



What DIFFERENCE Does a High Quality SUNDAY SCHOOL MAKE in Reaching & Keeping People in the Church?

CONFESSIONS OF A SUNDAY SCHOOL SKEPTIC

In the 1980s... though I did not try to dismantle the Sunday Schools in the churches I pastored, I certainly was not a leader in making the organization stronger and more evangelistic. If anything, the Sunday Schools of my churches suffered from pastoral neglect.

I was not alone in my sentiments. Many of my peers were like me, enamored with some of the latest methodologies and innovations to help a church grow. Sunday School just seemed a bit old fashioned compared to the 'cutting-edge' information we were receiving from a plethora of sources.

Indeed I had my doubts that Sunday School would be a viable growth and assimilation tool in the twenty-first century.

—Thom S. Rainer, *High Expectations*

And Then I Learned the TRUTH About—Sunday School, Evangelism & Discipleship

Over the course of two years, I made contact with nearly two hundred different churches... What I discovered both disturbed me and convicted me.

In almost every church, I heard pastors and leaders talk about the role of Sunday School for their evangelistic growth and assimilation.

—Thom S. Rainer,
High Expectations

7 Reasons To Invest in a 21st Century Sunday School

1. In the USA, Sunday School is the most widespread ministry of the Assemblies of God.

| Ministry | % Churches |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Youth | 78.6% |
| WMs | 77.1% |
| Honorbound | 47.9% |
| Missionettes | 47.7% |
| Royal Rangers | 44.0% |
| SUNDAY SCHOOL | 94.0% |

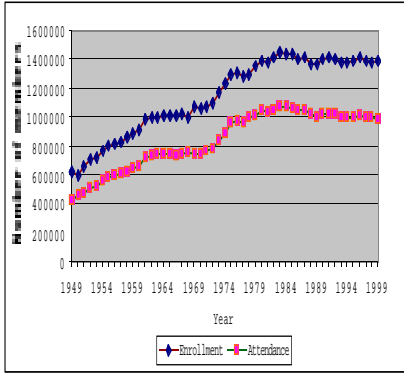
2. Sunday School disciples more people than five other church ministries combined.

| Ministry | Membership |
|---------------|------------------|
| Youth | 334,114 |
| WMs | 283,460 |
| Missionettes | 174,998 |
| Honorbound | 135,359 |
| Royal Rangers | 127,123 |
| TOTAL | 1,055,054 |

Sunday School 1,393,176
(335,000 more in SS)

3. Sunday School is bigger now than in the 50s, 60s or 70s.

Sunday School growth plateaued in the mid-80s.



4. Sunday School teaches every person at his level of understanding. The small group, graded structure of Sunday School allows teachers to tailor Bible study for the age-level needs and interests for children, youth, and adults.

5. Sunday School appeals to the least church-ed generation in the USA. According to George Barna, only 14% of Generation X consider themselves to be born again. Yet, according to *Newsweek*, 81% of all mothers and 78% of all fathers “plan to send their young children to Sunday School or some other religious training.”

6. Sunday School has mobilized more Christians than any other ministry in USA Assemblies of God churches.

- 2,000 Foreign Missions
- 6,000 Home Missions
- 33,000 Ministers
- 120,000 Sunday School Teachers

7. Sunday School has huge potential for mobilizing Christians for evangelism. The USA has become a large intercultural missions field. Research shows that the most effective long-term evangelism happens through one-on-one witnessing to friends, family, and colleagues. Each week almost 1,000,000 people attend Assemblies of God Sunday Schools. Let’s equip and mobilize them to find others who need to know Jesus’ love and forgiveness. Let’s make Sunday School a place they want to bring their friends.

Pastors’ Perspective

Key Elements in Assimilation

When Thom Rainer researched churches that both reach and keep new people, he asked pastors to rank the key elements of successful assimilation. These pastors assigned a number to each church ministry. A 5 meant that the ministry was essential for assimilation. Here is how these pastors rated Sunday School and four other church ministries.

| Rank | Ministry | Growth Impact |
|------|-----------------------|---------------|
| #1 | Sunday School | 4.9 |
| #2 | Expository sermons | 4.4 |
| #3 | A.M. worship | 4.21 |
| #4 | Youth ministries | 4.16 |
| #5 | Children’s ministries | 4.1 |

“Almost all the leaders said that their sustained growth would have been impossible without the Sunday School.”

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Ways To Grow Your Sunday School



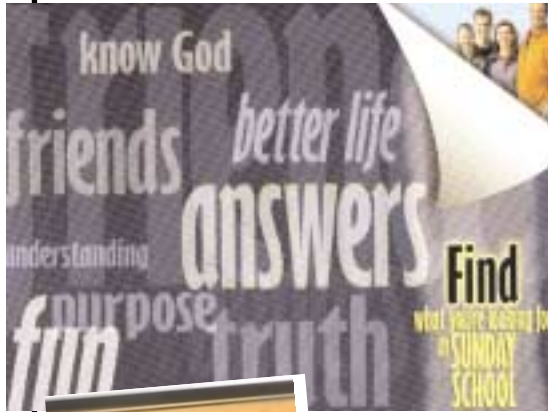
1. Engage Church Leaders

I’m a Voice for Sunday School

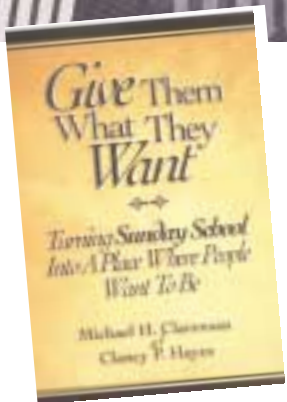
2. Thank Faithful Teachers



Make a Difference! Be a Sunday School Teacher



3. Enlarge Ministry Vision



FOR STUDENTS:
Find What You’re Looking for in Sunday School

FOR TEACHERS:
Give Them What They Want