



*A ministry of the Luis Palau Association*

*Celebrating & accelerating collaborative gospel work in cities around the world.*

# The Impact & Relevance of Large Scale Gospel Events

*Catalytic events impact individuals, the citywide church, and the city in lasting ways*

[www.citygospelmovements.org](http://www.citygospelmovements.org)

[info@citygospelmovements.org](mailto:info@citygospelmovements.org)

## **Gospel Movement** (noun)

**A united, holistic, sustainable effort by the citywide Church to seek the peace and prosperity of their city. Common union found in Jesus Christ provides the foundation for relational trust on which all collaborative efforts are built.**

*United:* the united citywide Church working together with other sectors of society

*Holistic:* living out and proclaiming the gospel in word and deed

*Sustainable:* long-term vision and commitment to the city



## The Impact & Relevance of Large Scale Gospel Events

At the Palau Association, we are passionate about evangelism.

When we say "evangelism," we mean the communication of the gospel message. It is our mission to share the gospel message in clear, creative, and winsome ways and invite people to respond by following Jesus with their whole lives.

We exist to communicate the gospel, and also to train the Church to evangelize with cultural relevance and big faith. One of the main ways we equip the Church in evangelism is through hosting large scale gospel events. We view large scale gatherings as an effective way to not only proclaim the gospel but to catalyze unity amongst local churches, and elevate the citywide conversation on evangelism in a lasting way.

Large scale gospel events are one tool among many that celebrate and accelerate what God is doing in a gospel movement. This resource communicates the impact and relevance of large scale gospel events on the individual, the citywide church, and the city area.

We hope this resource helps you envision why, how, and when an event like this would make sense in the timeline of the gospel movement in your area.

# WHY GOSPEL PROCLAMATION ON A LARGE SCALE?

## IMPACT ON THE INDIVIDUAL:

- **Jesus had compassion for the crowds and the individual.**  
Jesus was filled with compassion when he saw the crowds because they were harassed and helpless.<sup>1</sup> He healed individuals who suffered from diseases and sicknesses, but also proclaimed the gospel to the crowds. Jesus and the apostles' ministry was marked by personal, one-on-one connections and teaching truths of the Kingdom of God to large crowds. We believe both emphases are important and necessary. Andrew Palau often quotes: "Mass evangelism is personal evangelism on a massive scale."
- **Large scale gospel events reach those who would never step into a church.**  
Live music, kids' activities, and action sports are just a few components of a Palau festival that differ from a church service. By creating a welcoming environment for the entire community, people who are intimidated by or uncomfortable in church settings are more likely to participate. Moreover, sites for largescale events are hosted in city "living rooms." Waterfront parks and stadiums are two examples of venues that accommodate large numbers of people and act as neutral places where people come excited to enjoy themselves.
- **Large scale gospel events invite local believers to think about individuals in their life who do not know Jesus personally.**  
While there may be one or a few dedicated speakers who share the gospel at a large event, individual believers draw the crowds. This is because most of the time people who attend a gospel gathering come because they were invited by and attended with a friend. During the buildup to a festival, individual believers are frequently encouraged to pray for their family members, co-workers, neighbors, and friends who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. A tangible event provides an easy onramp to talk to these individuals about God and life's big questions. The event may be one conversation starter that opens the door for ongoing dialogue about life with Jesus. Ultimately, the ownership of the event is shared between local believers and the speakers.

---

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 9:36

## IMPACT ON THE CITYWIDE CHURCH:

- **Large scale gospel events unite local churches with a bigger vision than any one of them could accomplish on their own.**

Large events demand the participation of many people in the planning, promoting, hosting, and follow up. Most of the time, churches are not able to pull off large scale evangelism events on their own. By casting a vision as big as filling a stadium with thousands—even tens of thousands—of individuals, churches must work together in order to successfully host a gathering. No matter the size of the church, history in the city, or financial capacity, any and all churches have the opportunity to play a key and unique role in the festival.

- **Large scale gospel events are more like seasons than events.**

As stated above, large scale evangelism events necessitate churches partnering together and preparing for months—even years. A typical build up to a Palau festival lasts 18 – 24 months. While the advertised event may begin and end over the course of an evening or weekend, local churches work together and engage with the community in this extended lead-up to the event. During this time, local churches participate in collaborative and strategic community service, and prayer committees ensure the entire festival process is governed by prayer. A festival season highlights existing relationships between churches and the city, while also strengthening ties between churches as they work together.<sup>2</sup>

- **Large scale gospel events elevate the topic of evangelism in churches across the city.**

For a concentrated season, local churches cannot escape the topic of evangelism. They are challenged to ask many questions. The Palau Association’s role during a festival season is—in large part—to assist churches as they respond to these questions. Some questions include:

1. **“How will we participate in this citywide evangelistic effort?”**

Church relations team members from the Palau Association personally meet with hundreds of pastors and ministry leaders to develop relationships and dialogue about the best ways for churches to participate in the festival season. There are avenues for churches of every size and interest level to get involved. Even if leaders are skeptical about participating in large scale evangelism events, we have witnessed profound changes of heart as individuals realize the grander vision to develop church unity and elevate the conversation on evangelism in lasting ways—[take tips from this self-proclaimed skeptic](#).

---

<sup>2</sup> One of the main hesitations we hear about large scale gospel events is that they are “in and out” or “drive-by” events without a lasting impact. We work hard to ensure that festivals move forward at the pace and depth of genuine relationships between pastors and other leaders in the city. One of the highest measures of success in a festival city is to see pastors working together and enjoying relationship years after the festival.

**2. “How are we currently sharing the gospel?”**

We have seen churches get involved in festivals for many reasons. Sometimes churches lead by example in the ways they consistently and creatively share the gospel. They get excited every time the gospel is presented. Other times churches rally to invite people to the festival because they struggle to regularly provide clear invitations for people to respond to the gospel in their own gatherings. These churches view the festival as a key moment where those who have been on the fence about faith in Jesus can make a decisive commitment. We hope to encourage churches regardless of where they find themselves in their passion and practice of evangelism.

**3. “Do we have a compassion for those who do not know Jesus?”**

Pat Palau, wife of Luis Palau, is known to say: “*Consider the lost first.*” Large scale gospel events have a unique way of awakening local churches to remember God’s heart for the lost.<sup>3</sup> Churches can emphasize many great things including community service, Bible study, and affinity groups. Large scale gospel events unashamedly encourage a renewed passion for evangelism in the local church and a deepened compassion for the lost.

**4. “How will we continue building a culture of sustainable citywide evangelism after this event?”**

The Palau Association helps local leaders establish an evangelism team during the festival season to prayerfully strategize how to further equip church leaders and believers in evangelism in the years after the festival. This team is made up of evangelistically passionate senior pastors, non-profit leaders, and other influencers who work to create a culture of sustainable citywide evangelism. This includes developing a plan to (1) host regular trainings in various expressions of evangelism, (2) tell current testimonies of people in their city responding to the gospel, (3) equip local churches to identify individuals with the gift of evangelism or a unique passion for evangelism, and (4) support existing evangelism efforts.

- **Large scale gospel events remind local churches they are a part of something much bigger.**

By drawing crowds of believers across a city or region, festivals remind the area-wide Church that God is indeed present through His people. God is not confined to one local congregation, but is doing amazing things all across the city through many different church expressions. Momentum builds as churches recognize there are more believers who have a heart for the city than they realized.

- **Large scale gospel events remind local churches that the gospel is still good news with the power to save.**

During a gathering in 2018 of nearly 300 local church leaders in Portland, Oregon, Luis Palau reminded the crowd: “The gospel is still good news.” Even pastors and non-profit leaders need to hear this again. We do not graduate past the gospel to

---

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. 2:3-4; 1 Pet. 3:9b

speak on hot-button topics.<sup>4</sup> Though these conversations are significant and necessary for the church to engage in, the gospel is the one message which Jesus has entrusted to His Church. It is the Church's unique calling to ensure this message is communicated with clarity and consistency.

Momentum builds as churches recognize there are more believers who have a heart for the city than they realized.

### IMPACT ON THE CITY AND SURROUNDING AREAS:

- **Large scale gospel events show the church is positive presence *in the city, for the city.***  
In a world where bad news is often broadcast the loudest, a citywide event that is positive, inclusive, and free communicates a different and often unexpected message from the Church. Not only does the event provide an opportunity for the city to celebrate together, but the community service efforts occurring in the months surrounding the festival practically show the city that the Church desires life and wholeness for everyone—especially the marginalized and suffering.
- **Large scale gospel events declare God's love outside of church walls.**  
Rarely do weekly church gatherings catch the attention of those outside of church walls. However, when hundreds of churches unite (like in [Bogotá, Colombia](#) and [Grand Rapids, Michigan](#)) to declare one message, the public takes notice. Unlike regular weekly church gatherings, festival seasons include comprehensive promotional strategies which spread the word about the event to the public. It's hard to miss the billboards, radio segments, news stations, social media, and yard signs that invite everyone to the festival. Churches who unite together outside of church walls (1) amplify their communication that God's presence is in the city and (2) concretely express their belief that because of Christ, we are able to live in reconciled relationships with God and each other in the midst of differences.

Special thanks to Greg Laurie and Canon J. John whose commitment to making the gospel clear and available to all people has been an example to us. Their conviction about large scale gospel gatherings which Greg shared about [here](#) and J. John [here](#), helped inform this resource.

---

<sup>4</sup> Josh White, lead pastor of Door of Hope in Portland, Oregon and member of the Portland Evangelism Team, reminded us of this truth on the [City Gospel Movements Podcast](#). Listen the [Part I](#) and [Part II](#) here.