

# “Fundamentals of Successful Church Fundraising”

## Church Leaders Event

February 27, 2016

Workshop Leader  
Rev. Dr. Alan Akana

*If you want to change the world, tell a better story.*  
—Gail Larsen

### Workshop Overview

There are fundamental principles and practices that guarantee more income for your church. Put them into place, raise more money; ignore them, raise less money. This workshop will teach you those principles and practices, beginning with “Tell inspirational stories from the heart.”

### Workshop Leader

Rev. Dr. Alan Akana has been a teacher, consultant and coach for churches and other not-for-profit organizations in the areas of stewardship, fundraising, and “successfully telling your story.” He formerly worked as a senior consultant for RSI-Ketchum (Pursuant) in Dallas, TX, which specialized in religious stewardship development, fundraising and capital campaigns. Dr. Akana is currently pastor of Kōloa Union Church on Kaua‘i. He enjoys writing and promoting his book, *The Volcano Is Our Home: Nine Generations of a Hawaiian Family on Kilauea Volcano*. He also enjoys watercoloring and telling stories through his art, which can be seen at galleries on Kaua‘i.

### Introduction: Clear Vision and Telling Our Stories

In the past 2 years, Kōloa Union Church has experienced the following:

- ❖ 64% increase in general fund giving.
- ❖ Completion of a \$300,000 capital campaign.
- ❖ Increased income to our special offerings; for example, a 57% increase in Henry ‘Opukaha‘ia Scholarship Fund

And all of this happened by NOT focusing on money. Instead, it happened by focusing on ***a clear vision*** and ***telling our stories***.

Creating a clear vision and telling our stories takes a little bit of work, but they are really easy to do. Let’s practice....

1. Your Name
2. Your Church (and Island)
3. Complete this sentence in ONE word: “I love my church because....”
4. Answer this question in a word or short phrase: “If you could wave a magic wand right now and have any wish granted for your church, what would it be?”

# “Fundamentals of Successful Church Fundraising”

## The 4 “I’s” of of Successful Church Fundraising

### Inform

- ❖ Create a vision ahead of time: “If you could wave a magic wand...” “If money were no object...”
- ❖ Pick a theme and Scripture verse.
- ❖ 12-15 Rule: If you are going to do something extraordinary in your church, people need to hear about it a minimum of 12-15 times (“intentional saturation of key information”). This includes printed and verbal communications (in addition to electronic), including at least two letters from the pastor.
- ❖ Focus some on the past: changed lives, meaningful community.
- ❖ Focus some on the present: what is happening now.
- ❖ Focus even more on the future: vision, mission and opportunities.

### Involve

- ❖ “When people do anything for a fundraising effort and they clearly understand why they are doing it, they tend to give about 30% more than they do when they have no involvement whatsoever.”
- ❖ Give everyone the opportunity to do something:
  - ❖ Pray
  - ❖ Share their story in speech and writing
  - ❖ Roll up their sleeves and help in any way: assist with an event, participate in a fun project, stuff envelopes, make phone calls.
- ❖ Always involve the children and teenagers of your church.
- ❖ Plan an event with food and drinks on Commitment Sunday

### Inspire

- ❖ Ask people to pray. Creating a campaign prayer is very inspiring. Keep it positive, grateful and hopeful. Include a prayer for the *overall success* of the fundraising effort (ex. “O God, may we all open our hearts and give generously to what you are doing among us.”). Also include a prayer of *personal commitment*, here are some examples (“O God...”):
  - ❖ “How can my giving truly represent the gratitude I have for our church?”
  - ❖ “What do you want to do through me to fulfill your vision for our church?”
  - ❖ “How can my giving help our church bring God’s love to many others?”
- ❖ Think of how you can inspire in everything you do: letters, worship, training....
- ❖ Think of visual aids: banners, posters, a **visual project**
- ❖ Have 4 Inspiration Sundays in a row: vision, sermons, stories, Scriptures; with the last Sunday being Commitment Sunday.

### Invite

- ❖ Invite people to pray.
- ❖ Invite people to do something.
- ❖ Invite people to make a generous financial commitment.

# “Fundamentals of Successful Church Fundraising”

## Immediate Follow-Up

- ❖ **Thank the Congregation for Involvement and Commitment:** When the fundraising effort is over, publicly thank everyone in your worship service and in writing (bulletin, newsletter, etc.). Include the total amount of commitments.
- ❖ **Thank Individuals:** Write a handwritten thank you note to everyone who made a commitment.
- ❖ **Thank God:** Give thanks for a successful fundraising effort in your worship service.

## Ongoing Follow-Up

- ❖ **Offering Envelopes:** Provide these a month before they are to be used.
- ❖ **Quarterly Statements:** Send quarterly statements with a letter from the Pastor: April, July, October. Include the amount of commitment if one is given.
- ❖ **Annual Statements:** Send an annual statement with a letter from the Pastor: January. Include the amount of commitment if one is given.
- ❖ **Keep Talking:** Talk about ministry and changed lives throughout the year and thank the congregation for making it possible because of their generosity.
- ❖ **New Member Cultivation:** Be sure to make enough extra material for new members who join during the year and invite them to make a commitment for the remainder of the year.

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**NOTES:**

# “Fundamentals of Successful Church Fundraising”

## Appendix 1: Essential Materials

### Prayer Card

Create a prayer that you will ask everyone to pray and print it on a card.

### Commitment Card and Privacy Envelope

- ❖ **Section 1 (“For Church Records”)** Include space for: name, contact info, total amount, amount per week or month (with a box to choose week or month) beginning (date & year), “I understand that this commitment can be changed at any time by giving notice to the church office,” signature and date.
- ❖ **Section 2 (“For Your Records”)** Include space for: name, date, “I commit to express my gratitude for my church and support its vision by giving” total amount, amount per week or month (with a box to choose week or month) beginning (date & year).
- ❖ **Order enough for:** everyone on the church mailing list, every bulletin on Commitment Sunday, those who may not give on Commitment Sunday (Letter #3), potential new members who may join during the year

### Invitation to the Event

Create a simple invitation to the event on Commitment Sunday. Enclose it in Letter #2.

### Material for Visual Project

Surface: Banner, poster board, bulletin board, etc.

Something for each person: card, sticker, photo, etc.

### Letter 1 from the Pastor

Include the theme, a story, a brief message about the church’s vision, a request to pray for a successful fundraising effort and personal commitment, and “save the date” for the event on Commitment Sunday. **Enclose** a prayer card.

### Letter 2 from the Pastor

Remind people of the theme; include another story and another brief message about the church’s vision; ask for continued prayer; explain the “visual project” and specifically ask what you want them to do; invite people to complete the enclosed commitment card and bring it with them to church on Commitment Sunday. **Enclose** something for them to do as it pertains to the visual project (ex. “This Is My Dream” card); a commitment card and privacy envelope; an invitation to the event on Commitment Sunday.

### Letter 3 from the Pastor

*NOTE: Send this letter only to those who did not make a commitment on or before Commitment Sunday!* Remind people of the theme; explain the importance of everyone making a commitment, include another brief message about the church’s vision; ask for continued prayer; invite people to complete the enclosed commitment card and either mail it or bring it with them to church by the deadline. **Enclose** a commitment card with privacy envelope.

# “Fundamentals of Successful Church Fundraising”

## Appendix 2: Sample Letter to Those Who Do not Make a Commitment by Commitment Sunday

Kōloa Union Church  
P.O. Box 536  
Kōloa, HI 96756

October 7, 2015

Dear Kalani:

During the past four weeks, I have invited the members and friends of Kōloa Union Church to share their hopes and dreams that we all have for our lives and for our church. It has been such a rewarding and inspirational time hearing dreams that we have shared with each other! Here are a few of them:

- More children and youth
- More time for prayer and personal reflection
- Making a bigger difference in our community
- Greater variety of music on Sunday mornings

I invite you to commit to our church's future with a financial commitment for 2016. At the end of October, our finance committee will prepare a budget for the coming year and present it to the Church Council in November. ***Your financial commitment will be a great help to us*** as we determine how to plan for our ministry in 2016. When the majority of people in a congregation make financial commitments each year, they see the greatest growth, vitality and energy! As of Sunday, October 4, we have not received a commitment from you. If you would be willing to let us know what you plan to give to the church in 2016, ***you will be helping more than you realize.***

For your convenience, I have included a commitment card and return envelope. Will you please consider completing the card and either mailing it to the church or putting it in the offering plate by October 25th? You can change the amount at any time during the year. I have also included a “dream card” just in case you didn't turn one in yet. Please write a few words or sentences about your dreams for Kōloa Union Church so that we can include it on our dream banner as we ***acknowledge and celebrate all of our dreams!***

Thank you once again for your presence, support, and prayers for the ministry of Kōloa Union Church!

Sincerely,  
Kahu Alan Akana