

DEFYING GRAVITY

Escaping the Pull of Sunday-Centric Church

Every once in a while, when I'm talking with a pastor or church leader about shifting from a Sunday-centric paradigm toward a Harvest Forward paradigm, I hear something like this: *"I'm willing to give this a try."*

Whenever I hear those words, Yoda immediately enters my head: *"Do or do not. There is no try."*

I know. Taking church leadership advice from a tiny green Jedi probably isn't the best strategy.

But he has a point.

Because Sunday-centricity has gravity.

Stand near the Artemis rocket at Kennedy Space Center and you immediately feel how massive it is. The rocket towers 32 stories above you. But what fascinates me isn't simply its size. It's how much power is required just to escape Earth's gravitational pull.

Roughly 90% of that enormous machine exists for the first few minutes of the journey. Think about that. All that fuel. All that engineering. All that power. Just to break free from gravity.

Once the spacecraft escapes Earth's gravitational pull, everything changes. It requires dramatically less energy to continue the journey.

I think churches underestimate the gravitational pull of Sunday.

For generations, we have built entire church ecosystems around it.

Our buildings orbit Sunday.

Our budgets orbit Sunday.

Our staff structures orbit Sunday.

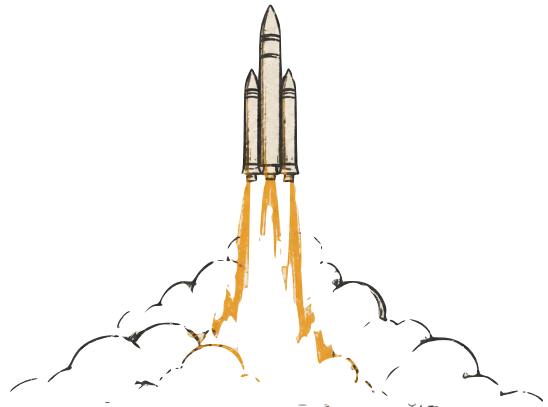
Our calendars orbit Sunday.

Our measurements orbit Sunday.

Our communication orbits Sunday.

Even our understanding of what it means to be a faithful Christian often orbits Sunday.

Come. Attend. Serve. Give. Invite someone. Repeat.



Then someone begins imagining something different.

What if the primary expression of the Church wasn't what happened when everyone gathered, but what happened when everyone scattered?

What if we equipped people to recognize the harvest already surrounding them?

What if we released ordinary followers of Jesus to become Kingdom Expressions in the neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, coffee shops, hospitals, restaurants, and relationships where God has already placed them?

Everyone gets excited. *"We should try that."*

And gravity smiles like a Cheshire cat.

Because gravity doesn't care about your intentions. You don't overcome gravity with good intentions. *You overcome gravity with thrust.*

That is why I believe moving from a Sunday-centric paradigm toward a Harvest Forward paradigm requires something close to 90% focus.

Not 90% of the budget.

Not 90% of the staff.

Not 90% of the calendar.

Ninety percent conviction.

A deep organizational conviction that the Church does not exist primarily to gather people around what happens on Sunday. We gather so followers of Jesus can be formed, encouraged, equipped, and released into what Jesus is already doing in the harvest.

Without that conviction, gravity wins.

The new language slowly disappears. The experiments become another program. The stories stop being told. The calendar fills back up. The staff returns to what it knows how to measure. And before long, everyone is orbiting Sunday again.

Nothing failed. Nothing exploded. The rocket simply never escaped gravity.

That's why *"giving it a try"* isn't enough.

A church doesn't casually drift into a Harvest Forward paradigm. It has to generate enough collective conviction to break free from the gravitational pull of the paradigm it already knows.

That takes leadership. It takes courage. It takes repetition. It takes saying the same things over and over until people begin seeing the Church differently. It takes celebrating different stories, asking different questions, measuring different things, and releasing people instead of recruiting them.

And eventually something remarkable happens.

The gravitational pull begins to weaken. People stop seeing Sunday as the center of their Christian life. They begin seeing the harvest. They begin noticing people. They begin recognizing where Jesus is already moving. They begin experimenting. They begin becoming Kingdom Expressions right where they already are.

And Sunday doesn't disappear.

It simply stops being the center of gravity.

Good intentions say, "*Let's give this a try.*"

Conviction says, "*We're going.*"