize, chances are the unchurched or marginally churched people will not be even slightly interested.

The Primary Church Sign (The Main Sign)

Before we discuss directional signs, think for a minute about the general appearance of the facility as well as the primary sign in front of the church.

The appearance of the building.

1. If your meeting place is in need of paint and cleaning, chances are those who might otherwise drop in for a visit, will take one look and keep on going.
2. Even if your meeting place does present a nice appearance, it is truly amazing how many churches fail to place the time of service and a phone number on the primary sign! Some do, but the *words are so small* one cannot see them from a moving vehicle. Isn't it true, when you are trying to locate a particular business, you appreciate being able to read their sign from your moving car?

No, *do not* put the times of all your services on the sign... *just your primary worship service*, and a phone number. Believe it.... they really do not need all the other stuff! That information will be available when they do visit. Remember, do not paint or design the sign yourself or have a church member do it. Usually the sign looks tacky, ugly, worn-out and generally poorly done. Use professional sign makers.

3. It is always a good idea to place a real estate mail box with a supply of simple brochures (5x8) so people can reach out the window of their car and take one. Place it conveniently so they will not block traffic or place themselves in a dangerous situation. Do not try to preach a message on the brochure, just the facts as they used to say in the old Dragnet TV series!

Directional Signage

1. You need 10 to 15 real estate size signs placed in strategic locations – main intersections, at corners to guide them to the location, and even at the front of the church *in addition* to the main church sign. Ask your church members place them on their front lawn or at their place of employment. The more signs the better!
2. The signs should be approximately 12” by 16”. *Shop around* to find a company that will offer the best price. These signs will come with wire legs that are easily be pushed into the ground.
3. *The signs must be easily readable.* Do not clutter them up with unnecessary words, as mentioned above. The best color combination is red letters on a white background. The signs must have only the *name of church in larger, bold letters. The, address, time of service, phone number, and web site can be there but keep them small..* These are directional signs only.

A very large church near where we live uses this approach. Their sign says “VISIT OUR CHURCH” then the name of the church is a bit smaller with the time of service. Their web sight is listed. I see them on lawns and along the various highways. This church is about 7 years old and is running well over 6000 people From day one they have done everything possible to make their church visible to the entire community.

4. Recruit someone who will take responsibility to place the directional signs at strategic locations Friday evening and then pick them up Sunday evening. The only time signs should be left out during the week is when the sign code allows it. Of course, it is ideal to leave them out permanently.

Other “Signs”

1. Design and print a number of *posters* to be placed in stores. (11 X 17 or 8 ½ by 11). Some will allow them to be placed in windows, on counters, or on community bulletin boards. Any location they are permitted, put them to work!
2. *Bill boards* can be expensive, but weigh the cost of the bill board against the incredibly high visibility they give your church. The cost of digital scrolling signs is quite reasonable. You can find on the internet many companies that provide them. This is worth researching! To add a digital scroll sign to the top of bottom of your primary church sign is a great way to call attention to your church.
3. *Parking signs at the church* are a really good idea. When guests come it is good to give them the VIP reserved parking spots close to the entrance. Nice large letters “GUEST PARKING” should be readily visible. We recommend training people to direct traffic even if your church is small and there are plenty of spaces. Just having a greeter in the lot is a real plus!
4. Use *directional signs* to guide new people from the parking lot to the location of the worship service, baby nursery, Sunday School classes, special classes, church office, pastors study, rest rooms, is another real plus. We recommend the use of *chrome framed sign holders* as used in department stores. Large cities will have companies that provide these to commercial customers. *Never* use hand printed signs!

Once They Decide to Park and Go Inside.....

1. *Train* greeters, parking attendants, ushers to be the best welcomers ever! Select people who present a nice appearance, friendly smile and who are very knowledgeable about the church and what it believes. Guests do ask so have people ready and well prepared.
2. Husband and wife couples is always a plus.
3. Articulate, out going young people is always a plus.
4. If possible, have the children's *exterior playground* readily visible near the *front* of the church, always staffed by workers. This makes a great statement to young families!
5. *Develop a Guest Center*, visible and easily accessible. Do not over do it on literature. Just have enough to introduce the church and it's ministries. Provide juice and cookies for the guests. Remember to give each adult and child a gift. Always have an attendant at the Guest Center. Also, at the conclusion of the service, the pastor, staff and selected greeters should be at the Guest Center to greet people and give them a nice gift from the church. This must be announced by the pastor during and at the conclusion of the service.

Overcome the Natural Aversion to Visit a Church

We are all the same. Driving through the community, ask yourself, "*Why would I want to drop in for a visit at that church?*" ... or ... "*Why do I not want to visit? What keeps me from visiting?*"

Try to be objective and ask some of the following questions about your church, as if you were in the visitor's shoes:

1. *I do not know anyone. I feel awkward and out of place.*
2. *The church looks like a fortress – I can't see in and they can't see out. It just looks unfriendly.*
3. *I do not like to be embarrassed. I hate it when they have visitors stand or be pointed out. It is like having a big zit on my nose!*
4. *I do not like to be "pounced on" by greeters, ushers and others. Just leave me alone, other than a brief, warm greeting and a word of direction as to where to sit.*
5. *I want to be inconspicuous, ... just a fly on the wall. Leave me alone!*
6. *I really do not want to dress up. I need to see that people are attired in a respectful, neat manner, but not sloppy in their attempt to be "cool".*
7. *I really do not want to sacrifice my entire Sunday. In other words keep the service within the announced time frame. Consistently going overtime is rude. I need my free time.*

How can we address some of the hesitations to visiting?

1. It is always *best to know someone* who attends the church. Do not just “invite” people, work it out to pick them up and *bring* them with you, followed by lunch at your house or at a restaurant.
2. *Consider the appearance of the facility.* What can we do to make the place attractive – visitor friendly – non-threatening? Can our facility exterior have a warm, friendly look? No stain glass windows... use clear glass... gives the sense of openness. The more clear glass the better. This helps remove the “fortress” feeling.
3. Visibility. Do your best to locate the church so it is highly *visible*. If this is not possible, the *location can be overcome* by using many portable signs.
3. *Excess parking.* Make parking as easy as possible.
4. *Accessibility.* How easy is it to enter the parking lot? What can be done to make it easy and attractive? Most parking lots are poorly planned and ugly! Gravel parking is a major no-no. It is also an invitation to a law-suit. Good landscaping is a major plus.
5. Use good, *clear signage* to enter the parking lot and directional signs to get the guests to the right doors. Do not assume they know how things work at a church!
6. Again, the *children’s play area* should be highly visible...just like McDonalds and the other fast-food chains... it is always out *front!*

Other Ways to Make the Church Known as a Great Place to Visit

1. Get involved in community events. Sports, clubs, parades, etc.
2. Sponsor major men and sons events. Not evangelistic. That will come later.
3. Sponsor major women and daughters events. Not evangelistic. That will come later.
4. Sponsor major youth events. Not evangelistic. That will come later.
5. Sponsor major children’s events. Not evangelistic. That will come later.
6. A few times each year bring in a very well known speaker who has wide appeal.

These things and many others are for the *purpose of making the church known*. As you begin to fold new people into certain aspects of the life of the church the opportunities for evangelism will present themselves. Christians want to evangelize at every event. Actually *what really happens is that we drive people away!* Just relax. No one is going to judge you for sponsoring events that do not include preaching. The events are just the first step in meeting many new people!

It better be good!

We can do an outstanding job of making our church known and even attract guests to our services. But *once inside* and settled into a comfortable chair, what then?

Keep it simple.

1. Carefully select very singable songs. Sing for 15 or 20 minutes, then....
2. Preach for 25 minutes...then....
3. Go home.

Yes, provide a nursery. Hire a retired woman. Parents need to know babies are loved and properly cared for. Nursery is **ALWAYS OPEN!** Put this in **all** literature!

As the church develops, Christians will step forward and suggest various ministries. Great! Let them start and run them. *Pastor, you just concentrate on having the best worship service in town!*

Preaching – this is critical. Do not try to be a great pulpit evangelist. Just concentrate on equipping the believers with the Word and it is amazing how God will motive them to step forward and develop needed ministries.

Most people return for three reasons:

1. They like the **pastor!**
2. They like the **preaching!**
3. They like the **people!**

Just keep everything simple!!