



The General Conference
Sabbath School &
Personal Ministries



TO
THE

MISSIONARY PROGRAM FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH



The Missionary Program for The Local Church is created by the
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THE MISSIONARY PROGRAM FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

Introduction

The missionary program of the local church is part of the world church's mission and goals, and works in coordination with its leadership on all levels.

The program must be driven by a vision for the total involvement of the local church membership in the finishing of God's work in these end-times. It should be based on the passion Jesus has for every lost person. Inspired and motivated by His love for the lost and the church's love for their Savior, every member should strive to partner with Him, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, reach and prepare as many as possible for Christ's imminent return.

We must never forget our privilege and responsibility: "In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light-bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the Word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import, —the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention."¹

To fulfill the purpose for which the Seventh-day Adventist church exists, the entire local church leadership and membership should be focused on the "missionary program of the local church." Impelled by the divine mandate of Revelation 10:11, everything our church does must be centered on and controlled by "mission." And with united action, the potential is unlimited: "If Christians were to act in concert, moving for-

ward as one, under the direction of one Power, for the accomplishment of one purpose, they would move the world.”²

With an extremely diverse world to reach, every means available and, possibly, yet undiscovered, should be used in this multifaceted-all-out endeavor. This can allow for the gifts of all to be utilized to the fullest.

With such an abundance of unreached groups of peoples and individuals in the world, certainly our current church missionary programs have not exhausted all the approaches needed to reach them. Along with old tried and productive ways, new innovative and appropriate approaches should be tried and used. With rapidly changing technologies in many parts of the world, some of the old methods may not be as effective as new ones. We have been counseled: “We must take every justifiable means of bringing the light before the people.”³ “Some of the methods used in this work will be different from the methods used in the work in the past. . . .”⁴ Members trying new methods that follow right principles should be encouraged and not hindered by leadership. Older leaders could greatly hinder progress by saying, “We have always done it this way” and object to sensible changes appropriate to the times with productive potential.

Experience over the years has demonstrated that, understandably, members and leaders are usually cautious about accepting a new untried approach. There is sometimes ardent opposition at first. This was true when H. M. S. Richards started to use radio, when George Vandeman began a television ministry, and when Danny Shelton started 3ABN. There was even some opposition to Sabbath School Action Units at first. But if you or your church has a new way to reach the unreached that is in accord with God’s direction and Christian principles, cordially move forward in the spirit of Jesus, without allowing hard feelings or discord to interfere with success. If the plan is of God, He will bless.

At the time of this writing, a 94 year old pastor, who is anxious to reach new people, handed the writer a document entitled “Starting a DVD Ministry in Your Church.” It is a new concept based on current technology and it has already proven to be effective. Praise God for giving two lay members a vision of a new approach and for working together with God to make it work. In this modern age, it would seem that where DVDs are utilized, they would be more watched than the printed page would be read.

Leadership is needed who are willing to take risks for the God of the impossible. Practical, balanced, dedicated, prayer-dependant, and experienced old and young leaders are needed who will not only follow traditional ways, but will be willing to launch out in new ways and persevere, depending on God at every step.

These leaders, including all church leaders and leaders of departments with outreach potential, can work together in an organized, united way with the pastor, church board, and the more outreach-focused Personal Ministries Council to bring success to the missionary program of the local church. Before we consider this further, we will first deepen the discussion a bit on membership involvement and organization in general.

Membership Involvement and Organization

“Both the Old and the New Testament emphasize that church members are to express in daily living the principles of the Decalogue—worship of God and service to our fellow men. ‘Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor,’ says the prophet Zechariah. [8:16]

“The church of Christ has been organized on earth for missionary purposes, and it is of the highest importance that every individual member of the church should be a sincere laborer together with God, filled with the Spirit, having the mind of Christ, perfected in sympathy with Christ, and there-

fore bending every energy, according to his entrusted ability, to the saving of souls.’—Ellen G. White, *An Appeal to Our Churches on Behalf of Missionary Work*, p. 28.

“As the church is specifically a missionary organization, its primary responsibility is twofold—gathering souls into the kingdom of God, and establishing them in righteous living. Each is a counterpart of the other. In order that the church may be a powerful evangelizing agency, it is necessary that the church be thoroughly organized to enable each member individually and the church as a whole to respond to the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19, 20.

“Church missionary organization is well illustrated by the apostle Paul in his comparison of the church to the human body, which has many members, but all functioning as one. So within the church, conference workers, church officers, each department, each member, all work together under the direction of the Head, which is Christ. Then, as souls are gathered into the church, they must be established in all points of the faith and trained for service in searching for others and bringing them to a knowledge of truth.”⁵

As the signs indicate that the coming of our loving Lord is more imminent than ever before, certainly this is especially true: “Time is short, and our forces must be organized to do a larger work.”⁶

Cycle of Evangelism

This leaflet will emphasize the utilization and coordination of the many departments and entities in the church to do outreach. All of these in themselves can be a tremendous blessing. However, we do not want to forget to include the long-proven “cycle of evangelism,” where the whole church systematically cultivates ongoing friendships in the community, continuously strives toward meeting their holistic needs, sows seeds of truth, and then harvests their interests in one or two yearly evangelistic campaigns.

Of course there will be some harvesting baptisms throughout the year from continual cultivation and sowing by all departments, as the Lord adds to the church daily (Acts 2:47), but for greater results, decision meetings are usually needed. Focusing unitedly on specific dates for these meetings motivates members to work harder than usual to prepare interests. Friendships which develop can often lead to personal Bible studies before the public effort begins, which can more solidly prepare candidates for baptism. We would caution, however, that the public meetings should not be forced on new friends that are not yet ready to attend meetings. Many developing interests and personal Bible studies have been lost by trying to move people too quickly. Much prayer is needed to determine whether the time is right, whether they are ripe enough for possible picking at the time of the scheduled campaign.

Three Organized Entities

We will now discuss three organized entities that will aid and should be utilized for the success of the missionary program of the local church. They can help encourage and coordinate the outreach activities of all departments, and their timing, for the greatest efficiency and results.

Church Board:

The highest organized group and authority in the local church under the pastor and church business meetings, in which all members are invited, is the church board. "Its chief concern is the spiritual nurture of church and the work of planning and fostering evangelism in all its phases."⁷ Listed responsibilities of the board pertinent to this discussion include: Evangelism in all its phases and coordination of church departments. The church manual, (voted by the World Church in session), goes on to state: "The gospel commission of Jesus makes evangelism, proclaiming the good news of the gospel, the primary function of the church

(Matt. 28:18-20). It is therefore, also the primary function of the board, which serves as the chief committee of the church.”⁸ And then it states a very vital, often neglected, truth: “When the board devotes its first interests and highest energies to every-member evangelism, most problems are alleviated or prevented, and a strong, positive influence is felt in the spiritual life and growth of members.”⁹

The *Church Manual*, with the full authority of the entire World Church, doubly emphasizes and further elaborates on the board and the missionary program of the church under the section entitled, “Work of the Board.”

- “1. The most important item on the agenda should be planning the evangelization of the outreach (missionary) territory of the church. In addition, once each quarter an entire meeting should be devoted to plans for evangelism. The board will study conference recommendations for evangelistic programs and methods and how they can be implemented locally. The pastor and the church board will initiate and develop plans for public evangelistic campaigns.
- “2. Coordinating outreach programs of departments. The church board is responsible for coordinating the work of all church departments. Each department develops its plans for outreach within its own sphere. To avoid conflict in timing and competition in securing volunteers and to achieve maximum beneficial results, coordination is essential. Before completing and announcing plans for any program, each department should submit its plans to the board for approval. The departments also report to the board on the progress and results of their outreach programs. The board may suggest how departmental programs can contribute to the preparation, conduct, and follow-up of a public evangelistic campaign.

- “3. Encouraging the personal ministries department to enlist all members and children in some form of personal outreach (missionary) service. Training classes should be conducted in various lines of outreach ministry.
- “4. Encouraging the interest coordinator to ensure that every interest is personally and promptly followed up by an assigned layperson.
- “5. Encouraging each department to report at least quarterly to the board and to members at business meetings or in Sabbath meetings.” ¹⁰

There may be a tendency for some to avoid submitting their outreach plans to be voted by the board, but the potential of full support of the entire church leadership can facilitate unity and harmony and can initiate greater and more rapid progress. Regular progress reports will then encourage all.

The Personal Ministries Council:

“The personal ministries council guides the outreach (missionary) efforts of the local church and works under the direction of the board. The council should meet at least once each month and should consist of the pastor, an elder, the treasurer, and leaders of the other departments and auxiliary services functioning in that congregation.” ¹¹

Who could be included among the above mentioned, “leaders of the other departments?” Your church may not have the capacity to include all of the following, but to encourage you to reach the fullest potential possible we list most of those included in an earlier church manual. They are: the personal ministries leader (chairperson), personal ministries secretary, publishing ministries coordinator, Adventist Community Services (ACS)/Dorcas society¹² leader, Adventist Men’s Organization (AMO) leader, interest coordinator, health ministries leader, communication secretary, Sabbath School superintendent, youth leader, coordina-

tor for ministry to people with disabilities, children's ministries coordinator, women's ministries leader, Bible school coordinator, church web master, and other members as deemed necessary.

The personal ministries council may assign subcommittees for specialized tasks as deemed necessary. All subcommittees report to the personal ministries council.¹³

Duties of the Personal Ministries Council should usually include:

1. To arrange for the outreach meetings of the church, to study its field of outreach activity, and to enlist every church member in definite lines of service.
2. To enlist the members' involvement in activities such as: literature distribution and circulation of periodicals, including subscription magazines, and Bible course enrollments; Community Services and/or Dorcas Society activities; entry events, such as stop-smoking clinics, cooking schools, stress management seminars, etc; Bible studies and follow-up of all contacts, public evangelistic meetings, seminar evangelism, and other outreach plans and projects.
3. To be responsible for the planning and implementation of the annual Ingathering campaign where conducted.
4. To arrange for or train members in class and in service (on-the-job) in methods of personal witnessing, including giving Bible studies, the operation of Community Services programs, and provision of disaster relief services, etc.
5. To encourage reporting through the personal ministries secretary.

6. To supervise the Community Services activities of the church and serve as the governing committee of the church's Community Services center.
7. To cooperate with the personal ministries department of the local conference/mission/field in carrying out its program.
8. To authorize disbursement of local church personal ministries funds.
9. To plan for and conduct the weekly and monthly personal ministries meetings as called for in the church calendar.¹⁴

Communication Department:

Besides the church board and the personal ministries council, a third vital entity to assist in the missionary program of the local church is the communication ministry. "Through the years divine instruction has come to the church concerning the importance of using contemporary communication media in spreading the gospel. 'We must take every justifiable means of bringing the light before the people. Let the press be utilized, and let every advertising agency be employed that will call attention to the work.'—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 36."¹⁵ "The communication department promotes the use of a sound program of public relations and all contemporary communication techniques, sustainable technologies, and media in the promulgation of the gospel."¹⁶

The church manual emphasizes that this organization "calls for the support of every layperson, Church employee, and Church institution."¹⁷ This department helps to involve as many members as possible in reaching out with every available media and print means. It also keeps the membership and church organizations aware of plans and progress as they occur.

The department is led by the communication secretary and assisted by a communication committee where needed. The secretary gathers and disseminates. All entities of the church should provide to the secretary, and the secretary should seek for news items, plans, and scheduled events that would be appropriate and beneficial to publicize either internally or for the general public. In a larger church, the secretary may need a committee and assistants responsible for various areas such as: internal news, church web site, public press, public media, etc.

Opportunities for the communication ministry to enhance the missionary outreach of the church are very broad and may include: Interview programs on radio, TV, or on the internet, of visiting missionaries or other persons of interest; promotion and advertizing by press, posters, billboards, media, internet, etc.; all outreach programs, including, public meetings, seminars, cooking schools and other health-related activities; Bible course enrollments; magazine and tract distribution, etc. "Other communication activities that fall within the sphere of interest of this (the communication) committee include planning for special church events and ceremonies, the preparation of church exhibits and parade floats, placement of church advertising, and providing public libraries and other information centers with information on the Seventh-day Adventist Church." ¹⁸

It is important to represent the Lord aright while working toward utilizing to the full all avenues of public media. "Every effort (should) be made to maintain a friendly, cooperative relationship with editors and other communications/media personnel." ¹⁹

Communication Secretary:

To accomplish the above, the secretary should be qualified by dedication to the Lord and by the ability to meet people, and should rightly represent the church. He/she should have sound judgment, organizational ability, ability to put

facts down on paper in attractive and persuasive grammatical form, and the willingness to carry out an assignment.²⁰

In addition to gathering and disseminating news to the local media, the communication secretary cooperates with the conference communication director, who provides instruction and help to him/her. Also the secretary presents periodic reports to the church business meeting. The pastor is primarily responsible for the church's communication program, and will work closely as an advisor to the communication secretary or committee.²¹

Now that we have shown the potential of utilizing three major organizations to help assure the success of the missionary program of the church, namely the church board, the personal ministries council, and the communication department, we will now turn to:

Other Departments—Their Leadership, Activities and Methods:

Personal Ministries Department:

Two definitions help to emphasize its broad scope. "This missionary organization embraces the entire church membership. Its purpose is to provide and assign to each member a definite line of missionary service."²² "Personal ministries provides resources and trains members to unite their efforts with those of the pastor and officers in soul-winning service. It also has primary responsibility for programs assisting those in need."²³ This department, whose leader chairs the personal ministries council, under the direction of the church board, has the responsibility and privilege to inspire, lead, and equip the entire church in outreach. All missionary activities are basically under the umbrella of this department. So it is a very important one.

Personal Ministries Leader:

Put succinctly: “The leader trains and directs members in outreach (missionary) service, and chairs the personal ministries council. The leader reports in the monthly church outreach (missionary) Sabbath service and business meetings about total outreach (missionary) activities of the congregation. Assistants may be assigned to coordinate the Bible correspondence school, Bible evangelism, literature distribution, Ingathering (or equivalent appeals), small group ministries, member training, and other soul-winning programs.”²⁴

The nine points listed under the “Duties of the Personal Ministries Council” above can indicate more completely the potential activities of the leader. With this heavy responsibility, the personal ministries leader needs to constantly depend on the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit to be successful. Total dedication to the Lord and a passion to mobilize the church is needed. But that passion must not lead to a dictatorial spirit. He or she must be a passionate servant leader possessing the love of Christ for both the lost and for each member. Force should not be used. Assist members in planning—in making their own plans. “Imposing assignments on people who have not been a part of the planning process” may lead “to resistance. If people are involved in the planning, they will treat the project as a personal challenge.”²⁵ Enthusiastic leadership is needed that inspires and involves the members in planning what they want to do, within the goals and objectives of the overall church plan, and then encourages and assists them kindly and personally, in accomplishing their goals. Training and equipping is vital. The most successful personal ministries trainer is one who not only gives classroom lectures, but, when needed, works with the members in the field, showing by demonstration how to do it. And, nothing inspires others to become involved more than having the members tell success stories of what they did through the Lord’s blessing. When endeavoring to involve the total membership in ministry, it really pays to keep suc-

cess stories of the various activities the church is doing before the congregation as often as possible. Before emphasizing when this can be done, we need to mention the role of the personal ministries secretary:

“The secretary serves as representative of the Adventist Book Center for all departments of the church and works with the leader in developing the outreach (missionary) programs of the church.”²⁶

Three Personal Ministries Meetings:

There are three times set aside for the personal ministries department to promote, train, and share with the congregation success stories, plans, and the various activities the church is doing. But first, we begin with the importance of such meetings:

“The Saviour ‘gave authority to His servants, and to every man his work’ [Mark 13:34]. He appointed a meeting with His eleven disciples after His resurrection for the purpose of giving them counsel and encouragement, and at that time He gave the gospel commission to the disciples and to the assembled church, numbering more than five hundred brethren. That was the first outreach (missionary) meeting of the Christian church; it was certainly not to be the last.

“As a permanent and definite part of the services of the Christian church, the outreach (missionary) meeting bears the divine endorsement for all time.... We are told: ‘God has committed to our hands a most sacred work, and *we need to meet together* to receive instruction, that we may be fitted to perform this work.’ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 32. (Italics supplied.)²⁷

In planning and conducting these meetings, the following instruction from the Lord should be followed as well for the benefit of all: “Our meetings should be made intensely interesting. They should be pervaded with the very atmosphere of heaven. Let there be no long, dry speeches and formal prayers.... All should be ready to act their part with promptness.”²⁸

The First Sabbath of the Month Is Outreach Sabbath:

“The first Sabbath of each month is the Church Outreach (Missionary) Sabbath. The worship service focuses on lay evangelism, and may feature plans and activities of various departments.”²⁹ (Note: In Adventist history, outreach has been considered of such vital importance that as early as 1919 it was decided that the preaching service one Sabbath a month should be devoted to it.)³⁰ Arrangements for conducting these services should be carefully planned in advance, allowing equal rights to each department, but also providing the time needed for current pressing issues and the latest good news stories. Certainly this monthly worship service should be a top priority of the personal ministries council led by the personal ministries leader. It would be wise for them to make a yearly balanced plan that includes all departments. They should determine together what the focus of each of these meetings should be, in consideration of current progress and future objectives. Also they should select dedicated lay speakers months in advance, allowing them time to develop short Bible-based sermons that are on target and that will inspire and motivate all. In doing this, remember that some of the less vocal individuals, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, may prepare the best messages.

There also needs to be flexibility. If an unexpected fantastic success story suddenly appears foreign to the current theme, in most cases, it would be wise to utilize it immediately. But this does not minimize the importance of planning ahead. All plans for the service should be laid at least ten days before. Participants may need to be instructed on how to make their presentations inspiring, attractive, concise, and focused on the day’s theme.

Here is a suggested order of service accompanied by ideas to enhance the service:

1. A rousing song by the congregation.

2. Prayer, which may include: Gratitude for God’s blessings on the church’s outreach of the past month and that this service will inspire all to greater activity for the Lord in the future.
3. An interesting report by the personal ministries secretary. (Brief interviews and or success stories may be included to add spice. Note below.)
4. A special missionary song.
5. Sermon: Short, Bible-based, inspiring, and motivating on the theme of the day, including interviews or success stories if appropriate to the message.
6. Talk by the personal ministries leader. It could include brief training and a demonstration of how to do an outreach activity utilizing experienced members. They could be interviewed and could share their successes. Outreach plans for the coming month and beyond should be emphasized.
7. Offering for local missionary work.
8. Closing song and prayer of dedication.³¹

“Promptness in beginning and closing the service is vital.”³²
“In rare instances it may be advisable to postpone the missionary service until the second Sabbath of the month. . . . If such a postponement is necessary, however, the service should be held the following Sabbath. In every church there should be a sacred regard for the regularly appointed monthly missionary service.

“The church missionary secretary should be duly impressed with the importance of giving an interesting report—one in which all the missionary activities of the church as well as the deficiencies in missionary activity are properly represented. The report calls for originality and versatility.

“Study to. . . make the monthly missionary service so interesting and helpful that the church members will look forward to it, and will allow nothing to hinder them from being present.”³³ To assist in making that possible we emphasize again the importance of members sharing their successes as part of this and the other outreach services. Why? Because this is what brings “new life and fresh vigor” to all. Notice: “Let church members, during the week, act their part faithfully, and on the Sabbath relate their experience. The meeting will then be as meat in due season, bringing to all present new life and fresh vigor.”³⁴

The Ten-minute Weekly Service:

The second time set aside for personal ministries meetings is The Ten-minute Weekly Service:

The personal ministries council, led by their leader, should carefully plan, direct, and supervise this special weekly action time, seeing that all departments have an equal opportunity to utilize it effectively. It should be dynamic, concise, and exciting. It can be a time of sharing and promoting plans and goals, reporting progress of various activities, sharing experiences of God’s blessings in meeting goals, brief training, etc. It should be a time of “spiritual revival and practical training.”³⁵

As to the time, it should be consistently held each Sabbath, often “following the close of the Sabbath school and preceding the preaching service,” but the time should suit “local conditions.”³⁶ If it is held between Sabbath school and church many are moving about, picking up children, etc. There are few who hear and few who concentrate on what is happening. Many find it best to conduct it after the entire congregation is settled for the worship service when all are attentive.

In 1947 it was voted to have the ten-minute period of training in the children’s departments at the close of Sabbath

school “adapted to their age and interests.”³⁷ That excellent plan, along with the outreach time in the Sabbath School Action Units at the beginning of adult Sabbath school class time, where they plan, share progress, meet challenges together, and give training each Sabbath, would certainly enhance the missionary program of the local church.

A Midweek Meeting

And now the third type of personal ministries meeting—“A midweek meeting combined with the weekly prayer meeting.

“On this occasion, the first part of the service may be given to a devotional message, followed by a season of prayer, remembering that worship is vital in spiritual growth and preparation for service. The remainder of the time may then be devoted to training for lay evangelistic service. Instruction in soul-winning methods is presented, and the members are given opportunity to present and discuss problems they have met in lay evangelism.”³⁸

On-the-job Training:

Experience has shown that the most effective training includes lots of practical demonstration and practice in the class, yes, but more importantly, it must be combined with on-the-job training in the field, giving all in the class a taste, and beyond just a taste, of the joy of sharing Jesus and His message. If this prayer-meeting-night training, for instance, can be incorporated into field training, the results will be far greater. It depends on the type of training, of course. In training people how to give Bible studies, often members attend a training class and never go out and give one. If the trainer selects those who know how and each, including the trainer, team up with one or two who don't know how to do it and they go out from the class into the homes of people and do what is taught in the class, they will really learn. That very evening, if possible, they should return to the class and the trainees can share what they experienced. There is usually great excitement. The trainer trains from all the experiences

shared. Real unforgettable learning occurs and all are inspired to move forward. Those who had difficulties are encouraged by those who did not. The group helps meet the challenges some faced. In giving Bible studies, a three-month training session of this type is most effective. It usually allows enough time for the trainers and trainees to assist one another through a complete Bible course. At the end, the trainees can become trainers of other members, including the new ones brought into the church through this effort. The on-the-job training class can, or course, be held any day or night of the week in addition or instead of Wednesday night.

Territorial Assignment:

To reach the whole world for Jesus, the General Conference, world divisions, unions, conferences, or missions and church districts have their territory of responsibility. Usually, however, the responsibility for the homes and businesses where outreach must actually be done is not designated. Here is some wise counsel: “Every church should realize that all the territory within the reach of its missionary activities is its home mission field. The instruction on this point is clear: ‘Wherever a church is established, all the members should engage actively in missionary work. They should visit every family in the neighborhood and know their spiritual condition.’—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 296.”³⁹

“Where there is only one Seventh-day Adventist church in a village, town, or city, that one church bears the responsibility of working the entire territory. Where there is more than one church, the conference should divide the territory, giving due consideration to the size and circumstances of each church. Each member of the church, regardless of what service company he belongs to, should be given missionary territory, preferably that which surrounds his own home.”⁴⁰ In order to cover the whole church territory, it is sometimes advisable to give each member or each family two territories: one surrounding the house and one at some distance where no member lives.

The plan should be presented to the church after church board approval. This should be done at a deeply spiritual service that does not force but emphasizes the love of Jesus for each person. The personal ministries council can then locate all members on a large map and mark out a territory surrounding each home and suggest a distant territory so that all the church territory is covered. A copy of each member's or family's territory can then be passed out at a dedication prayer service. Changes can be made if requested. The personal ministries secretary and council should then monitor progress, encourage activity, see that instruction and training are provided as needed, and see that success stories are kept before the church to encourage all to get involved. Constant prayer is essential. Often members first do a prayer walk through their territory, pleading with God for wisdom as to the approach they should use. Many visit, distribute literature or brochures for church outreach programs, etc. The potential is unlimited.

Interest Coordinator:

It is vital that an organized, efficient, and skilled interest coordinator see that all "interests developed through the church's missionary outreach are cared for promptly. This person is a member of the board and the personal ministries council and works directly with the pastor and chairperson of the council.

Duties of this office include:

1. Keeping an organized list of all interests received by the church." ⁴¹ Include interests "from every source, such as Community Services, Ingathering, public evangelism, Bible studies, lay preaching and witnessing contacts, outreach (missionary) magazines, Sabbath School evangelism, literature evangelism, temperance and health evangelism, radio-TV, and church outreach (missionary) literature." ⁴² Also in-

clude those from all departments listed in this pamphlet not included above.

All important data on each interest should be recorded on a card or in the computer so that a copy of the information can be readily available for prompt visitation and follow-up, as well as for mass mailings, advertizing church outreach events, etc.

- “2. Assisting the pastor and chairperson of the personal ministries council in enlisting and recruiting qualified members for follow-up service.
- “3. Presenting to the board a monthly report on the number of interests received and followed up. When an interest is sufficiently developed, it should be shared with the pastor.”⁴³

Bible School:

Operating a Bible correspondence school in the local church that includes personal delivery and a review of study guides in the homes can be a very successful soul-winning tool. This can do a superb job in the much needed grounding of potential members in the Lord and His Word. The more personal work, developing relationships with the students, the better. The “by mail” students should usually be visited and encouraged at intervals. The school should be in operation at all times, but it can be especially effective if it is timed so the students complete the courses and are invited to a graduation the first night of an evangelistic series at the church. The leader should be a vital part of the personal ministries council. The *Church Manual* says, “The Bible School coordinator organizes and coordinates the church’s Bible school outreach ministry to the community. The coordinator should work closely with the pastor, the interest coordinator, and the personal ministries leader.”⁴⁴ “Duties of the coordinator include recruiting volunteers, providing training on how to give Bible studies and make visits, ordering Bible corre-

spondence lessons and other supplies, and establishing a plan for enrolling students and promoting the school. Bible school lessons are provided through various media including printed Bible studies, small group materials, video and DVD, and the Internet.”⁴⁵ Larger Bible schools like the Voice of Prophecy have detailed manuals to follow for success.

Sabbath School:

“The Sabbath School, the primary religious education program of the Church, has four purposes: study of the Scripture, fellowship, community outreach, and world mission emphasis.”⁴⁶ “The Sabbath school is an important branch of the missionary work.”⁴⁷ If “rightly conducted, [it] is one of God’s great instrumentalities to bring souls to a knowledge of the truth.”⁴⁸ “The officers, teachers, and all Sabbath School members should cooperate with other departments in all outreach (missionary) work, as well as carrying on Sabbath School evangelism by means of the regular Sabbath School classes, and such activities as Decision Days, pastors’ Bible classes, Community Guest Days, Vacation Bible Schools, and branch Sabbath Schools, including Neighborhood Bible Clubs and Story Hours.”⁴⁹ In addition, where followed, the small group Sabbath School Action Unit plan, with its major focus on outreach is a very successful soul-winning model to follow.⁵⁰ As is done in this effective plan, a limited amount of time should be set aside in the regular Sabbath school classes for sharing the week’s outreach success stories, meeting current witnessing challenges, planning, brief outreach instructions that are needed that week, and prayer.

The missionary outreach of the Sabbath school departments have a unique opportunity to reach beyond the area of the local church to the entire world. With the exception of the Sabbath School expense offering, “all Sabbath school offerings are for the support of the mission fields These funds include the regular weekly Sabbath school offering, the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, Sabbath School Investment,

and Birthday-Thank Offering.”⁵¹ Offering goal setting, promotion, and progress sharing in all departments of the Sabbath school can greatly increase these funds as well as the blessings members will receive for their active participation in preparing, not only their church, but the world for Christ’s return. Membership involvement in the Sabbath school Investment plan can thrill their hearts. God becomes very real to them as they experience His blessing their projects. This should include the children as well. It is helpful to have an Investment secretary who will promote the Investment plan for mission support in all Sabbath School divisions and keep all members informed on the program’s progress.⁵²

Groups and Church Planting:

High on the agenda of the personal ministries council should be: *How can we, under the power of God, and for His glory, bring the most successful, solid, and sustained growth to our church by following the ministry method of Jesus?* His truly successful holistic method was to meet the physical, mental, and spiritual needs of those around Him. (Look again at *Ministry of Healing*, page 143). World-wide, small groups (or home groups) and planting new churches are key in this process. Planting a new church could simply be sparked by a personal Bible study some distance from the church in the home of a member or an interest that begins to grow. Or it could begin by targeting an unentered territory. Key leaders could swarm, or move there and begin worship services. It could start with a branch Sabbath school or a community services project. There are many ways and points to be considered. Earnest prayer is essential. Some may think the existing church may suffer, but usually starting a new church will help to activate and expand its growth, as necessity will inspire the inactive to become involved. “It will cultivate a missionary spirit to work in new localities.”⁵³ A relatively dead church can be enlivened by small groups and church planting. Detailed information is available.

Children's Ministries:

Usually much more effort is expended to inspire and train older people in the church, who have little time to serve, to become involved in missionary activity, than is spent on those with the greatest potential. The greater focus should be on inspiring and training the children and youth who have a lifetime ahead of them to utilize the training. Here lies the present and the future of the church. We have been instructed: "Too much importance cannot be placed on the early training of children. The lessons that the child learns during the first seven years of life have more to do with forming his character than all that it learns in future years." ⁵⁴ "It is still true that children are the most susceptible to the teachings of the gospel; their hearts are open to divine influences, and strong to retain the lessons received." ⁵⁵ They make fantastic workers for God when they begin early.

"The mission of the Children's Ministries Department is to nurture children into a loving, serving relationship with Jesus." ⁵⁶ Children's ministries leaders should have the passion and ability to lead the young to a daily friendship with Jesus, to the assurance of salvation, and to involve them in sharing Him. Children should be "given opportunity for hands-on service to people in their neighborhood or city, thus establishing a pattern of outreach to others that may well continue through life." ⁵⁷ One of the responsibilities of the Children's Ministries Coordinator and committee is "to plan and implement a yearly calendar of programs for children that will draw them to Christ and provide for their participation in all church activities." ⁵⁸ The children may be included in planning and working with their leaders according to their abilities in "Evangelistic Ministries, in which children who are not included in the church family will be introduced to the love of Jesus through such outreach programs as: Vacation Bible Schools, children's Branch Sabbath Schools, Neighborhood Bible Clubs, and Story Hours." ⁵⁹

Youth Ministries:

“The primary focus of youth ministry is the salvation of youth through Jesus Christ.”⁶⁰ “The church works for and with its youth through the AYS [Adventist Youth Society]. Under the AYS leader youth are to work together in development of a strong youth ministry that includes spiritual, mental, and physical development of each individual, Christian social interaction, and an active witnessing program that supports the general soul-winning plans of the church.”⁶¹ The Spirit of Prophecy lays out objectives of the youth organization that include (1) training the youth to work for other youth, (2) recruiting the youth to help their church, and (3) to work “for those who are not of our faith.”⁶²

“In seeking to reach these objectives the youth are called upon (1) to pray together, (2) to study the Word together, (3) to fellowship together in Christian social interaction, (4) to act together in small groups to carry out well-laid plans for witnessing, (5) to develop tact and skill and talent in the Master’s service, and (6) to encourage one another in spiritual growth.”⁶³ “Young men and women are invited to give God the strength of their youth, that through the exercise of their powers, through keen thought and vigorous action, they may bring glory to Him and salvation to their fellow-men.”⁶⁴

There are many aspects of this ministry such as: Adventist Youth, Adventist Junior Youth, Ambassador Club, Pathfinder Club, and Adventure Club.⁶⁵ As mentioned under children’s ministry above, youth ministry with its unlimited potential should be a focus of top priority in the missionary program of the local church.

Publishing Ministries:

The publishing ministries coordinator and publishing ministries council lead out in literature and DVD distribution. Members should be encouraged and trained to carry and distribute a variety of tracts, DVDs, booklets, and leaflets ad-

vertizing media programs, etc. We have been instructed, “Let every believer scatter broadcast tracts and leaflets and books containing the message for this time.”⁶⁶ What would happen if every member who is in contact with people carried material and prayed daily, “Lord, guide me to someone today with whom I can share and show me what to say and what to leave with them?”

In addition to total membership involvement, God’s messenger says, “We need colporteurs, who will go forth to circulate our publications everywhere.”⁶⁷ And “God calls for workers from every church among us to enter His service as canvasser evangelists [now called literature evangelists].”⁶⁸ Their work can provide a constant flow of interests to the church. We know of nothing that can better assist in finding Bible study interests and interests to attend an area-wide evangelistic campaign than the literature ministry. If homes are visited with tracts and literature months before the campaign, the harvest can be abundant.

It is the happy privilege of the publishing ministries coordinator to give practical training to the membership and to find, train, and encourage literature evangelists in this work that is equal to the gospel ministry.⁶⁹

Community Services/Dorcas Society:

This entity can more closely follow the example of our Lord in outreach than virtually any other department. “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.’ ”⁷⁰ To help make the missionary program of the church successful, it is important that the leader and associates aim at assisting clients to “follow” Jesus. As you know, “This organization gathers and prepares clothing, food, and other supplies for those in need and works closely with the deacons and deaconesses.”⁷¹ By maintaining a constant connection with

Jesus, and listening and watching for opportunities to meet people's needs and to share Him, church members will prepare the way to offer spiritual help, literature, Bible studies, etc. Their work "includes more than giving material aid. It encompasses adult education, visiting, homemaking, home nursing, counseling and other services." ⁷² All of these activities enable workers to make close friends with clients. Friendship is a key to the heart, and maintaining close friendships before and after clients are baptized is the way to maintaining a strong and stable church membership.

Ministry to People With Disabilities:

This caring ministry "functions under the personal ministries council and develops programs for members and others with disabilities." ⁷³ The coordinator may utilize the services of organizations that provide assistance for the disabled, such as Christian Record. ⁷⁴

Health Ministries:

"The church believes its responsibility to make Christ known to the world includes a moral obligation to preserve human dignity by promoting optimal levels of physical, mental, and spiritual health.

"In addition to ministering to those who are ill, this responsibility extends to the prevention of disease through effective health education and leadership in promoting optimum health, free of tobacco, alcohol, other drugs, and unclean foods. Where possible, members shall be encouraged to follow a primarily vegetarian diet." ⁷⁵

Health ministries activities will include "such programs as stop-smoking plans, cooking schools, health classes, stress-control programs, and related endeavors." ⁷⁶ Health ministry is an "entering wedge." ⁷⁷ It breaks down prejudice. Many who find that their health improves when they practice what we teach on health are soon excited about what we share

with them about spiritual health—Christ and His message for this time. There are professionally prepared programs like “CHIP”⁷⁸ that can be utilized.

Family Ministries:

“The objective of family ministries is to strengthen marriage and the family.”⁷⁹ In this age there is hardly a greater need. When it comes to outreach, exemplary homes of members can be a great witness in the community. “Far more powerful than any sermon that can be preached is the influence of a true home upon human hearts and lives.”⁸⁰ “Christian homes, established and conducted in accordance with God’s plan, are among His most effective agencies for the formation of Christian character and for the advancement of His work.”⁸¹ Forming friendships with, associating with and periodically inviting families, singles, those suffering from brokenness and divorce, etc., to a happy home for social events and family worship can be, if correctly done, a ministry of encouragement and hope. Modeling is very important.

The leader of this ministry can also conduct or arrange for the conducting by specialists of various seminars on marriage and family enrichment, single parenting, parental education, etc. In addition to lifting up the biblical teaching related to the family and God’s ideal for family living, hope and support must be extended to those who have been hurt by abuse, family dysfunction, and broken relationships. “In order to be effective, the family ministries leader(s) must have an understanding of God’s redemptive plan for dealing with brokenness in relationships that sin has brought.”⁸²

Adventist Men:

This “is a subsidiary of the personal ministries department. It includes lay preaching efforts, prison ministry, and Community Services.”⁸³

Harvesting meetings should be part of a cycle of ongoing endeavors by the publishing, health, community services,

and other departments in cultivating the soil of people's hearts by forming friendships, meeting holistic needs, and sowing the seeds of truth. To be successful in conducting a harvesting campaign, it is wise to coordinate, consult, and have the support of the departments that have been continuously reaching out in the community. Friendships and Bible studies in the homes preceding lay preaching efforts will most often assure lasting results—fruit that remains. That is the desire of Jesus, who said, “I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain” (John 15:16, KJV).

Certainly, the love, compassion, and tact of Jesus is a requirement for men working to save the lost in the prisons. They may claim this amazing promise as they talk and minister to each prisoner: “Christ will impart to His messengers the same yearning love that He Himself has in seeking for the lost.”⁸⁴ He will give you the same love for that person that He has, if you ask Him.

Women's Ministries:

Some of the objectives of women's ministries are to “equip them for service, . . . cooperate with other departments to facilitate ministry to women and of women; . . . and find ways and means to challenge each woman to use her gifts to further global mission.”⁸⁵ The leader “develops specific ministries” to accomplish this. She “encourages ideas and plans that maximize women's contributions to the mission of the church.”⁸⁶ The department should “assess the needs and concerns of women in the local church and community, by utilizing surveys and interviews, and in counsel with the pastor and church leaders; . . . brainstorm, develop strategies, and cooperate with other specialized departments of the church to foster programs and activities which minister to women; . . . plan and implement these and other initiatives which relate to women's specific and varied needs, in cooperation with the pastor, departmental specialists, and other

church leaders; . . . [and] facilitate local church participation in annual programs and activities . . . such as the International Women’s Day of Prayer, Women’s Ministries Day, and small group ministries to support women and encourage them in service.”⁸⁷ “The mission of Women’s Ministries is, in the larger sense, common to all Christians—that of uplifting Christ in the church and in the world.”⁸⁸

Conclusion

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the missionary program of your church can be very successful if driven by a vision for the total involvement of the membership through the coordinated efforts of all departments and entities working together in unity with the passion Jesus has for every lost person. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to fully utilize all the ideas in this leaflet, but we trust you will find sufficient here to greatly enhance your efforts. May your church be richly blessed and filled with the joy of our Lord as you work with Him in preparing an abundant harvest for His return.

Endnotes

¹ *Evangelism*, p. 119, 120.

² *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 221.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 36.

⁴ *Evangelism*, p. 105.

⁵ Taken from *The Missionary Program of the Church*,” Lay Activities Leaflet # 1, 1976 version, p. 3. This is the leaflet that is being revised and updated into its current form. (Other than *Ibid.*, further references will state: LA, 1976, p. __).

⁶ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 27.

⁷ *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 18th edition, revised 2010, p. 124. (Other than *Ibid.*, further references will state: CM, 2010, p.)

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 124, 125.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

¹² Even though the Dorcas Society was officially renamed Adventist

Community Services in 1972, some parts of the world still use the Dorcas name. Adventist Community Services (ACS) is based on Dorcas and expanded.

¹³ *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 17th edition, revised 2005, p. 102. (Other than *Ibid.*, further references will state: CM, 2005, p.).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.133, 134.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 121, 122.

¹⁶ CM, 2010, p. 86.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ CM, 2005, p.139.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.122.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.123, CM, 2010, p. 86.

²¹ CM, 2010, p. 86.

²² LA, 1976, p. 3

²³ CM, 2010, p. 97.

²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 98.

²⁵ *Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Handbook*, 2009 ed., p.109.

²⁶ CM, 2010, p. 98.

²⁷ CM, 2005, p. 88.

²⁸ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 609.

²⁹ CM, 2010, p. 118.

³⁰ LA, 1976, pp. 8, 9.

³¹ *Ibid.*, adapted.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.* p.10.

³⁴ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 19.

³⁵ CM, 2010, pp.174, 175.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ LA, 1976, p. 11.

³⁸ CM, 2010, p.174.

³⁹ LA, 1976, p. 14.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ CM, 2010, p. 84.

⁴² CM, 2005, p. 64.

⁴³ CM, 2010, p. 84.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁴⁵ CM, 2005, p. 135.

- ⁴⁶ CM, 2010, p. 94.
- ⁴⁷ *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 10.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 115.
- ⁴⁹ CM, 2010, p. 94.
- ⁵⁰ For information on the Sabbath School Action Unit model, see *Keys to Sabbath School Action Units*, (Lincoln NE: AdventSource, 2008). Or go online to <http://www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org/site/1/leaflets/Action%20Units.pdf>
- ⁵¹ CM, 2010, p. 97.
- ⁵² *Ibid.* p. 95.
- ⁵³ *Evangelism*, p. 47.
- ⁵⁴ *Child Guidance*, p. 193.
- ⁵⁵ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 515.
- ⁵⁶ CM, 2005, p. 128.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 143.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 128.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 110.
- ⁶¹ CM, 2010, p. 100.
- ⁶² *Signs of the Times*, May 29, 1893.
- ⁶³ CM, 1005, p. 111.
- ⁶⁴ *Gospel Workers*, p. 67.
- ⁶⁵ For information on each of these aspects of youth ministry, see CM, 2010, pp. 103-105.
- ⁶⁶ *Colporteur Ministry*, p. 21.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.
- ⁷⁰ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143.
- ⁷¹ CM, 2010, p. 98
- ⁷² *Ibid.*
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 98, 99.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 91.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁷ *Counsels on Health*, p. 535.

⁷⁸ CHIP means Coronary Health Improvement Project. For more information go to <http://www.chiphealth.com>.

⁷⁹ CM, 2010, p. 89.

⁸⁰ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 352.

⁸¹ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 430.

⁸² CM, 2010, p. 90.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁸⁴ *Christ's Objects Lessons*, p. 235.

⁸⁵ CM, 2010, p. 100.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ CM, 2005, p. 142.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

The missionary program of the local church must be driven by a vision for the involvement of all church members in finishing God's work. It should be based Jesus' passion for every lost person. This booklet will help you learn how to work with other ministry departments and church officers to involve members in spreading the message about Jesus' soon return.

For lots more Personal Ministries resources visit www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org. This website has an extensive library of downloadable articles and activities to enhance the preparation of Personal Ministries leaders.

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- How to Run a Church-Based Bible School
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- Small Group Ministry
- Personal Witnessing
- Methods of Door-to-Door Visitation
- Gaining Decisions for Christ and His Truth
- The Work of the Personal Ministries Leader
- Reaching People Where They Are
- Health Evangelism
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