

# SERVING humanity



A Practical Guide to Discovering  
the Heart of God for Your Church







HE SHOWED HIS  
*sympathy*  
FOR THEM,

**MINISTERED** TO THEIR  
needs

& won their  
**CONFIDENCE**



# INTRODUCTION

Alex\* is a trained fitter machinist from rural New South Wales. Several years ago, he was involved in a fight in a night club and suffered a severe knock to the head. He was poorly compensated for the incident and since that time has not been able to hold down a job. This caused him to fall through the cracks economically and socially, and his sense of worth plummeted.

A local Seventh-day Adventist church started a food pantry ministry in his suburb and spread the word among the community. Alex reluctantly turned up one Thursday afternoon to see what it was all about. He found a group of people that not only met his economic need for quality food, allowing the rest of his meagre income to be used for other needs, but also met his social need. Within a few weeks, he was involved in serving at the food pantry to others in the community. His sense of worth grew as he realised that he still had a real purpose and resources he could use to support his community. His sense of worth grew as he realised that, even now, his life had real purpose and he had, despite his limitations, resources he could use in support of his community.

Alex learned that this church also had an excellent lunch every Saturday. He also learned that, prior to lunch, the church came together as a community. Never having experienced any of this before, he had a lot to learn, but the more he learned, the more he liked. The church community embraced him and he started to feel that he belonged somewhere again.

With many of his needs now met and his heart open to the needs of others, Alex was very responsive when the pastor asked him if he would like to have Bible studies.

Alex was receptive to the message of Christ because he was reached with the method of Christ:

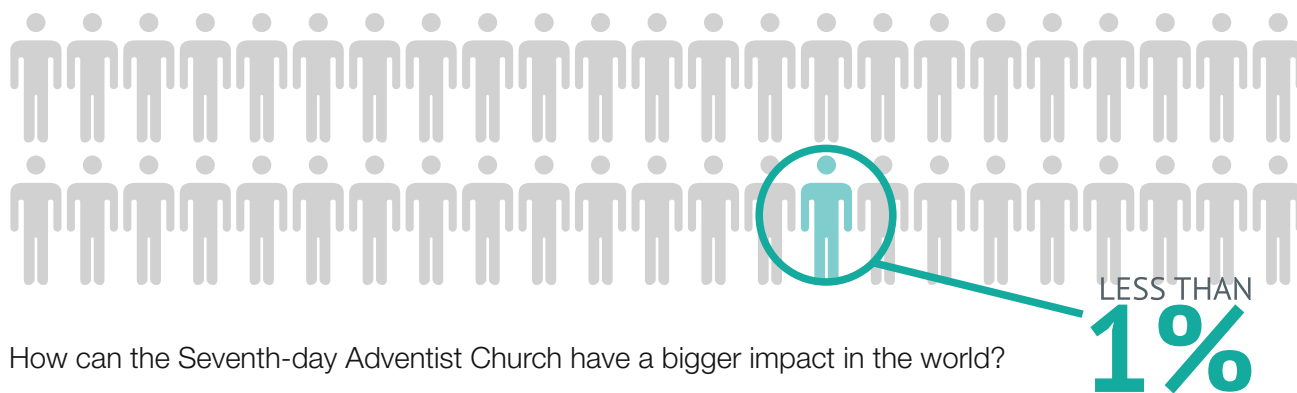
*Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me."*<sup>1</sup>

\*Not his real name



## THE CHALLENGE

As a denomination, Seventh-day Adventists have had some success in reaching people, but it would be a stretch to describe it as true success. We are currently baptising about 1.5% of our membership, or 2% of our attendance. If you take out children of existing church members, our kingdom growth baptism numbers are less than 1% of membership — hardly true success!



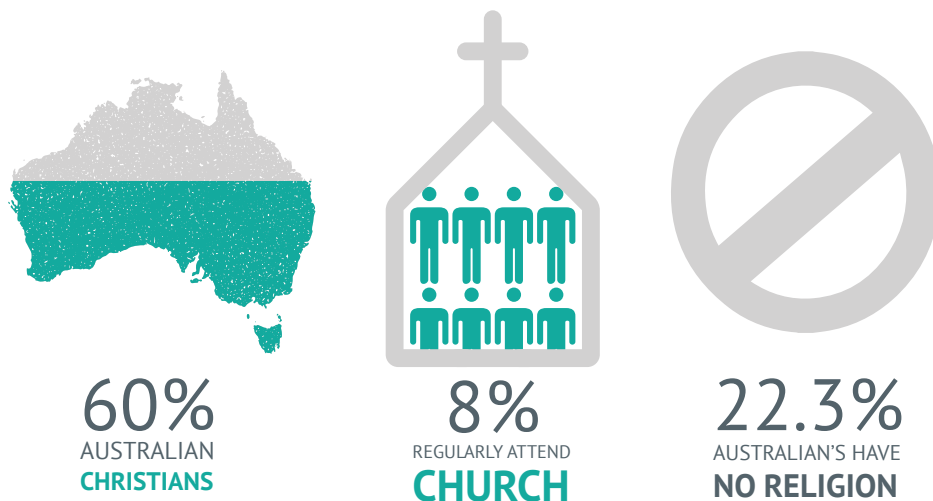
In his book *UnChristian*<sup>2</sup>, David Kinnaman surveyed “outsiders” to Christianity in order to understand their perception of Christians. His research found that Christians are perceived as hypocritical, focused on getting converts rather than caring about people, sheltered and judgmental. So either the findings are true (and perception are a person’s reality) or they don’t know us very well. It’s probably both.

The overwhelming majority of Australians are either apathetic or hostile to the message of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In the 2011 census<sup>3</sup>, 60% of the Australian population described themselves as Christian, but only 8%<sup>4</sup> of them attend church more than once a month. A record 22.3% of Australians describe themselves as having no religion<sup>5</sup>.

So what do we do? That’s the genius of “*Christ’s method alone...*” There’s a very well-known adage that people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care. In order to make a



withdrawal from a bank account, you first have to make a deposit. The truth of the matter is that few of us have really invested enough time in people outside the church to have the right to talk to them about their spirituality.



When Jesus was on earth, He preached to crowds, but spent the majority of His time either investing heavily in a small group of followers or helping the most helpless in the society. His strategy was simple: build a relationship through genuine care and then seek opportunity to introduce them to the One who can fulfil their deepest needs.

Christ's method is challenging. Relationship building is time-consuming, messy, usually doesn't pay much in material terms and cuts across naturally self-centred hearts. Preaching the "good news" or "the truth" is easier whether there is an audience to listen to it or not. A church rejoices in the small fruit of this effort (and that's okay — every lost soul that comes to repentance causes heaven to rejoice, so we should too), or becomes more discouraged and convinced that the traditional form of public evangelism no longer works.

What you hold in your hand is an effort to reignite a passion for a broader vision for your local church to serve humanity and share the joy of "true success" by reaching the lost using Jesus' method.



# CHAPTER 1 DOING WHAT JESUS DID

Matthew 10:25 states that *“Students are to be like their teacher, and slaves are to be like their master.”*  
(NLT)

Considering this command, what did Jesus do? It’s not a difficult task to ascertain because Jesus made His intentions very clear right at the beginning of His ministry. He was baptised, went into the wilderness for 40 days and, soon after, went to His home town of Nazareth. He is asked to do the scripture reading in the synagogue one Sabbath and reads from Isaiah 61:

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, He has sent me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind. To set at liberty those that are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”*

This was His mission statement. Not too long after He expanded the practicality of that mission statement from 49 words to more than 2400 in the Sermon on the Mount.

You could summarise what Jesus did as:



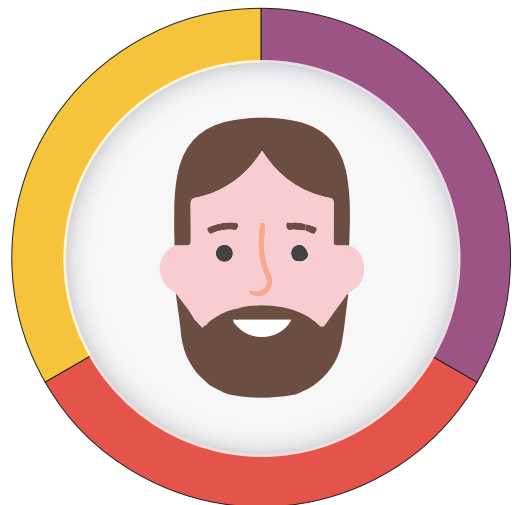
**Proclaimed the gospel**



**Made disciples**



**Served humanity**





Jesus was led constantly by the Holy Spirit. He had these things in perfect balance and created a movement that transformed the world.

As Seventh-day Adventists and mere mortals, we have endeavoured to replicate Jesus' model, but sometimes we place these three actions in a hierarchy and operate out of balance.

Our natural strength and comfort is proclaiming the gospel. Rightly we specialise in strong biblical preaching. We have as our God-given message the everlasting gospel preached in the context of the three angel's messages of Revelation 14:6-12. So that's where we go first, and go often. The challenge is that most are apathetic and some are hostile to what we have to say. The genuine seeker is rare. So we can proclaim loud and long, and sometimes simply create disillusionment with public evangelism.

More recently we have recognised that as Seventh-day Adventists, we have not done "making disciples" quite as well. Thankfully, we have appreciated that this is a weakness and have started to create resources across Adventism to focus on this vital aspect of what Jesus calls us to do. Often it is still the weaker, younger sibling of our "proclaiming the gospel" juggernaut. However, it is rightfully developing, growing and assuming greater importance.

Unfortunately, "serving humanity" is still running a distant third. Based on conference and local church budgets, conference executive committee and local church board agendas, and plenty of anecdotal evidence, serving humanity is an add-on to what the local church does rather than central to it. People consider it to be ADRA's job.

Could it be that as a Seventh-day Adventist, it is possible to take the command that a "disciple be like his teacher" seriously, but in practice place the three things Jesus did in a hierarchy that Jesus didn't? That is, proclaim the gospel first and foremost.

Within the past decade, we have recognised that our job is not done at baptism. Therefore, we are endeavouring to be more intentional with discipleship so that the newly-baptised saint moves from the community to the congregation, to the committed and, hopefully, to the core group doing all the work.



They may be so inspired that they get involved in serving humanity, primarily to give evidence of their truly committed state.

That statement of Ellen White's continues to haunt us:

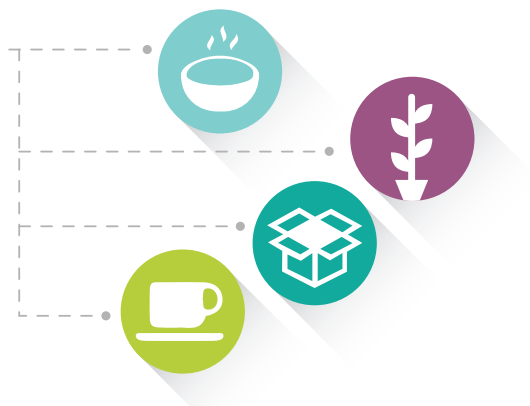
*Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me."*

Do Seventh-day Adventists truly believe that? Is that what we see consistently displayed across our churches, small groups or personal experiences? Do we manifest the beauty of the balance of Jesus?

If we truly believed this statement, there would be no hierarchy given to the activities of Jesus; but they would be held in balance. That means all three activities of Jesus are important all of the time. All churches, small groups and members would be actively involved in serving humanity — not out of a sense of duty, but because we are Christ's disciples. That's Christ's method and we take it seriously.

What would that look like?

It would look like a lot of the things that ADRA already does. Sadly, only a tiny percentage of the Seventh-day Adventist membership are involved. You could get involved in things like soup kitchens for the homeless, cafés for the disadvantaged, community gardens, emergency food distribution centres and many more.



However, it would be even broader than that. It would be any local church connection to entities working for the betterment of humanity in the town or suburb in which they are located. It would even be small groups in local churches that have a knowledge of a need and just going ahead and meeting it. It would even be individual church members doing random acts of kindness.





### **WHAT'S THE GOAL?**

Simply community connectedness. Or, like Jesus, mingling with people.

Many Seventh-day Adventists do not interact with anyone who is not a Seventh-day Adventist. So when the pastor makes an appeal for members to bring their non-SDA friends to the evangelistic series, eyes are diverted, guilt is felt and the results are discouraging.

What if, having served humanity and thereby connected to our community, we did something really radical? What if we started the discipleship path with our newly acquired friends before they are even a Seventh-day Adventist?

What if, having made connection through service, a Seventh-day Adventist finds themselves faced with the challenge of relating to a non-believer? What if they developed an actual friendship with that non-believer? What if, when something was happening in the community like a small group that were getting together to play tennis, surf, do woodwork, crochet or go for a run, or even attend a health seminar, financial planning seminar or relationship seminar, that the new friends did it together?



### **WHAT'S THE GOAL?**

Just deepening a friendship. Or, like Jesus, “winning their confidence.”

If nothing else happens haven't both lives been enhanced? There is a dearth of true connectedness in Australian communities today. If that alone is addressed, haven't we made a difference?

But what if there's another group meeting in someone's home that is reading through the book of John? Or there is a visitor's day at church? Or there are evangelistic meetings happening at the church? Now when the pastor makes an appeal for members to invite along their friends, the members are excited. They have friends! Friends who need Jesus, just like they do. Friends who have an understanding that part of what they do is go to church on Saturday. Friends who may have grown to respect them for their lifestyle choices, but don't really understand why they have made those choices.



Let's go back to Jesus. He has given His short version of the mission statement in Luke 4 and His long version in Matthew 5-7. Having outlined the theory, the very next thing He does is demonstrate it. Matthew 8:1 says, "When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came..." The unclean, filthy, pustulant, outcast leper. Is there any greater test of His commitment to the mission? Jesus is asked if He is willing. He replies that He is and the leper is cleansed. "See, my friends, that's how it's done!"

The next person He meets is a Centurion. In the eyes of a first century Jew, a Centurion was an oppressive, dictatorial agent of the devil. He's concerned about his servant. "I will come and heal him." Jesus says. Noses are suddenly out of joint and jaws are dropped. "See, my friends, it's not just theory."

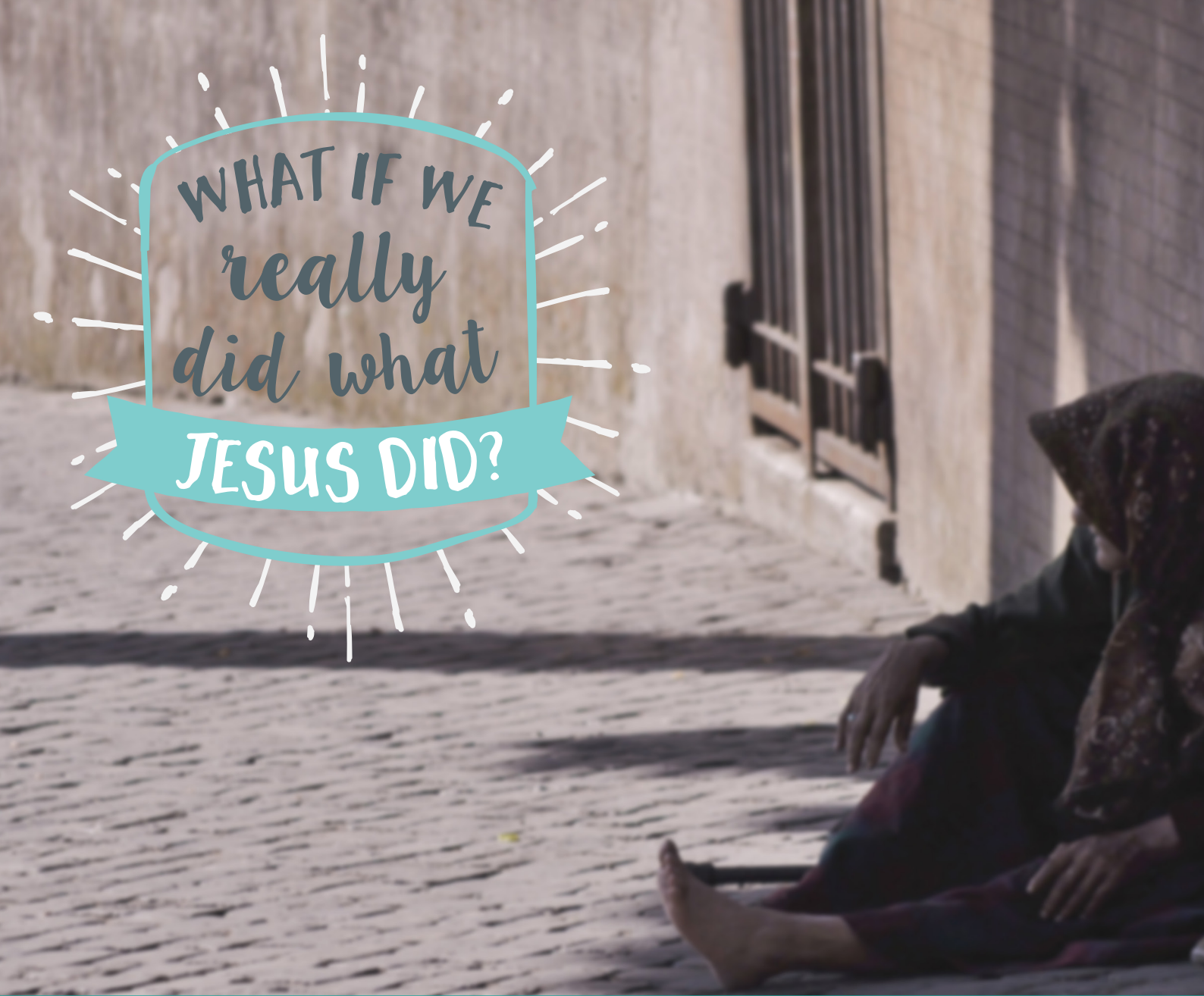
By the end of Matthew 8, there are a couple of demon-possessed men who are no longer tormented. And Jesus does something radical. In a matter of minutes, He commissions them as His first evangelists. But they're not even baptised! Isn't He starting their discipleship path a little early? Are they really qualified to teach and preach? Shouldn't they do some course of study before they do that?

He keeps this extravagant, wasteful, flagrant grace and healing going in Matthew 9. A sinful paralytic is healed, a despised tax collector is called to be a disciple, He's turned fasting on its head, a woman with an issue of blood has been healed, blind see, mute speak. Matthew has to just stop near the end of the chapter to summarise what he has seen and heard: "Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people" (verse 35). The next verse says he was "moved with compassion".

Then in Matthew 10, he says "Ok, you've heard the theory, you've seen the practical. Your turn!" He gives them some final instructions, prays with them, and off they go.

When we read the "Christ's method alone" statement from Ministry of Healing, 143, we always stop after that one sentence. Have you ever read on?



A woman wearing a dark headscarf and a patterned shawl is sitting on a cobblestone street. She is looking down, and her hands are resting on her lap. In the background, there is a building with a dark door and a window. The scene is lit with warm, golden light, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

WHAT IF WE  
really  
did what

JESUS DID?

*"There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counselled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit."*

- Ministry of Healing 143,144



## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Think of examples that you have seen or experienced when Christ's method has been used in your local church. Discuss them with your group. If you struggle to recall any examples readily, what does that reveal?

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2. Do you think your local church has a balanced approach to ministry the way Jesus did?

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3. If Jesus said that "students are to be like their teachers," is your walk with Jesus becoming more and more aligned with the pattern He set?

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## CHAPTER 2 DISCOVERING THE HEART OF GOD

We can spend all of eternity worshiping God and singing His praises, but now is the only opportunity we have to reach people for Christ.

*“The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world.”<sup>6</sup>*

Ephesians 3:10 says that God’s “intent [is] that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church...” God has a mission for every church to fulfil in their local community. A church is being disobedient to its God-given purpose until it discovers what that mission is and actively fulfils it.

George Barna says, “Vision for ministry is a clear mental image of a preferable future imparted by God to His chosen servants and is based upon an accurate understanding of God, self, and circumstances.”<sup>7</sup> Thom S Rainer echoes this thought when he writes, “True vision arises from an integration of the leader’s passion for God, the gifts and passion of the congregation, and the needs of the community.”<sup>8</sup> This is a formula for discovering a God-given vision for your church.





## DISCOVERING A PASSION FOR GOD

When we are truly connected to God and doing things for God, these two things form a mutually beneficial symbiotic relationship. Operating in this way, our “doing” becomes an outgrowth of the will of God, and is accompanied with power and purpose.

*“The first lesson to be taught the workers in our institutions [or churches] is the lesson of dependence upon God. Before they can attain success in any line, they must, each for himself, accept the truth contained in the words of Christ: ‘Without Me ye can do nothing.’”<sup>9</sup>*

*“Prayer and faith will do what no power upon earth can accomplish. We need not be so anxious and troubled. The human agent cannot go everywhere, and do everything that needs to be done. Often imperfections manifest themselves in the work, but if we show unwavering trust in God, not depending upon the ability or talent of men, the truth will advance. Let us place all things in God’s hands, leaving Him to do the work in His own way, according to His own will, through whomsoever He may choose. Those who seem to be weak God will use, if they are humble. Human wisdom, unless daily controlled by the Holy Spirit, will prove foolishness. We must have more faith and trust in God. He will carry His work out with success. Earnest prayer and faith will do for us what our own devising cannot do.”<sup>10</sup>*

Jesus was a faithful student of the Word of God and felt in need of constant prayer. If He felt so much in need of connection to His Heavenly Father, how much more do we need that constant connection?

*“Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, ‘Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.’” This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ.”<sup>11</sup>*





LET US PLACE  
*all things*  
IN GOD'S HANDS

LEAVING HIM <sup>TO DO</sup> <sub>the</sub>

the work in  
*HIS OWN WAY*



Before moving ahead with any service to humanity, have the church or a group of leaders commit themselves to a period of focussed prayer, Bible study and fasting.

**RESOURCES** See Appendix 1 for resources to assist with bringing about spiritual revival in your church.

God wants us to love Him. Then He fills us with His presence and guides us to do ministry for Him. Once we have an intimate, personal relationship with God, He will show us what He is doing. Our job is simply to follow the example of Jesus and to do what the Father is already doing. Watch where God is at work and join Him.

## DISCOVERING THE GIFTS AND PASSION OF THE CHURCH

*“Have you ever been asked to fill a position in the church for which you didn’t feel qualified, and yet you were pressured into accepting the role anyway? As a result of people being persuaded to serve the church in areas where they are not gifted, many have become disillusioned and refuse to become involved in church activities any longer. That’s why it is so critical to have a gift-based ministry operating in the local church.”<sup>12</sup>*

The potential range of opportunities available to the church are found in the gifts God has given to the members of the church. Therefore, it is important to gain an understanding of what those gifts are.

A simple process that can be followed for discovering spiritual gifts includes:

- a. **Prayer** – spiritual things are spiritually discerned, so spiritual gift discovery is a process that should be bathed in prayer
- b. **Understand the possibilities** – study the biblical counsel on spiritual gifts in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. At this point, a spiritual gifts inventory may be used, however caution should be exercised as they are only one tool to be used as part of a process rather than to be relied upon exclusively.



- c. **Experiment and Assess** – Assess which gifts feel natural and easy, and which are challenging and hard. This may involve trying a number of gifts, and undertaking a honest assessment of both your effectiveness and your feelings in relation to the gifts. This requires both boldness and humility, so the presence of the Holy Spirit is critically important. It is also wise to seek the counsel of trusted spiritually-aware fellow church members.

There are a number of books that can be used to guide the church through an exploration of spiritual gifts. Most are written from a generic Christian perspective, so care needs to be taken to use these books with a Seventh-day Adventist filter.

**RESOURCES** Some of the books include:

- *Discover Your Spiritual Gifts the Network Way: 4 Assessments for Determining Your Spiritual Gifts*, Bruce Bugbee, 2005
- *Unfinished Business: Returning Ministry to the People of God*, Greg Ogden, 2003

## DISCOVERING THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

It is important that the service the local church is proposing to provide their community is a clearly identified need.

There are three steps that should be used to identifying a community need:

a. **Reach out**

Talk to community members and service providers. Ask local residents what needs they see as prevalent in the local community and which needs they care about most. For example, issues may include homelessness, youth unemployment or poverty. You can connect with your community by conducting door to door surveys, talking to your neighbours or chatting to the local hairdresser.





Visit existing local service providers and ask them the same questions. Ask them what services they offer the community so that you can identify if there are any gaps that need to be filled. A good place to start is to connect with local council, schools, church and welfare agencies, such as the Salvation Army or Lifeline.

b. **Research**

Find out more about the community demographics and needs. Log on to your local council’s website and look for the Council’s Strategic Plan, as well as other documents relevant to the community’s needs and demographics.

An excellent source of information is the Australian Bureau of Statistics website. At the following link, you can type in the name or postcode of your local community and receive a report on many aspects of it:

[www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2011/communityprofile/](http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2011/communityprofile/)

c. **Review**

Collate the data and highlight some options. The first two steps should have given you enough data to populate the following table:

| Information Source | Identified Needs or Gaps | Demographic Data | Comments |
|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------|----------|
|                    |                          |                  |          |
|                    |                          |                  |          |
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*Community Needs Assessment* and *Local Capacity Assessment* documents are available at <http://nns.adventist.org.au/serving-humanity>

**RESOURCES** Some good websites that can stimulate your thinking on serving humanity projects include:

- <http://www.volunteering.nsw.gov.au/>
- <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/>
- <https://www.adra.org.au/>
- <https://govolunteer.com.au/>

There are three types of serving humanity that can be engaged in:

### **Relief**

This is an immediate short-term need that a person definitely cannot meet themselves. For example, a family's house has been destroyed by fire. In a relief situation it is important and appropriate to pour in material resources, and to get very actively involved in the situation. Relief is always temporary and "stops the bleeding." This primarily involves working for people.

### **Rehabilitation**


This begins as soon as the "bleeding" has stopped, and seeks to restore people and their communities to the positive elements of their pre-crisis conditions.<sup>13</sup> The key feature of rehabilitation is a dynamic of working *with* people as they participate in their own recovery.

### **Development**

This involves moving all the people involved in service — both the "helped" and the "helpers" — to a better place than they currently are. This is not done at the time of crisis, but at a time when people, in all areas of their life, can be moved closer to what God created them to be. This is done not to people, or for people, but with people.

*A Note of Caution:* One of the biggest mistakes that churches make in seeking to serve humanity is to apply the principles of relief to situations that really require rehabilitation or development.



A person is lying down, reading an open Bible. The Bible is resting on their lap, and a pink pen is placed between the pages. The person is wearing dark blue jeans and a light-colored, possibly white, long-sleeved shirt. The background shows a patterned fabric, likely a bedsheet or blanket, with a green and white leaf design. A graphic overlay is centered on the Bible, featuring a teal banner at the top with the word "CHRIST" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Below the banner, the text "IS THE GREAT" is in a smaller, dark, sans-serif font. The word "center" is in a large, dark, cursive script. Below that, "THE SOURCE OF" is in a smaller, dark, sans-serif font, followed by "ALL" in a medium-sized, dark, sans-serif font, and "strength" in a large, dark, cursive script. The entire graphic is surrounded by white, hand-drawn style lines radiating outwards, giving it a sunburst or spotlight effect.

CHRIST  
IS THE GREAT  
*center*  
THE SOURCE OF  
ALL  
*strength*



Applying the principles of relief at inappropriate times can create some of the following harmful outcomes:

- Make people feel inferior to the “superior” helpers
- Reinforce a feeling of worthlessness, shame and a reliance on handouts
- Paralyse the poor from taking initiative or seeing solutions to improve themselves
- Disempower people, particularly fathers, who cannot provide for their families
- Create a “god complex” in the helpers, rather than a recognition that we all have some area of brokenness that needs assistance
- Applies a quick, low-commitment fix rather than building an affirming and empowering relationship

For additional information on ensuring that your service to humanity is creating positive change, an excellent resource is *When Helping Hurts – How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor and Yourself* (Corbett and Fikkert, Moody Press, Chicago, 2014).

### **Conclusion:**

As the church and its leaders move closer to God and work through a process of discovering their spiritual gifts, they will become more Christlike, which will inevitably lead to a greater desire to meet the needs of their local community.

*“Christ is the great center, the source of all strength. His disciples are to receive their supplies from Him. The most intelligent, the most spiritually minded, can bestow only as they receive. Of themselves they can supply nothing for the needs of the soul. We can impart only that which we receive from Christ; and we can receive only as we impart to others. As we continue imparting, we continue to receive; and the more we impart, the more we shall receive. Thus we may be constantly believing, trusting, receiving, and imparting.”<sup>14</sup>*

If this connection to Christ is linked to a well-researched community need, the results will be powerful.



## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. One of the greatest challenges when God calls you to serve Him is having the patience to move on His agenda, not your own. What do you think are some of the ways that you can know, understand and move with God-given wisdom, rather than rushing ahead of His agenda?

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2. Can you think of any community service initiatives that your local church has been involved in previously that have failed to meet expectations or goals? What do you think went wrong?

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3. How can your local church:
  - Prepare for a situation that requires relief?
  - Connect with other organisations that provide rehabilitation?
  - Create a ministry involved in development in your local community?

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## CHAPTER 3 CHANGING CULTURE

Culture is the sum of attitudes, customs and beliefs that distinguish one church from another. The natural tendency of a church is to meet its own needs; to have wonderful fellowship and worship and show little concern for the needs of the lost. However, this is disobedient to the great commission of Christ.

*“The goal of every Christian leader should be to create a living, vibrant culture for evangelism in the church where every member is growing in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ, has a sense of ownership of the mission of the church, and a passionate desire for sharing the gospel with the world.”<sup>15</sup>*

No two churches are alike. Each church has its own unique DNA; its own unique environment, circumstances, personality and flavour.

*“Every congregation is a distinct and complex entity. Each church develops a certain style, has a particular history, comprises a unique collection of individuals, and serves in a specific context. No two congregations are alike. Consequently, the journey to a new future must be customized for those people in that time and place. Principles need to be transferred, but prescriptions need to be carefully tailored.”<sup>16</sup>*

Cultural change is achieved through leadership:

*“...One of the greatest leadership challenges a leader will face is to convince people to look beyond their own needs and to begin developing a vision for reaching those outside God’s family.”<sup>17</sup>*

Culture is established by leaders. Leaders exist in all churches, but not always where you would think. Often it is the church pastor, but it can also be the elders, the deacons, the worship leaders, the most



affluent in the church, the church patriarch or matriarch, or many others.

Unless there is a cultural change in the church, the easiest thing to do is to just keep doing what has always been done. This will guarantee that the results will be the same as they have always been.

When a leader sets out to change culture, it is easy to be discouraged, or to see the current church situation as dysfunctional or problematic. Members, like leaders themselves, are filled with flaws and failings.

However, it is God's church, and He has condescended to give us stewardship of His church and to cooperate with Him in its work.

*"Enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard. It is the theater of His grace, in which He delights to reveal His power to transform hearts."*<sup>18</sup>

### **The depth of cultural change:**

A Seventh-day Adventist Church needs a culture of volunteering to pervade it. A study of the Book of Acts shows that the early church was an incredibly engaged body of believers. As a denomination, we have strayed from our biblical mandate for service. What we need today is nothing less than a radical change in how we do church.

Creating a culture for evangelism that reaches the lost for Christ cannot be done with only a few pastors or lay leaders. Every member of every church must be motivated to serve somewhere, and to be deployed to share their faith in practical, natural ways with others: "The work of God in the earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers."<sup>19</sup> Every church should be a training center for the members to be involved in ministry.



If members of the church can be motivated to build friendships with others by using their talents, gifts, passions, knowledge, and skills for baking, cooking, playing soccer, golfing, construction, car mechanics, or whatever else, then the church has a greater opportunity to minister to and reach people for Christ. Such an evangelistic approach helps members gain a new vision for evangelism where they can simply be themselves, build relationships with others, and share their faith in natural and compelling ways.<sup>20</sup>

Some practical steps to shift the culture of the church include:

# 01

## **Jesus builds His Church**

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*“I will build my church; and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.” Matthew 16:18. “We cannot be successful in building a church unless we are connected to Christ, for every step along the way we will face spiritual battles with the forces of hell and we can only win these battles in His strength and power.”<sup>21</sup>*

# 02

## **Review**

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What do your local church budgets, the minutes of the meetings that take place in your church, and the diaries of the leaders reveal about the values and priorities in the church? Consider what your church would look like if it were a church of service, as well as proclamation and discipleship.

# 03

## **Have a plan**

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Cultural change is hard. It takes vision, skill and persistence. Ecclesiastes 10:10 says, “If the ax is dull, and one does not sharpen the edge, then he must use more strength; but wisdom brings success.” At this point it is important to “sharpen the ax.”

Some prayerful reading about culture and change can be very helpful. There is some suggested reading at Appendix 2.



## 04 Build a Team

Any church leader cannot go it alone when they are trying to change culture. Jesus didn't do it by Himself and we can't expect to either. It is so important to gather a group of leaders together.

Evangelist Rueben Torrey, a close friend of Dwight L Moody, put it this way:

*First, let a few Christians (they need not be many) get thoroughly right with God themselves. This is the prime essential. If this is not done, the rest that I am to say will come to nothing. Second, let them bind themselves together to pray for a revival until God opens the heavens and comes down. Third, let them put themselves at the disposal of God for Him to use as He sees fit in winning others to Christ.*



## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. The management expert Peter Drucker famously said that “culture eats strategy for breakfast.” Consider what sort of culture you have in your local church and what it is doing to the churches effectiveness in fulfilling its mission.

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2. Sometimes culture is so deep and difficult to change that it is better to plant a new church with new, seeker-friendly DNA. Do you think your church is at that point or is there hope for positive change?

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3. What are you going to do personally this week to effect a cultural change in you that will make you more closely aligned with the ministry of Jesus?

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# CHAPTER 4 RECRUITING AND TRAINING LEADERS AND WORKERS

Too many church leaders feel that the success of their local church is based on their own personal availability and talent. However, this is unbiblical, arrogant and a sure recipe for burnout.

Using a business analogy, a service organisation relies on two things to be successful. Firstly, a strategy to retain their existing clients and, secondly, a strategy to attract new clients. The church is an enterprise of far greater importance than a business. However, if you look at the nominating committee report and a week of activity in a local church, it seems we are spending much more time and effort on retention of existing members than attracting new ones.

*“The church will never win the war with a cruise ship mentality! Churches should be battleships, where everyone is on call, where everyone has a responsibility, and where everyone is trying to make a difference.”<sup>22</sup>*

We are fighting the greatest battle ever fought on planet earth, the cosmic war between Christ and Satan for the souls of every person living on the planet so the church must have a War Cabinet to keep it focused on the evangelism cause.

Ellen White had much to say on the principle of leadership, and the recruiting and training of additional leaders:

*“Those who are placed in responsible positions should feel it their duty to recognize talent. They should learn how to use men, and how to advise them. If mistakes are made, they should not withdraw themselves, thinking it easier to do the work themselves than to educate others. Those who are learning should be patiently instructed...”<sup>23</sup>*





WHERE EVERYONE  
HAS A  
responsibility  
WHERE EVERYONE IS  
& trying to  
MAKE A

DIFFERENCE



*"If in their ministry those whom we teach develop an energy and an intelligence even superior to that which we possess, we should be led to rejoice over the privilege of having a part in the work of training them. But there is danger that some in positions of responsibility as teachers and leaders, will act as if talent and ability have been given to them only, and that they must do all the work in order to make sure that it is done aright."*<sup>24</sup>

*"Take your hands off the work, and do not hold it fast in your grasp. You are not the only man whom God will use. Give the Lord room to use the talents He has entrusted to men, in order that the cause may grow. Give the Lord a chance to use men's minds. We are losing much by our narrow ideas and plans. Do not stand in the way of the advancement of the work, but let the Lord work by whom He will. Educate, encourage young men to think and act, to devise and plan, in order that we may have a multitude of counsellors."*<sup>25</sup>

This is the methodology of Jesus. He called 12 men to be His disciples. Then He empowered them to champion His evangelistic cause. They were the ones who would be the culture setters in the early church. His method was contained in the fundamental principle of concentration on these men who He intended to use to transform the world. Not a program and not the masses.<sup>26</sup>

The leadership team must select and recruit the evangelistic champions and culture setters for the church. The key qualities of these people include:

- Deep commitment to the church and its mission
- Possess the gift of evangelism
- Have a passion for the lost
- Ideally have experience in soul-winning, and have seen people become members of the church as a result of their personal influence and efforts
- Possess leadership skills and is recognised as a leader
- Is recognised by the members as a person of spirituality and integrity
- Good organisational skills
- Humility



Some guidelines in developing your leadership team include:

# 01

## **Know your reason for existence**

True leaders and church members will rally around a God-given vision for why the church exists. Too often, people have risen to positions in church leadership because of the length of time they have been members or due to some skills in their working life. These attributes are not necessarily negatives. However, length of church membership does not always transform the hearts of people, and spirituality is the number one qualification. Likewise, skills acquired in work life are helpful, but only if the expertise is sanctified for the “building up of the body.”

# 02

## **Enlist leaders to a plan, not a program**

If leaders are enlisted to a program, the program can become all-consuming. There is a better way. If leaders are enlisted to a process of ministry that is based on a clear plan, it is much more likely to succeed long term.

# 03

## **Train leaders with high expectations**

Leaders rise to the occasion. Because they are leaders, they need a challenge. If an organisation rises and falls upon leadership (and it does), then a church should expect the best from leaders. However, an expectation without proper training is discouraging for leaders. Once selected, a specific budget of time and money should be allocated to the training and development of these leaders.



## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How are leaders in your church engaged in contributing to the vision of your local church? Has there been an intentional process of casting a vision and developing a strategic plan in your church in the past five years?

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2. Looking at your last nominating committee report and the church attendance figures, how closely does your local church align to the 80/20 rule? That is, are 80% of the jobs being done by 20% of the members?

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3. Has each key leader in your church identified another person who they are mentoring to fill their position in the future?

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## CHAPTER 5 FUNDING YOUR "SERVING HUMANITY" VISION

*"The means in our possession may not seem to be sufficient for the work; but if we will move forward in faith, believing in the all-sufficient power of God, abundant resources will open before us. If the work be of God, He Himself will provide the means for its accomplishment. He will reward honest, simple reliance upon Him. The little that is wisely and economically used in the service of the Lord of heaven will increase in the very act of imparting."*<sup>27</sup>

The work of serving humanity can be as simple as cooking for a neighbour, or as complex as running a homeless shelter or women's refuge. Therefore, the funding options are as diverse as the vision for service.

One way to consider your service options and the potential funding available is to cluster your ideas into size.



| Scale of Project | Number of Participants <sup>28</sup> | Examples  | Funding Sources  |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Personal         | One person or family                 | Random acts of kindness<br>Mowing lawns<br>Cooking food<br>Providing transport<br>Cleaning house  | Personal sacrificial giving of time, talent and resources  |
| Small Group      | Up to 20 people                      | Christian help bands <sup>29</sup><br>Regular breakfast club at a local school<br>Provide volunteer help at a homeless shelter<br>Work with Meals on Wheels | Sacrificial giving of small group members<br>Local church budget   |
| Local Church     | 20 to 50 people                      | Foodbank ministry<br>Regular games nights for community children<br>Community garden<br>Refugee support<br>Free tax returns<br>STORM Co                     | Local church budget<br>Adventist Community Services NNSW<br>ADRA Australia   |
| Institutional    | 50 + people                          | Women's Refuge<br>Homeless Shelter<br>Op Shop<br>Counselling Centre   | Government grants and recurrent funding<br>ADRA Australia<br>Adventist Community Services NNSW<br>Op Shop<br>Local Church budget |



## **Sacrificial Giving:**

This manual starts with the need for personal spiritual revival as the indispensable prerequisite for the selflessness to serve humanity. It is only when a clearer revelation of selflessness of God in giving His all for us becomes more apparent that we will have a true motivation for giving of ourselves for Him. It is only when we recognise that our God-ordained purpose is to reach the lost for the kingdom that will we consider “everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus...” (Philippians 3:8).

*“When divine light is shining into the heart with unusual clearness and power, habitual selfishness relaxes its grasp and there is a disposition to give to the cause of God. But none need think that they will be allowed to fulfill the promises then made, without a protest on the part of Satan. He is not pleased to see the Redeemer’s kingdom on earth built up. He suggests that the pledge made was too much, that it may cripple them in their efforts to acquire property or gratify the desires of their families.”<sup>30</sup>*

There is a lot more that could be achieved in the cause of Christ if church members caught a vision of what God truly wants to achieve through them.

Websites that can be used to facilitate sacrificial giving in your local church include:

<https://au.gofundme.com/>

<https://www.everydayhero.com/au/>

Recently, a church raised more than \$20,000 in two weeks for a van for a food distribution ministry using the [www.gofundme.com](https://www.gofundme.com) website.

## **Local Church Budget:**

A time of renewed focus on serving humanity is a good time to review the local church budget to see what it tells the church about its priorities. If it has a large budget for the maintenance of the building





MILLENNIALS ARE  
MORE COMMITTED TO  
community  
& service

VOLUNTEERING

THAN THEIR parents



and the payment of staff to run the church, but nothing for impacting the local community, it may be time to reprioritise. If it is weighted heavily toward the maintenance of the institution rather than the seeking of the lost, the church is being disobedient to the commission of Christ.

At the Lismore Adventist Church in 2010, there was an action to change the second offering in the Sabbath morning church service from “Building Maintenance Offering” to the “Service and Mission Offering”. Over the next six months, giving to this second offering increased more than 300% as people caught a vision for service, rather than just making the church more comfortable.

Research shows that millennials are more committed to community service and volunteering than their parents.<sup>31</sup> If a local church is keen to keep their youth engaged and active, they could do a lot worse than increase their financial support of community service activities involving their youth.

### **Adventist Community Services NNSW and ADRA Funding:**

Seed funding for larger projects may be available from the Adventist Community Services NNSW department or ADRA.

The only absolute non-negotiable for eligibility for this funding is that the project must be in the community that the local church resides in, or in a nearby community that the church has specific plans to plant another church in.

Other criteria used to assess conference funding applications include:

- A well constructed project proposal that shows a clear process for seeking the heart of God, based on the recommendations found in Chapter 2 of this manual
- A priority will be given to projects that are requesting seed funding, rather than the ongoing operating costs of the project
- An assessment of the long-term sustainability of the project
- The scope of involvement of the local church members in the project



Remember that if the conference is not able to fund your project, you can remain confident in the vision that God has given your church and seek alternative means of funding such as those outlined on page 35.

ADRA Australia is also committed to partnering with local churches to serve their communities. The total net ADRA appeal monies collected in the North NSW Conference are returned to the North NSW Conference to be used in service to communities within the conference.

**For a Project Application document to access funding from Adventist Community Services  
NNSW and ADRA Australia, please contact David Haupt.**

Phone: 0433 305 910

Email: [DavidHaupt@adventist.org.au](mailto:DavidHaupt@adventist.org.au)

Postal: 112 Lake Road (PO Box 7), Wallsend NSW 2287



## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does your local church budget reveal about the values, priorities and culture of the church?

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2. One of the powerful features of the early church is that they needed very little investment in capital works, such as a church building, so that their resources could be predominantly focussed on service and outreach (Acts 2:43-45). Is there anything your local church can learn from that model?

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3. What resource is God calling you to use in service to humanity? Your time? Your talent? Or your treasure?

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# CHAPTER 6 FROM SERVING TO PROCLAIMING

There are at least four reasons for serving humanity:

**01** **The fact that the world has incredible needs places a weight of responsibility on the Christian to make a difference. Simply because of the existence of need, service is essential.**

Jesus was “moved with compassion” when He saw the crowds before Him. Often hearts are calcified to the needs of others as we compete for our own advancement, offload our responsibility to the government or others, or are just too spiritually fatigued to care. All of this can also generate compassion fatigue. Compassion is not generated by our own efforts, but downloaded to us as we invite the Holy Spirit into our life.

*“The unselfish labor of Christians in the past should be to us an object lesson and an inspiration. The members of God’s church are to be zealous of good works, separating from worldly ambition and walking in the footsteps of Him who went about doing good. With hearts filled with sympathy and compassion, they are to minister to those in need of help, bringing to sinners a knowledge of the Saviour’s love. Such work calls for laborious effort, but it brings a rich reward. Those who engage in it with sincerity of purpose will see souls won to the Saviour, for the influence that attends the practical carrying out of the divine commission is irresistible.”<sup>32</sup>*

**02** **The kingdom of heaven is for those that give the Gospel credibility through their selfless service to others.**

Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.”<sup>33</sup>



*“Let the world see that we are not selfishly narrowed up to our own exclusive interests and religious joys, but that we are liberal, and desire them to share our blessings and privileges, through the sanctification of the truth. Let them see that the religion which we profess does not close up or freeze over the avenues to the soul, making us unsympathizing and exacting. Let all who profess to have found Christ, minister as He did to the benefit of man... We shall then see many souls following the light that shines from our precept and example.”<sup>34</sup>*

## 03

### **Serving others strengthens our own spiritual experience.**

*“The very life of the church depends on her faithfulness in fulfilling the Lord’s commission. To neglect this work is to invite spiritual feebleness and decay. Where there is no active labor for others love wanes and grows dim.”<sup>35</sup> “So long as church members make no effort to give others the help given them, great spiritual feebleness must result.”<sup>36</sup>*

## 04

### **The ultimate gift of life and hope is introducing someone to Jesus.**

The whisper of a friend is more powerful in drawing people to Jesus than the shout of a stranger.

*The redeemed will meet and recognise those whose attention they have directed to the uplifted Saviour. What blessed converse they have with these souls! “I was a sinner,” it will be said, “without God and without hope in the world, and you came to me, and drew my attention to the precious Saviour as my only hope.” Others will express their gratitude to those who fed the hungry and clothed the naked. “When despair bound my soul in unbelief, the Lord sent you to me,” they say, “to speak words of hope and comfort. You brought me food for my physical necessities, and you opened to me the Word of God, awakening me to my spiritual needs. You treated me as a brother. You sympathized with me in my sorrows and restored my bruised and wounded soul so that I could grasp the hand of Christ that was reached out to save me. In my ignorance you taught me patiently that I had a Father in heaven who cared for me.”<sup>37</sup>*



A photograph of two young men sitting on a rocky shore, looking out at the ocean. The man on the left is wearing a brown shirt and sunglasses, and the man on the right is wearing a blue and white patterned shirt. The ocean is in the background, with a small town visible on a distant hill. The text is overlaid on the top left of the image.

personal  
testimonies

CAN BE THE MOST

**POWERFUL**

WAY

To witness



## APPEAL

Jesus' method of evangelism was to touch people at their points of greatest need. Christ was not content only to heal them physically and do nothing else. Serving humanity may not start with bidding those whom we know to follow Jesus. Yet out of our love for people, we will long to offer them everything that Jesus offers.

You may think, "I will take care of the first part of Jesus' method, but I don't do the bidding 'follow Me' part. That's not my gift." That's fine. Often sowers and reapers are different people. But it is also true that if you do the first part, you may surprise yourself by automatically sharing Jesus. By following Christ's method, it will be so natural, so much easier, because you did the "groundwork" in the soil of their hearts.

As you become better acquainted with the people you serve, be alert for opportunities to talk about faith and about what the Lord means to you. Seek for opportunities to bring up spiritual topics. Ask your new friends about their family, their occupation and their religion, which opens the way to share your personal testimony.

In fact, personal testimonies can be the most powerful way to witness, because they can also be the least threatening. You aren't overtly preaching; you are simply telling a story, and we all should have our own personal story about what Jesus has done in our lives.<sup>38</sup>



## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Review the story at the beginning of the introduction to this manual. How could your church create an environment in which a similar story could take place?

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2. For what purpose does your local church exist? Is it for saints or fellow sinners? Assuming it's for fellow sinners, what is your intentional strategy to reach them?

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3. How much time have you personally and your church leaders and members committed to prayer lately, asking God to lead you to greater growth?

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## APPENDIX 1

- *40 Days of Prayers and Devotions*, Books 1 -5, Dennis Smith
- *10 Days of Prayers and Devotions*, Dennis Smith
- *Steps to Personal Revival – Being Filled with the Holy Spirit*, Helmut Haubeil
- *Revive Us Again*, Mark A Finley
- *The Radical Prayer*, Derek J Morris
- *Steps to Christ*, Ellen G White
- *Welfare Ministry*, Ellen G White
- Book of Nehemiah
- *The Revival We Need*, Oswald J Smith
- *My Utmost for His Highest*, Oswald Chambers

## APPENDIX 2

- *Evangelism*, Ellen G White
- *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, Coleman, 2010
- *The Big Four*, Kidder, 2011
- *Leading Change*, John Kotter, 1996
- *Becoming a Contagious Church, Increasing Your Churches Evangelistic Temperature*, Mark Mittelberg, 2010
- *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey*, Herrington, Bonem and Furr, 2000
- *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap*, Rainer, 2009
- *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church from the Inside Out*, Lewis and Cordeiro, 2005
- *Cracking Your Churches Culture Code: Seven Keys to Unlocking Vision and Inspiration*, Chand , 2011



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6. Ellen G White, *Acts of The Apostles*, p 9
7. George Barna, *The Power of a Vision: Discover and Apply God's Vision for Your Life and Ministry* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1992), p 28.
8. Rainer, *Breakout Churches, How to Make the Leap*, Zondervan, 2005, p 114.
9. Ellen G White, *Testimonies to the Church*, 7:194.
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13. Corbett and Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts – How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor... and Yourself*, Moody Publishers, Chicago, 2012, p 100
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16. Herrington, Bonem, and Furr, *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey*, p 160.
17. Jamison, Doctoral Dissertation, "Creating A Culture For Evangelism In The Local Church: A Case Study In The Aldergrove Adventist Church", 2009, p 73,74
18. Ellen G White, *Acts of the Apostles*, p 12
19. Ellen G White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915), p 352.



20. Jamison, Doctoral Dissertation, "Creating A Culture For Evangelism In The Local Church: A Case Study In The Aldergrove Adventist Church", 2009, p 106
21. Ibid p 73,74
22. Lewis and Cordeiro, *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church from the Inside Out*, 2005, p 88
23. Ellen G White, *Christian Leadership*, p 57
24. Ellen G White, *Review and Herald*, 1 December 1904, "The Training of Workers", para 7
25. Ellen G White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p 303
26. Jamison, Doctoral Dissertation, "Creating A Culture For Evangelism In The Local Church: A Case Study In The Aldergrove Adventist Church", 2009, p 95, 96
27. Ellen G White, *Desire of Ages*, p 371
28. This is a guideline only. There may be projects that gain institutional support that have a small number of very passionate and committed participants
29. Christian Help Bands is an idea for service-based small groups that was developed by John Harvey Kellogg in the 1890s and roundly endorsed by Ellen White. Sadly, the church of the day did not adopt this God-given counsel. However it remains God-given counsel and is very worthy of further study. An excellent source of information on Christian Help Bands is the book *D'Sozo: Reversing the Worst Evil* by Dave Fiedler, Remnant Publications, 2012
30. Ellen G White, *Acts of the Apostles*, p 74
31. Associated Press GfK Poll,
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33. Matthew 25:34-36
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36. Ellen G White, *Testimonies to the Church*, Vol 7, p 19
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