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PROJECT ABSTRACT

PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS: A CATALYST FOR
CHANGE IN THE EPHRAIM SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH

by

Reginald R. Barthelemy

Adviser: Zebron Ncube

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS: A CATALYST FOR CHANGE IN THE
EPHRAIM SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Name of researcher: Reginald R. Barthelemy

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Zebron Ncube, D.Min.

Date completed: December 2012

Problem

The Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church has experienced a significant decline over the last seven years. Nearly half of the membership was missing; however, one of the main reasons for this decline is the fact that church members failed to understand their calling to ministry and as a result they failed to assume their responsibility as disciples.

Method

A series of six seminars were given. The participants were taught the concept of the priesthood of all believers, the duty, and the responsibility of a disciple. Pre- and post-seminar surveys were administered by the researcher to measure understanding and

growth acquired from those seminars. Data collected from the surveys was evaluated and was beneficial to the Ephraim Church. Recommendations were made that other churches in the Greater New York Conference area give a thorough study of the priesthood of all believers concept.

The researcher recommended that follow-up get-togethers take place on a quarterly basis for those who were taught the priesthood of all believers concept so that they can share their ministry experiences with each other, and also to study new ways to share the concept with other believers.

Results

We had an attendance between 20 to 40 participants in each seminar. Four small groups were formed in order to identify those who were interested in learning and sharing the priesthood of all believers' concept. Each small group was composed of five to seven members, and had for their task to grow the group to twelve people. When the group reached twelve, then a new group would be formed. The groups met once a week for Bible study, and then they would go out to reach others for Christ. Ministry in the groups began with the members of the groups, then to the members of Ephraim Church, and then they took their ministry outside to the community. Each group had a designated Sabbath to share their experiences with the church during the personal ministry minutes.

We found small groups ministries to be among the best models to implement the priesthood of all believers' concept. The Ephraim church members have been motivated by the results of these findings and manifested the desire to continue toward that path. Four people have received Christ as a result of the small group ministries, and we are currently preparing other people who joined these small groups to receive water baptism.

Conclusions

The priesthood of all believers concept advocated in this project seeks to train and equip members of the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church for Christian duty. This concept creates a friendly environment for all believers to work together as a team and to foster a spirit of unity and togetherness among pastors and members. Team effort is the pathway to success. This research provided many practical and spiritual life changing lessons to both participants and the researcher. However, this model needs further reflection and implementation for improvement.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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CHANGE IN THE EPHRAIM SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH

A Project Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by

Reginald R. Barthelemy

December 2012

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Description of Ministerial Context

The religious context of this project includes one of the two churches that the researcher pastor in the Greater New York Conference: Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church located in Amityville, New York. He was assigned to this two-church district in April 2007. The Ephraim church can seat about 300 to 325 people in its sanctuary; however, the researcher quickly noticed that attendance at the Ephraim was very low. When checking the church membership list, the list showed a membership of 162; but attendance on a weekly Sabbath was between 60 to 65 people, including visitors. There are many members that still have their names on the membership list, but they do not come.

The researcher observed that the church did not know what to do to address the situation. He also recognized that this case was not an isolated case. Many churches in New York, and in North America as a whole, are facing the same problem. People are entering the church front door only to leave at the back door. As a result a lot of members have been missing for years, sometimes leaving no trace behind.

In order to address the issue, he plans to teach on the subject of a priesthood of all believers as a catalyst for change in the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church. Over the centuries, the biblical doctrine of “the priesthood of all believers” (1 Pet 2:9) has often

been misunderstood, neglected, and misused by many Christians. This misunderstanding has caused Christians to stand on the side-lines waiting for pastors to do ministry for them. This attitude on the part of many Christians including those at the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church needs to be addressed. The finishing of God's work on earth greatly depends on the understanding of the priesthood of all believers and the united effort of both the clergy and the laity. The members of the Ephraim church need to realize that ministry is the work and the gift of all believers. In order for this to take place, they need to fully comprehend their calling to the ministry.

Statement of the Problem

The membership of the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church located in Amityville, New York, has declined over the last seven years from about 162 to roughly 85. Concurrently the weekly attendance for the Sabbath worship service has dropped from 130 to an average of 65. Among numerous contributing factors to this decline, there seems to be one primary factor: Pastoral observation suggests that the fundamental factor related to this decline attributed to missing members, which is a sign of nurturing concerns. As new members are entering the church, others are leaving. It seems that members do not work to stay in contact with missing members and bring them back. Many do not understand their calling to ministry and have been spectators instead of priests engaged in nurturing.

Table 1 and Figure 1 show the status of the Ephraim church membership for the past 10 years. The charts indicate that the church went through a period of highs and lows in its membership growth. Based on the researcher's consultation with past leaders of the church as well as with current members, the three-year growth recorded from 2001 to

2003 was the result of an annual evangelistic meeting. Unfortunately, the growth was short lived. The church had also experienced an unprecedented decline in the following four years from 2004 to 2007, where only six people entered the church as members.

Table 1

Statistical Report

Year	Memb.	Bap.	Prof.	Letter	Lrt	Dead	Apos.	Miss.	Adj.	Memb.	Net	%
2000	96									96	0	0%
2001	96		17		1	2	2	1		115	19	20%
2002	115	21	0	5		1	2	4		134	19	17%
2003	134	24	0	0		1	1			156	22	16%
2004	156									156	0	0%
2005	156	6								162	6	4%
2006	162	0	0	0						162	0	0%
2007	162	0	0	0						162	0	0%
2008	162	10	6	2	9	3	5	78		85	-77	-48%
2009	85	6	0	0	2	1	1			87	2	2%
2010	87	11	0	0				2	5	91	4	5%
Total		86	23	7	12	8	11	85	5			

Note. From the Greater New York Conference of SDA Church, Manhasset, NY.

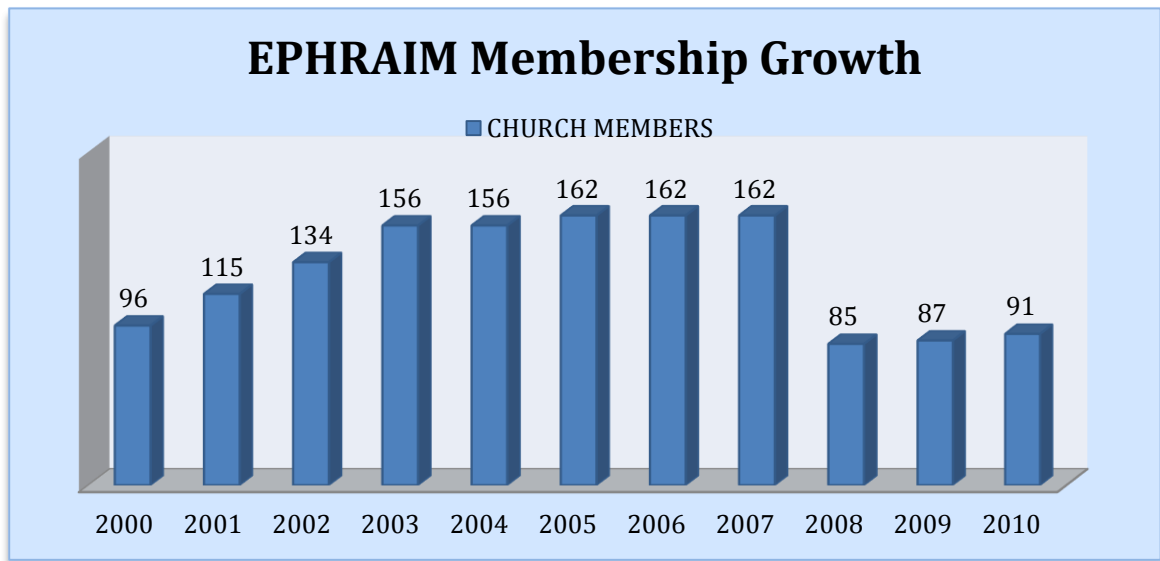


Figure 1. Church Growth Report. Adapted from the Greater New York Conference of SDA Church, Manhasset, NY.

Statement of the Task

This project presents a synopsis of the priesthood of all believers, a concept that has been around for centuries yet it is still unknown to most Christians. Others who have heard about it do not quite understand it. The researcher believes that many believers in the Seventh-day Adventist Church are not familiar with this concept and also have difficulties believing that they are part of the priestly kingdom of God.

Growing up in the Seventh-day Adventist faith, the researcher was never exposed to this concept, nor was it taught to him. He does not recall ever hearing a sermon preached, or a seminar presented on the priesthood of believers. He never knew that he was a minister and that God expected him to live and act as such. This lack of awareness on the subject is the driving force behind this project. For this reason he decided to focus his project on the priesthood of all believers in order to expose the concept to the

members of the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church (Ephraim Church interchangeably) where he has served as pastor for the past four years. Based on a survey done at the Ephraim Church, over 80% of those who participated in the survey did not have any knowledge of this concept and do not see themselves as being part of the priesthood.

This lack of knowledge on the part of members as to who they are with regards to their status in the church significantly contributes to their idleness. The researcher believes that the teaching of the priesthood of all believers will create an atmosphere where pastors and members can join hands to do the work that God has called them to do. The Church will have the power and the motivation to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, and thus hasten the second coming of the Lord.

Delimitations of the Project

This research is intended to be both qualitative and quantitative because it shows the importance of the priesthood of all believers, and how every believer is called to be a minister. It will promote a better working relationship between pastors and laities. Quality training will be provided to the participants via seminars, workshops, and field work, which in turn will give the members of the church a life changing experience in their understanding of ministry. Also, a great number of people will benefit from the research, not only the members of Ephraim Church, but also those of other churches.

The researcher will conduct a survey for this project which will take place at the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church, and its population will be church members who are 18 and above. Questions in the survey will be based on the knowledge of members on the topic of the priesthood of all believers and on how they perceive their church and

their leader. This study will help the researcher to build a teamwork environment where every member will feel like part of the team instead of being just spectators. As a result of this study his ministerial work will be more enhanced.

This research does not cover all the churches in the Greater New York Conference, neither all the Franco-Haitian churches of the Conference. The study is limited to the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church located in Amityville, New York, and the members of the Church. It is hoped that this study will help other churches and communities as well.

This project dissertation will not be an exhaustive, comprehensive history of the priesthood of all believers. Women in ministry and women's ordination will be part of the discussion. The study will also cover different segments of the priesthood in order to raise awareness among the believers at the Ephraim Church so that they can be the disciples that God wants them to be.

Description of the Project Process

Theological reflection in Chapter 2 will focus on the development of a biblical theology for priesthood of all believers. In this chapter, the characteristics of a pastor's life as a spiritual leader, his call, and function will be examined. Pastors and Laity as Ministers in church history will be examined, as well as women as Ministers, with the presentation of differing views of women in ministry: the Adventist view, Ellen White view, and others. And finally, as the members are being equipped for ministry the area of spiritual giftedness will be kept in mind as it is related to the gifts of the Spirit given out freely to each believer in a unique way for the building of the Church.

Current literature will be reviewed in Chapter 3. This will include books and articles on the priesthood of all believers. These sources will be used in the process of developing strategies and programs, which will help in the equipping of laity for effective ministry.

A statistical report of the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church will be collected from the records department of the Greater New York Conference for an evaluation of the growth of the church.

This project is going to discuss what the model of the concept of the priesthood should look like in the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church. The task of this project will be to conduct seminars and workshops and develop an on-going strategic plan of ministry involvement and mentors at the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church. These seminars will be an on-going part of church life for a period of one year. This will be followed by an analytical study that will demonstrate how the concept of the priesthood of all believers contributes to engaging church members in ministry.

Following is a list of seminars that will be presented at the Ephraim church:

1. *Priesthood and Freedom*: The purpose of this seminar is to demonstrate that God established the priesthood in response to the problem of sin. Sin brought humanity into spiritual and physical slavery, but Jesus came to set people free from all types of slavery. He also makes those who believe in Him become a kingdom of priests for His glory.

2. *Priesthood and Leadership*: The objective of this seminar is to show that every priest is a leader because the Holy-Spirit has given to every believer one or more spiritual gifts to use in order to build the body of Christ by leading people to God.

3. *Priesthood of all Believers and Spiritual Gifts*: The purpose of this seminar is to teach the members of the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church how to discover their spiritual gifts and how to use them in their God-given ministry.

4. *Priesthood and Spiritual Growth*: This seminar is intended to help members of the Ephraim Church grow spiritually in their Christian walk. It also provides spiritual growth tools that are designed to address key areas that influence members' development as Christ's followers.

5. *Priesthood and Small Groups*: The purpose of this seminar is to develop strategies for making small groups work at Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church. Ellen G. White (1974) comments that: "In our churches let companies be formed for service. In the Lord's work there are to be no idlers. Let different ones unite in labor as fishers of men. Let them seek to gather souls from the corruption of the world into the saving purity of Christ's love" (p. 115).

6. *Priesthood and Evangelism*: The purpose of this seminar is to demonstrate that every believer is called to "go and make disciples of all nations." It is designed to equip members of the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church for effective evangelism in their community, and to teach them how to share the gospel with people in a friendly and comfortable way.

The purpose of these seminars is to promote and model the concept of the priesthood of all believers within the Ephraim Church and to engage church members in ministry. Seminars, workshops, and entrance strategy will be implemented in the following order: (a) a pre-seminar survey will be administered to determine the attitude of members; (b) two seminars a month for a period of three months for one hour each

will be presented to create the vision with the Ephraim church sanctuary the venue where the seminars will be conducted; (c) a post-seminar survey will be given three months after the completion of the seminars to determine if/how a new understanding of the priesthood of all believers has changed, not only attitudes but also actions of the church members.

The researcher expects this project to help in the following ways:

- A. This project will help develop a lay ministry training program that will enable lay people to fully understand the concept of the priesthood of all believers as it is taught in the Bible.
- B. This project will help members to discover their spiritual gifts and show them how to implement these gifts in ministry.
- C. This project will provide an understanding of the relationship between pastors and laity, their function, and how they can complement each other.
- D. This project will help the researcher in developing his leadership and equipping skills as a pastor.
- E. This project will provide strategies for other pastors to lead their members toward the understanding and implementing of the concept of the priesthood of all believers.
- F. The goal of this project is to show that the priesthood of all believers is more about teamwork than anything else. Working together will make ministry stronger and more effective. The researcher believes that when this concept of the priesthood of all believers is fully understood and applied, the church will experience a spiritual revival and a growth just like the one that the early

apostolic church experienced.

An analysis of the effectiveness of the seminars and workshops and the implementation strategy for the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church will be evaluated.

A report on the experience will be made available for sharing with other Seventh-day Adventist churches in the New York area.

This project will be completed by August 2012. Since a longer time is needed to actually get the best results, the researcher will also do a post-project survey as an on-going program for the next four to five years.

Definition of Terms

The terms below are defined to facilitate a better understanding of the concepts mentioned in study chapters.

The Priesthood of all believers is synonymous to *universal priesthood*. It is a Christian belief that every believer has direct access to God through Jesus Christ and that the church is a fellowship of priests serving together under the lordship of Christ (*Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 2003, p.1327). Priesthood of all believers in the New Testament is the Christian community united to perform ministry according to the gifts received from the Holy-Spirit.

Priesthood: according to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* is: 1. the office, dignity, or character of a priest, 2. the whole body of priests (Jejunum, 2003). The term is also used in churches of the Catholic tradition for the ministry of bishops and presbyters

(Ferguson, 1997, p. 661). Priesthood in this study also refers to clergy, pastors, and members.

The terms *laity* and *people* (from the Greek *laos*) are the ordinary believers in contrast to the clergy, those who hold office in the church (Ferguson, 1997, p. 661). Burrill (1993, p. 33) states that anyone who is a part of the people of God is considered laity, including the clergy. The term laity in this research sometimes refers to clergy and pastors, since they are also part of God' people.

Believers in the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* is defined as a: those who have a firm religious faith, b: those who accept something as true, genuine. Believers in this study refer to those who believe in God and have faith in His promises and practice the teaching of the Bible.

Israelites: refers to the Jewish nation as a whole, the children of Israel, the Hebrews whom God had brought out of Egypt to the promise land.

Ordination: Ferguson (1997) defines ordination as an appointment to church office. The words *cheirotonia* (Greek) and ordination (Latin) at different times in their historical development referred to the selection of a person for a function, the installation of a person into an office, or both together. They became the technical terms in Christianity for the formal bestowal of holy orders, later counted as one of the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church (p. 661).

There is a nontechnical sense in which local churches and sometimes denominations, "ordain" those who minister among them. This is usually accompanied by the laying on of hands (Elwell, 1991, p. 360).

Spiritual gifts: The phrase “spiritual gifts” does not appear as such in the NT. It has gained common usage, though, in referring to what Scripture identifies as the God granted empowerment or ministry on the part of believers. Scripture specifically employs these terms: “gifts” (Gk. *Domata*, Eph 4:8), “spiritual things” (*pneumatika*, 1 Cor 12:4, 9, 28, 30-31; 1 Pet 4:10), “working” (*energemata*, 1 Cor 12:6), and “manifestation” (*phaneroris*, 1 Cor 12:7) (*Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 2003, p. 1529).

Spiritual gifts in this study refer to talents or skills given to the body of Christ which is the Church; each member of the Christian body obtains at least one spiritual gift in order to function.

Servant Leadership: The term was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in “The Servant as Leader,” an essay that he first published in 1970. In that essay, he said: “The servant-leader is servant first. . . . It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. . . . The great leader is seen as servant first, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness” (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 2).

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL BASIS FOR THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

Introduction

The concept of the priesthood of all believers has both Old and New Testament foundations. However, the term “priesthood of all believers” is a later usage precisely by Martin Luther during the Reformation in the sixteenth century. Wayne Jackson, in his article, “Exploring the Concept of Priesthood” states that the Bible makes mention of the “office of the priest some 700 times in the Old Testament, and approximately 80 times in the New Testament” (para. 1).

This chapter explains the priesthood as a community of believers by showing that the priests were a representative group of people serving on behalf of the nation in Old Testament times. *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* states

The priesthood in biblical thought represents Israel’s union with God. Under the Mosaic covenant the whole nation is to be a “kingdom of priests” and hence a holy people (Exod. 19:6; Lev. 11:44ff; Num. 15:40). The sanctity required of the people for the service of God is symbolized in the priesthood, which therefore becomes the mediator of the covenant. (p. 876)

It further explains that

Priesthood and Covenant are closely related in biblical thought. As the covenant people of God, Israel is to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exod. 19:5-6; cf. Isa. 61:6). Keeping the covenant, therefore, implies the consecration of the nation. Because God is holy, the people that is [sic.] to be his own possession must also be holy. . . . Since, moreover the covenant is made with the whole nation, the existence of an official priesthood does not exclude the rest of the people from their special relationship with God. (p. 877)

This suggests that God's purpose was that the nation of Israel was the priesthood. The question arises as to why God set up the threefold hierarchy of cultic officials—high priest, priest, and Levites. These were to serve in a representative capacity, but the requirements of the covenant were resident in the nation as a whole.

The Levitical priesthood has therefore a representative character: it embodies the duty, as well as the honor and privileges, of the whole nation as the covenant people of God. Corporate responsibility must of necessity be delegated to representative persons, who discharge it on behalf of the community as a whole. Hence in public and national worship the priests act as the representatives of the people. (p. 877)

What all this means is that appointed leaders such as priests did not relieve the rest of the nation of their corporate requirements. Their functions were delegated. When the priesthood and the covenant are seen together, it is easy to understand the corporate requirement. God intended that the nation of Israel would carry out His purposes in the world as a kingdom of priests.

Function of the Priesthood in Old Testament

According to Burrill (1993) the Old Testament priests performed two tasks that the people were unable to perform for themselves: Firstly, they served as intermediaries, that is, as go-betweens. When ancient Israel sinned, they did not directly approach God for forgiveness. Instead, they brought a lamb to the priest, who took their sacrifice into the sanctuary. Secondly, the priests performed ministry for the people. Except for the priests, the people were not allowed to enter the sanctuary. The high priest alone could venture into the most Holy Place, and he could do that only once a year (pp. 22, 23).

It is perhaps this mediatory function of the priests that has created sacerdotal dependence in the church even today. Many church members still think that the pastors have been chosen to do all the work on behalf of their members. As has been shown

earlier, such a mindset is a misunderstanding of God's purpose for the priesthood and the covenant. This research is meant to highlight the communal requirements through the concept of the priesthood of all believers.

Priesthood in the New Testament

According to chapters 7-10 in the epistle to the Hebrews, the mediatory Levitical priesthood ended when Jesus came and died for the sins of the world. In other words, the animal sacrificial system itself came to an end with the efficacy of the blood of Jesus for the whole human race, once and for all. The New Testament, however, uses the metaphor of priesthood to communicate the communal meaning as was intended in the Old Testament. In 1 Peter 2:9 the followers of Jesus are called "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and His own special people, that they may proclaim the praises of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light."

As in Exodus 19:5-6, the priesthood in the New Testament takes a wider application than just the cultic officials in the Old Testament or pastors in the New Testament. Christian believers are now a priesthood tasked to proclaim praises of God. This sense of priesthood carries a missionary function as opposed to the mediatory one. One may still see a mediatory function in the sense of Christians standing in the gap in times of crises to petition God's favor to alleviate the sufferings and human ills in our communities. In that sense we all have a mediatory function.

Conclusion

The biblical view of the priesthood, while symbolized by the threefold hierarchy in the Old Testament, applied to the nation of Israel as a whole. This idea of the priesthood

was linked to the requirements of the covenant—extending God’s blessings to the rest of the human race by the people of God. It is this understanding that the New Testament has.

The priests as official representatives in the sacrificial system ended when antitype, Jesus Christ, came and died for our sins. But the witnessing and missionary mandate of the people of God continued in the New Testament.

Clergy and Laity as Priesthood in Church History

The principle of the priesthood of all believers was lost sight of in the spiritual darkness of the Middle Ages. This was a period during which the Roman Catholic Church put emphasis on the importance of the clergy and the superiority of the priesthood over the laity. It was taught that only the priests were able to read and interpret scriptures. And the rest of the people, the “laity,” were not allowed to read and interpret scriptures on their own. Besides, the availability of printed copies of the Bible was very limited and was only made available to the members of the clergy. The result was sacerdotalism, a dependence on official priests.

A careful observation on the Old and the New Testaments priesthood seems to demonstrate that the priesthood was not only limited to those ministering in the temple or who are in pastoral ministry; God extends it to all believers including women. According to Luther, “All believers have equally received the treasures which God has given; no vocation is more ‘sacred’ than any other. No vocation is better than another. God has called all believers, without exception, to be His royal priests--from the dockworker to the doctor, from the messenger to the manager, from the educator to the executive. No legitimate vocation is too low to be the vehicle through which God will do His work.” (Eastwood, 1962, p. 12)

Luther believed that all are priests and have a ministry regardless of vocation; whether a person is a teacher, a tentmaker, a shoe shiner, a housekeeper, a nurse, a

doctor, and so forth, he/she still has a ministry to do, and it should not be taken lightly because it is as sacred as pastoral ministry.

Even though people are all part of the “priesthood of all believers,” however, I believe there is a functional difference between pastors and laity; the difference exists not in superiority of one over another but in the different function each one is called to perform. The priesthood of all believers does not mean that all believers play the same role or have the same function as disciples. It only means that all have a ministry to do, although the ministry may differ one from another.

Laity and the Priesthood of All Believers

According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1908), “the term laity first appeared during the time of the Apostolic Fathers in Clement’s Epistle to the Corinthians.

According to tradition, Clement was the fourth bishop of Rome during the latter part of the first century.”

Ferguson (1997) states that “Clement of Rome (A.D. 96) introduced the term ‘layman’ into Christian literature, by analogy from Judaism, to describe one who does not hold any office in the Christian community” (p. 661).

Clement also used the term to convey that a person who is ‘lay’ is not the ‘official’ at the divine service. This was the problem at Corinth. A group of laymen wanted to preside at the divine service. Clement directs the Corinthian church that the layman ought to remain in the position appropriate for the laity. Clement coins the term lay and provides us with a negative definition of the laity. (Faivre, 1990, pp. 19-20)

The term “laity” is used to depict those who are not in full time ministry, who are not paid or hired, and who are not in charge of a congregation. The term is used for church members whom God has blessed with spiritual gifts and talents in order to do the

ministry that He has called them to do. A lay pastor can hold any position in the church without the need to give up his/her job or profession. A lay priest can still function as a nurse, a teacher, a doctor, a bus driver, a policeman, a statesman, and so forth.

Ministry is not to be seen as a job, but as a lifestyle, something that can be done at anytime and anywhere. A lay person for instance, can minister to people at the job, in the train going to work, or in the bus coming from work, at the school, or in the hospital, without preventing him/her from performing his/her civic duty. God can use any vocation as a vehicle through which He blesses others. Our vocations must be seen as opportunities through which we exercise our priesthood. However, Barkley (1958) states that “all men are priests in their daily vocation. All are priests though their duties vary according to their calling” (p. 18). This included all women who have responded to the gospel call.

Pastors and the Priesthood of All Believers

On the other hand, a *pastor* is a believer who is in charge of a congregation, and has the responsibility to care for a body of believers (the laity). He or she represents God before the rest of the believers, and the believers before God. His or her duty includes the preaching of the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ, as well as getting God’s people ready to do the work of ministry through equipping and empowering them. The pastor also conducts religious rituals, such as: baptisms, weddings, communion, funerals, and also providing visitation, and counseling on a variety of issues.

In 1 Timothy 1, Paul gives a list of what is expected of a bishop.

This is a true saying, if a man desires the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy

of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?). (1 Tim 1:1-5)

A number of passages in the New Testament lay out the job description of a bishop.

1. A bishop is an “overseer.” In 1 Timothy 1:1, the primary meaning of the word bishop is “overseer.” The pastor’s responsibility is to oversight the ministry and operation of the church with the help of local elders.

2. A bishop is a ruler over the church (1 Tim 5:17); the word translated “rule” literally means “to stand before.” The idea is to lead or to attend to, with an emphasis on being a diligent caretaker. This would include the responsibility to exercise church discipline and reprove those who err from the faith (Matt 18:15-17; 1 Cor 5:11-13).

However, in 1 Peter 5:3, a description of a balanced pastoral ministry can be seen: “Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock.” The bishop’s authority is not something to be “lorded over” the church; rather, a bishop is to be an example of truth, love, and godliness for God’s flock to follow (1 Tim 4:12).

3. A bishop is “the steward of God” (Titus 1:7) and he will answer to God for his/her administration.

4. A bishop feeds the church (1 Pet 5:3). The pastor has a duty to “feed the flock” with God’s Word so that they can grow spiritually.

5. A bishop protects the doctrine of the church (Titus 1:9). The teaching of Bible was to be committed to “faithful men” who would teach others also (2 Tim 2:2).

Preserving the integrity of the gospel is one of the pastor’s highest callings.

GOD has called us to be spiritual leaders to His people, to take them to where He desires them to be. Blackaby describes the role of a Christian leader as “to move his followers from their agenda to GOD’s agenda” (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2001, p. 18). Therefore, the goal of spiritual leadership is to lead people to know GOD and to do His will. And the best way to do that is by showing them the love of God in us.

The bishop is also part of the laity. Burrill (1993) states that “in the New Testament, the clergy were lay people who devoted full time to directing gospel work. The laity were seen as the performers of ministry and the clergy as the trainers and equippers of ministry. Yet, as part of the laity, the clergy also performed ministry” (p. 30). These clergies also function as “clergy lay,” meaning they perform ministry just like all other believers, as lay, not because of the clergy status.

Women and the Priesthood of All Believers

The role of women in ministry has always raised many questions within different religions, denominations, and churches. Some people find it difficult to view or accept women as pastors, including some women as well. The researcher personally witnessed opposition from women to the idea of having female elders or pastors. Among the questions that people often ask are the following: Why is it that God never appointed female priests in the Old Testament? If there is no divine precedent, why does the church want to appoint female pastors in the last days? Why is it that Jesus did not pick a female to be one of His twelve disciples? Why did not the apostle establish a female pastor? Or why can’t a woman be a pastor? So many questions have been raised around this subject. Some perceive it as being the will of Satan in these last days to bring women in as church pastors in order to take over the church. They believe that as Satan was able to

successfully seduce a woman in the beginning of earth's history to bring sin into the world, so he (Satan) will try to use women again as his instruments of choice to destroy the church and thus thwart the plan of God for the church at the close of the world's history.

Many theories have been advanced as to why women do not belong in ministry and cannot be priests. Some think that woman was created to be just a helpmate to man; meaning that she has a different role to play in life. In order to address this subject, one needs to go back to Genesis to see how woman was created and what role God intended for her to play in His creation and in His Church.

The Bible provides significant details regarding the creation of man and woman, and their respective roles in the plan of creation. One can read: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen 1:27). Man and woman were the only creatures created in the image of God. And thus, they became an extension of their creator, bearing His likeness.

Woman was the last work of God's creation; she was not created last because she was inferior to man or to other creatures, but rather because of her importance. In other words, God created Adam and Eve after everything else was created. I would say that God saved the best for last. The creation of man was the only thing that was not created by the audible word of God; but instead, God used His hands and "formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen 2:7). By taking the time to form man, God wanted to show distinction between man and the other creatures. God put in man part of Himself.

God created all the animals in pairs; He made male and female together. Then he

created Adam. Adam was alone and sad in the Garden of Eden, so God put Adam to sleep, extracted one of his ribs and out of that single rib created Eve. “Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created” (Gen 5:2).

Notice that God called both male and female, “Adam” in the day they were created. Adam means “human.” Adam and Eve were created with God-ordained differences from each other, but together they make a full “man,” and a total image of God Himself. Divinely speaking, the presence of God in a male or a female is enough to feel complete, but humanly speaking, man and woman were created to complement each other and to feel the void that no other creature can fill.

Genesis 2:19 can help people understand why God created Eve after creating Adam and also why He made her from one of Adam’s ribs. “After creation, every living creature was brought before Adam to receive its name; he saw that each one had a companion, but among them “there was not found a help meet for him.” Among all the creatures that God had made on the earth, there was not one equal to man. And God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him” (Gen 2:18). Adam being alone was the only thing that was declared to be “no good” at creation. By saying this, God shows that man was intended to be a social being, and was not made to dwell in loneliness. So God provided Adam with the one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy.

Ellen White provides some insights as to why God created woman from a rib taken from man. She says:

She was formed from Adam's rib (Gen 2:21), indicating that she was "not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. (White, 1989, p. 46)

White (1947) writes, "The difference in physical features between them accentuated Adam's role as protector. Ellen White observed that "Eve was not quite as tall as Adam. Her head reached a little above his shoulders" (p. 21).

A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self, showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation. "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it" (Eph 5:29). "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one" (Gen 2:24).

So it is safe to state that in creating woman last, God wanted man to understand the importance of woman. The absence of Eve in the first hours of Adam's life made him see his need for companionship; and thus Eve was more appreciated when she came into his life. This explains Adam's sin. He chose to sin by eating the forbidden fruit from his wife because of fear of losing her and thus go back into loneliness.

Before sin, we see that authority had been given to both man and woman by God to rule and have dominion over His creation (Gen 1:28). Up until that time, there was no mention of man's dominion over woman. However, after sin, God pronounced His sentences against Adam and Eve as a consequence of their sin. Eve's punishment appears to be more severe for her attempt to gain knowledge, and for leading her husband into sin. "Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen 3:16).

We clearly see that after sin, there is dominion of man over woman. In 1 Timothy 2:11-15, it says that women are not permitted to have authority over men and that they must be silent because Adam was formed first then Eve. John Calvin on the other hand declared that

woman is guiltier than man, because she was seduced by Satan, and so diverted her husband from obedience to God that she was an instrument of death leading to all perdition. It is necessary that woman recognize this, and that she learn to what she is subjected; and not only against her husband. This is reason enough why today she is placed below and that she bears within her ignominy and shame (Tarico, 2012, p. 1).

Adventist View on Women in Ministry

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has taken a position on women in ministry and women's ordination. At the 1990 General Conference session, church leadership overwhelmingly voted not to ordain women as pastors. The vote against women ordination was 1,173 and in favor was just 377. In 1995, the recommendation to give each division the right to authorize the ordination of individuals within its territory came from the North American Division through the 1994 Annual Council. It was rejected by a margin of 66% to 34% (Benton, 1990, p. 15).

However, some conferences, notably in the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, are slowly, but progressively hiring women as pastors. Some congregations, especially in North America, are getting used to the idea of accepting females as their pastors.

On May 18, 2009, the *Adventist News Network* which is the official news service of the Seventh-day Adventist world church reported:

More than half of Adventist pastors in China are women. Hao Ya Jie, 46, is the pastor of the Beiguan Seventh-day Adventist Church in Shenyang, China. Hao Ya Jie leads the 7,000 members Beiguan Adventist church in China. The church started with 9

members in 1985 and now has 7,000 members with 117 satellite churches. (See Appendix G)

Dudley (1996) makes the following observation stating,

In general, women pastors are underemployed, paid lower salaries, and are less likely to be considered for more prestigious positions. However, in congregations where they serve, they are generally accepted and appreciated by members of the congregation, fellow male pastors, and judicatory officials. Furthermore, female pastors generally perform competently and exhibit ability to perform pastoral tasks.

However, in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, there are two dominant views regarding women serving as pastors, priests, or to receive ordination. Some are for and others are against. Some prominent, well educated and influential leaders can be found who hold opposite views one from another. Among those who argue against women in ministry, there must be mention of men like Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, and Doug Batchelor, speaker/director of Amazing Facts and senior pastor of the Sacramento Central Adventist Church.

Argument Against Ordination

Doug Batchelor (2010) presents a small sample of scriptural principles that confirm his position against women ordination:

- From the Garden of Eden, God established male leadership within the family and church (Gen 3:16; 1 Tim 2:13).
- While the Lord called the entire nation of Israel to be a kingdom of priests, only men were appointed to serve as priests for the sanctuary (Exod12:3; 29:10; 1 Pet 2:9).
- While men and women were both called as prophets, only men ever offered sacrifices (Lev 1:7, 8).
- Only men were anointed by God to serve as kings of Israel and Judah.

- “I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God” (1 Cor 11:3).
- Pastors, elders, and bishops should be “husband of one wife” (Titus 1:6; 1 Tim 3:2).
- While Jesus engaged women to share the gospel, He called only men to serve in the capacity of apostle. When Judas died, his replacement was chosen from among men (Mark 3:14; Acts 1:21).

However, Doug Batchelor claims that he believes and has always preached that every male and female in the church should be involved in ministry; then he continues, “but a woman being empowered for ministry is a separate issue from a woman being ordained as a pastor” (Batchelor, 2010, pp. 1-2).

In the book *Receiving the Word*, Samuel Koranteng-Pipim states that ordaining women as elders or pastors is new light that the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist church is being urged to embrace. For more than 100 years, the Adventists have been unanimous in their view that no precedent for the practice of ordaining women can be found in Scripture or in the writings of Ellen G. White and the early Seventh-day Adventist Church. (1996, pp. 123-126)

He claims that this has been the long-standing biblical position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Arguments for Ordination

There are also those who advocate in favor of women in ministry and women ordination. In 1995, 14 pro-ordination thought leaders produced a 408-page book, *The Welcome Table: Setting a Table for Ordained Women*. In this work some of the authors argued that Bible passages (Eph 5:22-33; Col 3:18, 19; 1 Pet 3:1-7; 1 Cor 11:3, 11, 12;

14:34, 35; 1 Tim 2:11-14; 3:2; and Titus 1:6) that Adventists historically understood as having a bearing on male-female role relations in both the home and the church, are the product of the Bible writers' faulty logic or mistaken rabbinic interpretations in vogue in their day. In 1998, the second major pro-ordination work was published by some 20 scholars at Andrews University. These two works provide many arguments in favor of women in ministry and ordination of women (Habada & Brillhart, 1995).

Welcome Table and Women in Ministry

This study takes the position that the account of Genesis 1-3 shows that Adam and Eve enjoyed "full equality" of "shared leadership." "Male headship and female submission were introduced by God after the fall" (Habada & Brillhart, 1995, p. 228).

Habada and Brillhart claim that the Bible reveals that there was actually at least one "woman priest" in the Old Testament. Jacques Doukhan, in "Women in Ministry," states that God had ordained Eve as a priest alongside Adam after the fall; He dressed both as priests in the Garden of Eden using animal skin (Gen 3:21; Vyhmeister, 1998, p. 36).

Habada and Brillhart say that the silence and the neutrality in Scripture on that issue exhibit that it is not forbidden. In this argument, biblical examples and texts that teach male headship and female supporting roles, within the complementary relationship of spiritual equals in the home and church, were explained away as "culturally conditioned." For them, ordaining women as elders or pastors in the church is a 'power' issue; a 'cultural' issue; it has to do with 'equality,' 'capability,' and 'ability' of male and female. The issue of women's ordination is not theological but 'ecclesiological'; the issue

of women's ordination is an example of "unity in diversity"; the issue has to do with the "Spirit's leading" or "progressive revelation."

Habada and Brillhart claim that women like prophetesses Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah have exercised headship or leadership roles over men. They claim that the Bible reveals "women apostles and leaders" in the New Testament. Junia (Rom 16:7), for example, was an outstanding "female apostle," and Phoebe (Rom 16:1, 2) was a "female minister" (1995, pp. 192, 193).

They also claim that the New Testament teaching of "the priesthood of all believers" suggests that women may be ordained as elders or pastors. Also, from a careful study of early Seventh-day Adventist history they believe that it reveals women actually served as pastors in those days and were issued ministerial certificates. Ellen G. White apparently endorsed the call of such women to the Gospel ministry.

Habada and Brillhart (1995) claim that the 1870 General Conference session established a committee to outline a course of study for ministers, and both men and women were to attend the course of lecture that would "qualify them to teach the words to others" (p. 30).

According to Habada and Brillhart (1995), the early Seventh-day Adventist history reveals that women actually served as pastors in those days and were issued ministerial certificates. Based on records, at least one of them, a Mrs. Wightman, "had been paid the salary of an ordain minister" (pp. 30, 56).

They claim that the 1881 General Conference session voted to ordain women, but the vote was apparently ignored or killed by the all-male General Conference Committee that was comprised of George I. Butler, Stephen Haskell, and Uriah Smith.

Arguments For and Against From Some Other Denominations and Authors

The issue of women ordination is not only a Seventh-day Adventist issue; almost all churches in the Christendom are confronted with that same issue. However, some are beginning to slowly put the issue behind them by including women to serve as pastors, and also to be ordained as such. Below is a list of a few major churches where women serve and being ordained as pastors:

Many evangelical feminists openly claim that the Bible contains errors concerning the role of women in ministry. Clark Pinnock (1977) points out that one such author, Paul Jewett, in his book *Man as Male and Female*, even accuses Paul of a sub-Christian view on women in passages that he cannot harmonize with Galatians 3:28. Pinnock said that if it is true that the human authors of Scripture could commit such errors, then God does not always speak in Scripture—and therefore the reader must determine when God speaks and when he does not. Pinnock concludes that “in principle this seems to be a liberal, not firmly evangelical, theological methodology, and therefore is a disturbing doctrinal development” (pp. 69-70).

The evangelical feminists seem to use the method of comparing scripture with scripture as method of interpretation. Jewett justifies the use of this method by saying that in Mark 10:3-5, Jesus compared scripture with scripture to answer the Pharisees when they questioned Him on His view on divorce. He states that “while Jesus acknowledged that Mosaic legislation allowed for divorce, He recognized that this allowance did not express God’s true intent for marriage in creation. Jesus, in citing Genesis 1:27 and 2:24, said that God gave permission for divorce in Deuteronomy 24:1 because the hearts of the

people were hard—a cultural conditioning. Divorce was not the perfect will of God” (House, 1995, p. 17).

Jewett applies the same reasoning to his interpretation of Paul’s instruction concerning women. He writes,

Such reasoning, we submit, is analogous . . . to that which we have followed in seeking to understand the Pauline statement of sexual hierarchy in the light of the creation ordinance of sexual partnership. To say that a man may write a bill of divorce and put away his wife, or to say that woman by definition is subordinate to the man, is to come short of the revealed intent of the Creator; it is to break the analogy of faith. (Jewett, 1975, pp. 136-137)

Orthodox Church

Thomas Hopko, in his book *Women and the Priesthood*, speaks on the position of a few church fathers in the Orthodox Church on women’s ordination or in ministry over the centuries saying that:

At the beginning of the third century Tertullian states unambiguously: “it is not permitted for a woman to speak in church, or to teach, or to anoint, or to make the offering, or to claim for herself any office performed by men or any priestly ministry. (1999, p. 31)

St. Epiphanius of Salamis said: “Since the beginning of time, a woman has never served as priest” (p. 31). Hopko also said that

in the Old Testament there were women priests in the pagan fertility cults. In the New Testament, he continues, although we find female prophets (Acts 21:9), no woman is ever an apostle, bishop or presbyter. Christ had many women among his immediate followers—Mary His mother, Salome and others from Galilee, Martha and Mary the sisters of Lazarus—yet on none of them did He confer the apostolate or priesthood (Hopko, 1999, p. 32).

United Church of Christ

The United Church of Christ is a strong supporter for ministries of women. This is paragraph 17 from its Constitution:

The United Church of Christ recognizes that God calls the whole church and every member to participate in and extend the ministry of Jesus Christ by witnessing to the gospel in church and society. The United Church of Christ seeks to undergird the ministry of its members by nurturing faith, calling forth gifts, and equipping members for Christian service. (Wessinger, 1996, p. 59)

The Hartford Institute for Religion Research provides in the “Fast Facts” section in Table 2 showing a partial list of churches and denominations with the percentage of their clergy women:

Table 2

Number and Percentage of Clergywomen 1977 & 2000

Faith Group	1977	2000
American Baptist Church	157 (3%)	1,032 (13%)
Disciples of Christ	388 (9%)	1,564 (22%)
Episcopal Church	94 (1%)	3,482 (20%)
Evangelical Lutheran Church America	2,358 (13%)
Presbyterian Church USA	350 (3%)	3,715 (18%)
United Methodist Church	319 (2%)	4,370 (17%)
Conservative Judaism	0	127 (9%)
Reformed Judaism	3 (.2%)	346 (14%)

Note. Taken from Olson et al., *Women with a Mission*, University of Alabama Press 2005, p. 8.

As one can observe, this statistic only included a few churches, and was taken in 2005. I think by now the number of women might be nearly doubled or significantly increased in most of these churches.

Ellen White’s View on Women in Ministry

Ellen G. White was one of the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and made many statements regarding women’s role in ministry and in the home. She placed a high value on women’s domestic role as a wife and as a mother and believed that the first

duty assigned to woman by God was that of being a wife. She was to be “a help meet” for Adam, meaning a wife, someone who would be there for him when he needed her most, his life partner, his other half, and the one who would fill the void in him. Eve’s second duty was to be a mother. Eve was a wife to Adam and a mother to Cain and Abel.

Talking to women as wives and mothers, White (2005) states that “wives and mothers should in no case neglect their husbands and children; but they can do much without neglecting home duties, and all have not these responsibilities” (p. 18).

White (1980) comments on how religious activities should not supersede care of family.

If you ignore your duty as a wife and mother and hold out your hands for the Lord to put another class of work in them, be sure that He will not contradict Himself; He points you to the duty you have to do at home. If you have the idea that some work greater and holier than this has been entrusted to you, you are under a deception. By faithfulness in your own home, working for the souls of those who are nearest to you, you may be gaining a fitness to work for Christ in a wider field. But be sure that those who are neglectful of their duty in the home circle are not prepared to work for other souls. (p. 245)

Ellen White gave further insight into the reason why Eve left her God-ordained sphere. She said:

Eve had been perfectly happy by her husband’s side in her Eden home; but, like restless modern Eves, she was flattered with the hope of entering a higher sphere than that which God had assigned her. In attempting to rise above her original position, she fell far below it. (1989, p. 59)

Ellen White here is probably referring to Eve’s desire to be “like God and to know good and evil” (Gen 3:5). She also wrote that

a similar result will be reached by all who are unwilling to take up cheerfully their life duties in accordance with God’s plan. In their efforts to reach positions for which He has not fitted them, many are leaving vacant the place where they might be a blessing. In their desire for a higher sphere, many have sacrificed true womanly dignity and nobility of character, and have left undone the very work that Heaven appointed them. (1989, p. 59)

Ellen White, in the two above quotes, seems to suggest that Eve's mistake was the fact that she wanted to enter a higher sphere than the one assigned to her by God. And, she adds, the same thing will happen to modern Eves. It looks as if she said that there are certain positions that are not fitted for women, because that is not God's plan.

White (1974) states that

there should be selected for the work wise, consecrated men who can do a good work in reaching souls. Women also should be chosen who can present the truth in a clear, intelligent, straightforward manner. We need among us laborers who see the need of a deep work of grace to be done in hearts; and such should be encouraged to engage in earnest missionary effort. (p. 472)

White (1974) gave this testimony about two women workers saying, "Sister R and Sister W are doing just as efficient work as the ministers; and some meetings when the ministers are all called away, Sister W takes the Bible and addresses the congregation" (p. 473).

She later encouraged women to be engaged in gospel ministry. She wrote that "there are women who should labor in the gospel ministry. In many respects they would do more good than the ministers who neglect to visit the flock of God" (White, 2005, p. 202).

The Biblical Research Institute Report to the 1973 Annual Council states that "young men and women who should be engaged in the ministry, in Bible work, and in the canvassing work, should not be bound down to mechanical employment" (White, 1948, p. 229).

Ellen White seems to encourage not only men, but also women to serve as pastors. In the *Review and Herald*, January 15, 1901, she said: "It is the accompaniment

of the Holy Spirit of God that prepares workers, both men and women, to become pastors to the flock of God” (Thompson, 1994, p .11).

In the above quotes, Ellen White stated her position very clearly regarding the role of women both at home and in the Church. She encouraged women to faithfully assume their responsibilities as wives and mothers. For her, raising children is a sacred trust which must not be neglected under any circumstances; however, she believes that women should be well balanced; they should not neglect home duties for church involvement, nor should they be limited to home duties. Her last two statements place men and women alike as pastors to the flock of God and as persons to be engaged in the ministry, Bible work, and the canvassing work.

Personal Conclusions on Ordination

Based on the researcher’s observation, Scripture does not take a position for or against women being ordained or serving as priests or pastors. This explains why the church is so divided on that subject. Furthermore, the Bible does not clearly identify any woman priest or pastor. The researcher surmises that if women were not chosen as priests in the Old Testament it was because the priesthood was a type of Christ, the Son of God, the seed of the woman who would come as a male (Gen 3:15). He also believes that this is no longer the case today because the death of Christ on the cross put an end to the cultic priesthood and a new system of priesthood was established.

Regarding women ordination, the researcher thinks it is crucial to have an understanding of the meaning of the word ordination. *Adventist Affirms* provides this light on ordination:

The Greek words for “ordain” in the New Testament mean to “choose,” “appoint,” or “set apart.” For example, Jesus “ordained (*poieo*) twelve” (Mark 3:14); Paul himself was “ordained (*tithemi*) a preacher and an apostle” (1 Timothy 2:7; cf. 4:14; 5:22); Titus was urged to “ordain (*kathistemi*) elders in every city” (Titus 1:5). Each of these three Greek words carries the sense of “appoint,” “place,” or “establish.” Another word used in the New Testament for the act of ordination is *cheirotoneo*, which can mean “to stretch forth the hand” or “elect” or “appoint.” Thus Paul and Barnabas “*ordained* them elders in every church” (Acts 14:23); and when Titus was appointed by the churches to travel with Paul to Jerusalem, we are told that he was “*chosen* of the churches” (2 Corinthians 8:19). The compound form of the word, *procheirotoneo*, appears in Acts 10:41, where it describes God’s prior appointment of the apostles. (Koranteng-Pipim, 1995, p. 24)

White comments that

Paul and Barnabas had already received their commission from God Himself, and the ceremony of the laying on of hands added no new grace or virtual qualification. It was an acknowledged form of designation to an appointed office and recognition of one’s authority in that office. By it the seal of the church was set upon the work of God. (1989, pp. 161, 162)

According to *Adventist Affirms* and Ellen White, ordination is a public acknowledgement of a person who has been called and set aside by God for a particular ministry.

Conclusion

God calls people from all races, gender, and tongues to serve as priests by being witnesses for Him. Every believer is made a disciple by God, whether that individual is a farmer, a teacher, a doctor, a nurse, a bus driver, a shoe shiner, a male, or a female. So a woman believer is called by God for ministry, she is a minister, lay pastor, and a disciple. So women who are called by God to serve as elders or to be in full time pastoral ministry have the same right as male pastors to receive the approval of God and of the Church by the laying on of hands to function as such.

In Galatians 3:28, Paul states that, “there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (NIV).

Thompson (1994) comments that Charles Bradford, on December 18, 1992, states:

We don’t need a text in the Bible that says, “Thou shalt ordain women.” We serve a big God, a God we can’t limit. As Jesus told Nicodemus, the Holy Spirit blows wherever He wants to blow. And if He wants to blow on she, it’s the same as when He blows on he. (p. 11)

During the period of 1854-1860, as discussions occurred concerning the establishment of our early system of church organization, and even the choice of a name, James White concluded that “we should not be afraid of that system which is not opposed by the Bible, and is approved by sound sense.” (RH, June 6, 1859, p. 28)

The researcher concurs with the wise counsel of James White in saying, as we approach and discuss this controversial subject, we need to allow the Holy Spirit to lead us into taking decisions that will honor God and His word.

Priesthood of All Believers and Spiritual Gifts

In every age, God bestows upon the members of His church blessings in forms of talents, gifts for the common good of the church and of humanity. The spiritual gifts are considered to be indispensable in the life of the Church; they provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its divinely ordained functions.

Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, speaks on the importance of receiving the spiritual blessings that he calls gifts. He addresses his Corinthians audience with these words, “Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant” (1 Cor 12:1).

God’s concern is that we are not to be ignorant, but that we discover our gifts and use them. I place priority in helping people to discover, develop, and use their unique

gifting in ministry. Spiritual gifts seem to be different from natural abilities or talents. Some people are naturally gifted from birth, but that does not mean that they are spiritually gifted; however, work abilities or talents inherited at birth can become blessings if used for the cause of God.

Natural abilities are the products of the first birth, while gifts are given by the Spirit (*Pneumatikoi*) (1 Cor 12:1) on the second birth. So the term spiritual gifts is very much appropriate, because the gifts are given by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of doing ministry. So a spiritual gift by definition is a specific ability given by the Holy Spirit to each believer to enable God's people to fulfill the great commission.

Christ illustrated the gifts of the Holy Spirit with a parable:

The kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. (Matt 25:14, 15)

The man traveling to a far country represents Jesus Christ leaving for heaven which is far from earth. The man's "own servants" are His disciples (the believers). And the man's "goods" delivered to each servant according to his ability, and "to each his work" (Mark 13:34) represent the spiritual gifts that Jesus Christ gave to His church at Pentecost through the outpouring of the Holy-Spirit. Paul says in his epistle to the Ephesians, "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Eph 4:7, 8).

In 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, Paul gives a list of spiritual gifts that are available to the Church:

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

Then in verses 28 through 31, Paul added more to the list;

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then the gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

According to Richardson (1988) these gifts are “needed to equip the members for service, to build up the church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity of the faith and knowledge of God.” He said: “When members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God’s varied grace, the church is protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine; grows with a growth that is from God; and is built up in faith and love” (p. 16).

The doctrine of spiritual gifts places the responsibility for the training of believers on the shoulders of the minister. God has appointed apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip His people for ministry.

White (1886) writes that “ministers should not do the work which belongs to the church, thus wearying themselves, and preventing others from performing their duty. They should teach the members how to labor in the church and in the community” (p. 291).

White (1915) comments that “in laboring where there are already some in the faith, the minister should at first seek not so much to convert unbelievers, as to train the

church members for acceptable co-operation” (p. 196).

Spiritual gifts are often revealed when people humbly obey God’s will. The story of the seven deacons chosen by the congregation at Jerusalem church is a good example. The church had grown so large that the twelve apostles were not able to take care of all the physical needs of the body and proclaim the word. They knew that if they neglected the ministry of the word the church would suffer: “It is not right for us to give up preaching the word of God to serve tables” (Acts 6:2). They asked the congregation to choose seven men—men of good reputation and sound character—to perform this task of serving tables. The verb “serve” in v. 2 is *diakoneuw* (*diakoneuo*). The cognate noun is *diakonos* (*diakonos*), from which is translated “deacon” (1 Tim 3:8). This word *diakonos* does not always have such a technical nuance in the New Testament. It simply means “servant” in many passages (Matt 20:26; 22:13; John 2:5; Rom 13:4), “minister” in others (2 Cor 3:6; Eph 3:7).

As can be observed in the sixth chapter of Acts, the apostles commissioned seven men to supervise the church’s ministry to the needs of its widows and other needy people, but while they were doing the task assigned to them, the Holy Spirit revealed to them their respective spiritual gifts. It is written that Philip went to Samaria, and preached and made converts, he then baptized them. He is afterward called the “evangelist” (Acts 21:8).

Stephen was another example to that fact; it was an honor for him to serve as a deacon in God’s church, an honor to distribute food to the poor. Stephen preached the gospel, taught the people, and defended the truth of God with power, and boldness; though none believed the gospel that he preached, and as a result he was stoned to death

(Acts 7:58), however he was able to faithfully accomplish his mission. I believe that his testimony and his death contributed greatly to Paul's conversion and commitment to follow Christ and die for the sake of the gospel.

God's desire is to see His church follow the example of the apostolic church where ministries are shared among the members (Acts 6). After being trained and equipped, members should play their part by putting their spiritual gifts to work. Spiritual gifts, once received, become the responsibility of the receiver to use them. Ellen White says that

believers who refuse to employ their spiritual gifts will not only find that their gifts atrophy but also that they are jeopardizing their eternal life. In loving concern Jesus solemnly warned that the servant who did not use his talent was nothing less than a "wicked and lazy servant" who forfeited the eternal reward (Matthew 25:26-30). (White, 1882, p. 1)

According to the *SDA Bible Commentary*,

The "unprofitable servant" had been derelict in his duty, a fact he freely admitted. His failure was deliberate and premeditated, and he must take the responsibility for that failure. In the great final day of judgment those who have drifted along, dodging opportunities and shirking responsibilities, will be classed by the great Judge with evildoers. (1976, vol. 5, p. 511)

That parable teaches that God will not reward those who are only Christian by name, but those who are also Christian by deeds. He will not reward those who simply go to church one day a week, but those who walk with Him and dwell in Him daily (Matthew 25:14-29).

Summary

This chapter is a reminder to all those who believe in the God of creation that they are called to be part of His priestly kingdom, which gives them full access to the throne of God through the blood of His Son Jesus, "the Lamb of God." The priesthood came as a

response to sin. All sinners depend on it for salvation. As priests His people represent God's kingdom on earth. They proclaim His love to humanity, His grace, and His upcoming eternal kingdom where sins and death shall be no more. The privilege of being a disciple is given to all men and women who believe in God and accept His grace through Christ. In order for the priesthood to function effectively, God through the Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts (gifts from the Spirit) to each believer according to the ministry entrusted to him or her. If anyone has not discovered yet what their spiritual gift(s) is(are), they should pray so that the Lord will reveal it(them) in order to know where in ministry their spiritual gifts can be applied and where they will be most effective.

The researcher hopes to see believers come to the full understanding of the priesthood and thus function as disciples, so that they can have a successful ministry.

CHAPTER 3

PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

Introduction

The priesthood of all believers, also known as the universal priesthood, is a Christian doctrine that is taken from the passages of the New Testament. The priesthood of all believers came into existence after Martin Luther and his followers wrote and preached about it. The meaning of priesthood of all believers differs from one denomination to another, but it involves a doctrinal responsibility to preach and increase in Christian faith. Many churches in different denominations have tried to maintain the concept of a priesthood of all believers including the Catholic Church, Seventh-day Adventist Church, and others. However, the priesthood of all believers remains a big challenge due to traditions and varied views people have regarding the priesthood of all believers.

The following topics will be addressed in this chapter: First, the paper will examine Jesus as High Priest and an example for the priesthood; second, priesthood in the Old Testament and the New Testament; third, what believers should do; fourth, perception of pastors and lay people on priesthood; fifth, the paper will identify factors that have contributed to different views about relationships between pastors and laity on priesthood; sixth, reasons that have made it hard for lay people and pastors to work together and find solutions; seventh, the chapter will discuss pastors as servants and

servant leadership; eighth, priests as servants and servant leadership; ninth, servant leadership in the Bible; tenth, the importance of servant leadership in the Church; eleventh, the priesthood of all believers in the Seventh-day Adventist Church; and last, a conclusion.

Jesus as an Example to the Church and Believers

Different people doing research have examined how Jesus is the perfect model for the church. Many agree that Jesus Christ is the High Priest. For instance, Brug (2012) argues that Jesus is the High Priest and all believers are priests. The universal priesthood was developed by Christ and, hence, Jesus Christ is the Highest Priest and perfect example of the church. Reid (2008) agrees with Nagel (1997) that Christ is the High Priest and model to the church. He claims that Jesus Christ is the priest before the Lord. Jesus offered sacrifice of Himself on behalf of the believers. Believers should not offer more sacrifices for their sins as Jesus offered himself for a sacrifice for them. Instead they should live by forgiveness.

Also, Reid (2008, pp. 331-333) examines Jesus Christ as the High Priest and as an example to Christians and the church. The New Testament does not address priesthood as being like in the Old Testament. Jesus is addressed figuratively as High Priest in different books in the New Testament, especially in the letter to Hebrews. In Hebrews 4:14, Jesus is considered an important High Priest who has passed via the heavens as He offers sacrifice. Jesus' priesthood is linked with the priesthood of Melchizedek as Jesus does not come from a priestly family. Jesus acts as mediator between the believers and God as the Old Testament priests did.

Fletcher-Louis (2007, pp. 57-79) believes that Jesus is the High Priest though He

does not come from a priestly family. He becomes the nation's Priest and King after the order of Melchizedek. In the Bible Jesus heals a man with leprosy, and then orders him to go see a priest. According to Fletcher-Louis, this shows that Jesus does not see Himself as a High Priest even though He had the power to heal and expel unclean spirits. Jesus Christ could have inspected the leper if He considered Himself a High Priest; however, after healing the leper, He commanded him to see a priest for inspection after being cured.

Fletcher-Louis (2007, pp. 57-79) believes that Jesus is the High Priest as Jesus claims to be the Holy One of God. Jesus claims that only the Holy One of God is able to forgive sins. Jesus forgives a paralytic his sin. The scribes think that Jesus forgiving the paralytic his sins is blasphemy as only God is able to forgive sins. Jesus does not explain to the scribes how He managed to forgive sins to avoid showing that He has power; instead, Jesus claims that the Son of man has the power to forgive sin. Jesus asks the paralytic to stand up and walk so as to show that the Son of man has power and that the man is healed. In this case, the Son of man is Jesus Christ and He has the power to forgive sins. As a High Priest, through His divine presence, Jesus brings people near to God; thus, Jesus Christ is a role model for the church and believers (Fletcher-Louis, 2007).

Priesthood in the Old Testament and New Testament

Peter uses different terms to describe priesthood of believers and the terms used are titles that were given to Israelites at Mount Sinai. In the Old Testament people considered as they were able to offer sacrifices as exhibited by Adam, Abram, and Noah (Brug, 2012).

Before the Aaronic priesthood, people offered sacrifices to God in their families. This was evidenced by the offerings offered by Noah and Abram. Both of them constructed altars and offered sacrifices to God. Brug (2012) states that the priesthood of believers began when God gave the first promises of the gospel to Adam and Eve. The priesthood was also practiced when the family of Adam offered sacrifices to the Lord. Among the Israelites the priesthood of believers was also found after God made them His chosen people. Prophets in the Old Testament claimed that the priesthood would be spread to other nations after Jesus came. Therefore, the priesthood of believers stated in the New Testament does not replace the priesthood in the Old Testament, but it is a continuation of a priesthood of believers discussed in the Old Testament (Brug, 2012).

The priests in the ancient days were different from the Christian priests they were appointed and inherited positions. Today, the Christian priests respond to a call from the Lord. The priest in the Old Testament performed different functions: offered sacrifices to God, explained God's mind to the people by stating the oracles and interpreting the law, and made statements regarding ritual cleanliness. For example, if a person had a skin disease and was cured, the priests declared the person pure as evidenced in Leviticus 13-15 (Reid, 2008).

What Should Believers Do?

Nagel (1997) claims that priests are in relationship with God and other people. Only God gives and creates the relationship. This is exemplified in 1 Peter where the Lord said that the Israelites would be a priestly kingdom to him and also a holy nation. In the Bible, priesthood is directed towards the Lord. Exodus 19 says that the Lord claims

that there is no priestly kingdom that is possible unless it is directed towards Him and His people.

Nagel (1997) and Brug (2012) claim that people who are not in covenant with the Lord are not priests. Non-Israelites were not priests. Israel would have special priests so as to come near to God and serve the world as stated in Exodus 19:24. People become priests when they are born again through Christ. Also, Christians are called to serve God through baptism.

Dederen (2012) states that Christians as priests are expected to perform various functions. First, they are required to offer holy sacrifices like Jesus. God expects people who believe in the doctrine of a priesthood of all believers to do the true work of priests by offering holy sacrifices as outlined by Peter in 1 Peter 2:5. Christians can offer sacrifices to God in different ways: praising him, confessing his name, charity work, fellowship, by ensuring their bodies are holy places by being pure.

Second, Christians are supposed to declare the deeds of the Lord as priests and to represent Jesus Christ to all nations. They are also to declare the deeds of the nations to the Lord. Christians are a kingdom of priests and are supposed to bring people near to God.

The priesthood addressed in the New Testament is corporate priesthood. This is because the priesthood belongs to all believers though believers are given different spiritual gifts; therefore, all the members of a church have individual and shared responsibilities. All believers have access to God and can come near Him with confidence. For instance, the laity and clergy have equal responsibilities in the church; they are supposed to work together to fulfill the goals of the church. Though the priests

are required to lead the laity, they are not supposed to rule them. Instead, they are required to encourage collaboration in the church (Fletcher-Louis, 2007, pp. 57-79, 23).

Perception of Pastors and Lay People on Priesthood

People in society have different views about priesthood, clergy, and laity. They believe that lay people and clergy have responsibilities in the church but play distinct roles. This is according to James and Dean (2007) who analyzed the perception lay people and the clergy had on the priesthood of all believers and how they understand their role in the church in 1950s.

Many people understood their role as being passive before Vatican II. They viewed the clergy as the most important people in the church. The priests were seen as leaders who were set aside in terms of spirituality, administration, and power. The laity in the society believed that they did not have a high status like priests but that priests were supposed to make all the decisions and then the laity were to give the advice. Lay people were supposed to pray, conform to what the priests said, and pay. This was evidenced in various studies on the role of lay people, clergy, and their perception on the priesthood.

According to a survey made up of Catholics that was carried out in 1987 in the United States by James and Dean (2007), a large percentage of lay people in the 1950s believed that they should not be involved in the selection of parish priests. This made it hard for them to take part in the selection process. Of the lay people 57% argued that parishioners should participate in the decision-making process. Another study conducted in 2005 showed that 71% of the lay people believed that parishioners should participate in decision-making. Another survey carried out in 1987 showed that 81% of the lay people thought that they should not participate in financial decisions in the church. This

number increased greatly in 2005. Eighty-nine percent of the lay people thought that they should not be involved in financial decisions in the church in 2005 (James & Dean, 2007).

Further, in the 1950s, the lay people believed that the priests had the final decision on moral issues such as divorce, marriage, abortion, and contraception. The findings from the studies conducted in 1987 and 2005 showed that lay people had varied views on whether priests had the final decision on moral issues. The lay people used in the study were asked to state who should have the final say on moral issues by indicating whether it was priests, individuals, or both. The percentage of the lay people who thought church leaders had the last decision on moral issues declined. Some of the lay people believed that individuals had the final say on moral problems in society; however, a large percentage of lay people thought that church leaders and individuals should work together to find solutions to moral issues and make decisions according to what James and Dean said (2007). The priests believed they belonged to the sacramental ministers and ecclesiological. It was the duty of the priests to give sacraments, manage priests, and teach the believers.

How the clergy understood their duties changed between 1960s and 1970s. The priests adapted a servant leader model. The clergy believed that priests and lay people are called to life in Jesus through baptism irrespective of their status in the church and that they are priests before the Lord. The laity believed that they were an important part of the church just like priests and believed that they should be actively involved in all church activities. The laity also believed that the priests should encourage them to participate in the church activities. The passive model in priesthood has been replaced with an active

model. The laity cultic view of priesthood has led to servant leadership in the church as the laity view priests as servant leaders (James & Dean, 2007).

The servant leader model does not change the teachings of Vatican II on sacraments, but supports them. According to the servant leader model, priests are spiritual leaders and work together with lay people on various things, such as, making financial decisions, during liturgical planning, and religious teaching (James & Dean, 2007).

Factors That Contributed to Difference Between Lay People and Pastors on Priesthood

Various reasons that contributed to the perception lay people and clergy had on the priesthood of all believers. The prejudice and low socioeconomic status during this period contributed to different views on the priesthood of all believers among the lay people and priests. The laity faced anti-Catholic prejudice between the 1940s and 1950s and also experienced low socio-economic status. This forced them to depend on Catholic institutions (schools, churches, and hospitals) to become successful in life. However, the Cultural Revolution experienced in the 1960s and Vatican II changed how people viewed authority and conformity to traditional methods of life. Vatican II changed how the church understood the laity and priesthood. Lay people started participating in church activities in the selection of leaders and making financial decisions.

Reasons That Have Made It Hard for Lay People and Pastors to Work Together and Find Solutions

Lay people play an important role in spreading the gospel. The church teaches that lay people and pastors are equal in dignity. The mission and vocation of the laity is

derived from baptism and enhanced through confirmation. This implies that their work in the body of Christ and place is given to them by the Holy Spirit, but not the ordained office (Paul, 2010). Most of the lay people would like to be involved in church matters, but they do not understand their role in the church and believe that only priests are supposed to perform priestly duties. Thus, the church needs to help lay people understand their roles in the church by doing some various things (Paul, 2010) as listed below.

First, the pastors should teach the lay people about their duties instead of preaching only. Teaching the laity will equip them with necessary skills needed to perform different activities in the church like making financial decisions and the selection of leaders. This will in turn empower them and promote equality in church as they will believe pastors are not the only ones supposed to do ministry. This will help change the traditional mindset people have about the priesthood (Paul, 2010).

Second, pastors should teach about discernment and formation. Discernment is one of the skills that lay people need to accomplish their mission. The researcher defines discernment as the ability to distinguish the right from wrong, truth from error. It is the ability to see and understand things ahead of time. It is the process of making careful distinctions in our thinking under the guidance of the Holy-Spirit. Paul puts it this way, “Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming” (Eph 4:14). By having discernment, lay people will be able to discern the will of God through Scriptures and signs of the time, and thus accomplish their mission. Lay people are called to participate in the work of the church by living according to the Christian teachings from Scriptures (Paul, 2010).

Pastors as Servants and Servant Leadership: Overview of Current Leadership in the Church

The Catholic Church shifted from a servant leadership model in the 1950s to a cultic priesthood model according to Dan (2012). The priests then changed from a servant leader model to a cultic priesthood. Priests believed that they were supposed to make decisions and lead the believers in 1950s (James & Dean, 2007). They encouraged cultic priesthood in the 1980s and ensured that the lay people did not participate actively in decision making and other church activities (James & Dean, 2007).

Today, Catholic priests do not exercise servant leadership as the clergy and lay people do not always work together. Though lay people play an important role in spreading the gospel in the church, their role is inferior to the role of priests. Thus, there is need to change from a cultic priesthood model to a servant leadership model as the church can learn a lot from servant leadership according to Gallagher (2010).

Servant leadership is a kind of leadership style that was developed by Robert Greenleaf. Greenleaf (2002) identified different traits of servant leaders. First, servant leaders listen to their followers. Servant leaders have good communication skills and are able to make ethical decisions. Servant leaders have the motivation to listen actively to their subordinates and support them in making decisions. A servant leader depends on his/her inner voice to determine what the body, mind, and spirit are saying. Second, servant leaders show empathy. They empathize with other people and understand them. Servant leaders consider their subordinates as people who need to be respected and appreciated because of their development. Third, servant leaders help others solve problems and encourage personal development. They are also able to view different situations from an integrated and holistic position. Fourth, servant leaders do not take

advantage of their position and power to force people to comply. Instead, they convince their followers. This characteristic differentiates servant leadership from traditional authoritarian leadership (Dan, 2012, pp. 1-12). Lastly, servant leaders are supposed to help and serve other people, but not control them.

Greenleaf differentiated servant leadership from authoritative leadership. He claims that the authoritarian leadership model gives leaders more power as they are at the top of the model and the people being led have less power. Placing leaders at the top of the hierarchy affects their relationship and communication with the subordinate. It leads to ineffective communication between the leaders and the subordinates. Leaders are not able to give feedback to their followers (Gallagher, 2010). Also, the followers do not trust their leaders. Authoritarian leadership leads to problems in the church. This in turn makes leaders less effective as they are not able to meet the needs of their followers.

According to Gallagher, the structure of the Catholic Church is similar to a pyramid. It consists of different people including the pope, bishops, priests, and lay people. Leaders in the church do not understand the shepherd nature of their priestly duties and this makes it hard for them to practice servant leadership Gallagher (2010).

The leaders tend to rule the believers instead of leading them. Church leaders are required to lead believers instead of ruling them. Church leaders, like priests, are supposed to practice servant leadership in order to transform the lives of the believers and enable them to develop. Servant leadership enables church leaders to communicate effectively with the believers and then correct each other. It also ensures the leaders make decisions that benefit the leaders and believers. The Bible, especially the New Testament, encourages servant leadership according Gallagher (2010).

Servant Leadership in the Bible

The New Testament has a lot to say about servant leaders according to Derek Morris (2012, pp. 31-47). Christian leadership is supposed to be different from other kinds of leadership in the world as Christian leaders are supposed to be servants. Jesus outlined how Christian leadership differs from other kinds of leadership in Mathew 20:25-27. Jesus told His disciples that whoever wanted to become a leader among them was supposed to be a servant to them and whoever wanted to become the first should be a slave like the Son of man. The Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve other people and give his life for all people. Jesus defined what Christian leadership should look like because leadership during that time was powerful and concerned with position. Leaders were aimed at accomplishing various tasks at all cost (Morris, 2012).

Jesus introduced servant leadership to enable leaders to lead by serving, but not ruling, however, introducing servant leadership led to conflict and tension as leaders were not able to be servants and leaders. Leaders are supposed to rule and servants to obey. In addition, leaders determine the direction of an organization including the church, but servants follow. Leaders also develop visions and think strategically and servants deal with the mundane.

Leaders are not able to lead and serve other people and this has led to tension in the church. Priests and pastors find it hard to balance leading and serving and tend to rule instead of serving and this affects the relationship between the priests and believers. It has also affected the concept of a priesthood of all believers as lay people do not engage in church activities (Morris, 2012, pp. 31-47).

Importance of Servant Leadership in the Church

Servant leadership can help overcome the problems that the church is facing by creating a culture of stewardship according to Dan (2011, pp. 17-21). Stewardship has ownership of the creation. Stewards have different characteristics. They are generous and show gratitude for the gifts that God has provided; they are also passionate about protecting the gift that God has given to human beings, including faith. Stewardship life is for the church leaders and members. Church members practice stewardship if the leaders do so.

Dan (2011, pp. 17-21) argues that church leaders including parish leaders do not practice servant leadership. This is because they command the church members and control them. Also, they do not listen attentively to the members and this makes it hard to address their needs. In addition, the leaders do not understand that they need the church members and the members need them. Encouraging servant leadership in church can help change the current culture and how people understand the priesthood. This is because church leaders will be motivated to serve. The motivation to serve comes from the spirit of gratitude which is a quality of stewardship. Servant leaders use their power to serve other people in church and attain the church goals. Power is considered a method of serving others in servant leadership, but leaders do not use power to benefit themselves.

The Priesthood of All Believers in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

The priesthood of believers in the Adventist Church has been neglected and this has made it unpopular in the Church. The Adventists believe that all members of the body of Christ are important and needed for the well-functioning of the church of God. The

Seventh-day Adventist Church has developed an administrative structure to guide them in their daily activities and Christian life. They claim that the main purpose of the administrative structure of the church is to enable all people to accomplish the Christian service that the Holy Spirit has prepared for them (Mustard, 2012).

The leadership structure in the Seventh-day Adventist church is different from other churches. Jesus Christ is the head of the church, and thus has more power over the church than the believers and the pastors. However, some members believe that the pastors have more power than the members as a result they often expect their leaders to tell them what to do. The researcher concludes that members need to be educated and reminded that Jesus has given them everything they need to perform ministries. Therefore, they do not need to wait for the leaders to tell them what to do, Jesus already commanded every believer to go, preach, teach, and make disciples for His kingdom (Matt 28:19).

Adventists claim that there is no clear distinction between pastors and members in the Bible. This is because people are called to perform different roles. Some perform pastoral ministry and others teaching. Others carry out the healing ministry, run businesses, and are parents as evidenced in 1 Peter 2:9. Jesus taught as the only mediator between the believers and God. They argue that believers are supposed to stand before the Lord, pray for other people, and intercede with and sacrifice themselves to the Lord. They are also supposed to proclaim the Word of God to other people (Sokupa, 2011).

The organization of the Seventh day Adventist church reflects the principle of a priesthood of believers and shows that Christ is the leader of the church. The main

purpose of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to facilitate the church to finish its mission successfully and preserve a unity of doctrine.

The Seventh-day Adventist ministers serve as shepherds of the believers, and they also lead believers in a subordinate way. They show great interest in the spiritual life of their members. Moreover, the Church teaches that Jesus will come soon. So the mission of the church is an urgent one. The members of the church should continue to work together and live in peace as they are waiting for their Lord. The church concentrates on seeking for the lost and also caring for the believers.

In order to enable the church members understand the priesthood of all believers, church leaders should teach them their roles in accomplishing the church goals. Also, leaders should encourage servant leadership so as to meet the needs of the church members. This will ensure they listen keenly to the members and help them overcome problems. The organizational structure should facilitate the church in achieving its goals by enabling it to overcome the challenges it faces today. This will ensure the priesthood of all believers is well understood by the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Mustard, 2012).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the priesthood of all believers is an important doctrine as it enables Christians to understand their role as disciples. They are ministers for the Lord; they have been given authority to perform ministries. Jesus Christ the High Priest commands them to go and multiply by making new disciples every day.

In addition, the believers praise God through their ministries, including the preaching of the gospel. Church leaders and lay people are supposed to perform their

duties as they are all equal through dignity. Though people have started to understand their role in church as believers, they do not have enough knowledge on their mission and need more training from church leaders

The Seventh-day Adventist church needs to provide more training in the area of the priesthood of all believers in order to take people from membership to discipleship. Church leaders should practice servant leadership so as to allow everyone to perform ministry freely. Leaders should serve the members of the church instead of ruling them. This will ensure that leaders listen to the members and help them solve their problems instead of expecting them to conform to what they say and respect their decisions. This will transform the church to a place where all people are equal before God.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF CHURCH GROWTH THROUGH THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS AT THE EPHRAIM SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Introduction

Amityville is the town where the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church is located. Over 70 percent of the church members live outside of Amityville. Since its membership comprises only people of Haitian descent, the main languages spoken at church are Haitian Creole and French. This chapter focuses on survey and programming; a biblical view of equipping believers for the priesthood, needs and objectives in the Ephraim SDA Church; strategies to equip the members for church growth, and the pathway for a successful priesthood.

Survey and Programming

The following steps were utilized in the teaching of the priesthood of all believers to the members of the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church:

Pre-Seminar Survey

The researcher administered a pre-seminar survey where 25 members of the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church participated. The purpose of the pre-seminar survey was to discover the area of needs in the Ephraim Church. In attempting to meet

the needs of the church, the survey was also helpful in putting together programs and strategies that have been used in meeting needs at the church and to get members to engage in ministry. The pre-seminar survey shows the responses that indicated the needs of my church members concerning the priesthood of all believers (see Appendix E).

Demographic Study

Following the pre-seminar survey, a demographic study was done. Its purpose was to collect information on the number of Haitians residing in Amityville. This study was helpful since the target was French and Creole-speaking people. The study suggested church growth at Ephraim church to be very challenging because the Haitian population of 915 living in Amityville was distributed among different denominations. Below is the demographic information of Amityville’s population compared to the total estimated zip code population in 2010 (24,811) and 2000 (26,379). The most common places of birth for the foreign-born residents was Jamaica (25%), El Salvador (13%), Dominican Republic (9%), Haiti (8%), Guyana (5%), Trinidad and Tobago (5%), Italy (3%).

White population	8,931
Black population	12,903
American Indian population	641
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander population	729
Asian population	1,239
Some other race population	103
Two or more races population	835
Hispanic or Latino population	5,602

Figure 2. Races in zip code 11701 (area of Ephraim SDA Church).

Statistical Record

The researcher requested a copy of the church membership record at the Greater New York Conference for the past ten years; from 2000 to 2010 (see Table 3).

As noted in table 1, membership was 96 in the year 2000, with no baptisms recorded for that year. Between the years of 2001 to 2003 there was a significant membership increase, 53 souls were added by way of baptism, 17 souls entered by profession of faith, and 5 through transfer letters. As a result, there were a total of 75 souls added to the Ephraim membership. However this significant increase was reduced to 60 people after withdrawing 5 missing, 5 apostasies, 4 deceased, and 1 transfer as shown in table 1. The researcher also noticed that from 2004 to 2007, only six people were baptized and added to the church. There was no profession of faith, no transfer, no decease, no apostasy, and no missing recorded for those four years.

Based on information given by old members of the church as well as the church's information and records, the church was dormant between the years 2004 to 2007. As noted in table 1, there was significant difference between the first three years (2001-2003) where 75 people joined and the next four years (2004-2007) where only 6 people joined. In compiling the numbers together, this shows a huge decrease of 69 people when compared to the first previous three years.

The researcher came onto the scene during a critical period of time in April 2007. At that time he noticed that the weekly attendance was about 60 to 65 people on Sabbath, including visitors. He asked the church secretary to provide him with a membership list. The list showed memberships of 162, while only 55 or less were actively attending the church.

TABLE 3

EPHRAIM CHURCH MEMBERSHIP RECORD 2000-2010

Year	Memb.	Bap.	Prof.	Letter	Lrt	Dea	Apos.	Miss.	Adj.	Memb.	Net	%
2000	96									96	0	0%
2001	96	8	17		1	2	2	1		115	19	20%
2002	115	21	0	5		1	2	4		134	19	17%
2003	134	24	0	0		1	1			156	22	16%
2004	156									156	0	0%
2005	156	6								162	6	4%
2006	162	0	0	0						162	0	0%
2007	162	0	0	0						162	0	0%
2008	162	10	6	2	9	3	5	78		85	-77	-48%
2009	85	6	0	0	2	1	1			87	2	2%
2010	87	11	0	0				2	5	91	4	5%
Total		86	23	7	12	8	11	85	5			

The researcher conducted a business meeting in which this matter was brought up before the church and was informed that some of the members on the list stopped coming long before he came into the scene. The church decided to drop the names of those who were no longer active on the church's roster. Instead, the researcher proposed that prior to dropping the names the church should first make an attempt to locate the missing members. They did follow up by sending out letters, making phone calls, as well as doing visitations. But unfortunately, some of the members had already transferred their membership to other churches. A number of them were not willing to come back. Some of the members had moved to other states, and others left no trace of their whereabouts.

The Ephraim church had never updated its membership list before. As a result, the list had names of people who left the church more than 10 years before, as well as names of deceased members. In 2008, as a result of this investigation, the church voted to drop the names of 95 people who were no longer attending the Ephraim church, which included apostasies, deceased, transfers as well as some of the newly baptized members who were missing. Concurrently, within that same year (2008), we added 18 people: 10 through baptism, 6 by profession of faith, and 2 by letters. When comparing the numbers of members dropped to the number of members added, a total of 77 members were lost in 2008.

This explains as to why the researcher was driven to do a demographic study and to retrieve the church's statistical report for the past ten years from the Conference Membership Department. This also explains the reason why he was motivated to use the priesthood of all believers as a catalyst for change in the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist

Church. He believed that the concept would make a big difference in the lives of the members and also create membership growth in the church.

After collecting data from the pre-seminar survey, the demographic study, and the statistical report, the researcher was ready to begin the seminars. Six seminars were presented on PowerPoint on Sabbath afternoons. The topics covered were the following:

Seminar # 1 Priesthood and Freedom;

Seminar # 2 Priesthood and Leadership

Seminar # 3 Priesthood and Spiritual Gifts

Seminar # 4 Priesthood and Spiritual Growth

Seminar # 5 Priesthood and Small Groups

Seminar # 6 Priesthood and Evangelism

The purpose of these seminars was to equip the members of Ephraim church and to motivate them to witness for Christ and do ministry. Equipping believers for the priesthood is the heart of the great commission.

A Biblical View of Equipping Believers for the Priesthood

This section deals with the role of pastors as equippers and trainers. They have the responsibility to help the members in discovering, developing, and exercising their gifts. According to church growth practitioners, spiritual gifts serve a most important purpose in the mission of the church. Wagner (1976) strongly urges Christians to use their gifts in witnessing to the lost. He states: “Church growth occurs when the gift of evangelist is being used, but it will not happen if the other gifts are not operating simultaneously” (p. 75). In other words, each believer has to do his/her part for church growth to happen.

The Bible presents God as the Equipper and Trainer of His people. He always equips and trains those He calls for service. The book of Exodus states that when God called Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah to serve, He filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic work, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of workmanship. And God has appointed with him Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and has put wisdom in the hearts of all the gifted artisans, that they may make all that He has commanded them (Exod 31:2-6 NKJV).

In Psalm 18, David calls God his Equipper and his Trainer. He says,

The God who equipped me with strength and made my way blameless. The God who made my feet like the feet of a deer, and set me secure on the heights. He trains my hands for war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. You have given me the shield of your salvation, and your right hand supported me, and your gentleness made me great. You gave a wide place for my steps under me, and my feet did not slip. (Ps 18:32-36, ESV)

For Paul, God is also an equipper. He states that “God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work” (2 Tim 3:17, NLT).

In the book *Revolution in the Church*, Russell Burrill (1993) mentions the importance of educating members for ministry. He firmly affirms that a pastor’s primary job is to train members to be disciples. He states that the gifts mentioned by Paul in Ephesians chapter 4 are all clergy gifts:

And he gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (Eph 4:11-13, KJV)

These gifts are given to the clergy for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of

the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ. Burrill (1993) points out that in the King James Version, the comma that comes after “saints” in verse 12 does not belong there. He claims that some modern translated versions of this text eliminate the comma to make it more accurate, which would make it read: “for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry.” In other words, he wants to show that the role of the pastor would be to perfect the saints for their ministry. This text is not describing the “pastor as a performer of ministry, but instead as a trainer of ministers.” He points out the following translations where the comma is omitted:

“To fit His people for the work of the ministry” (Twentieth Century New Testament).
“In order to fully to equip His people for the work of serving” (Weymouth).
“For the immediate equipment of God’s people for the work of service” (Williams).
“To equip God’s people for work in His service” (New English Bible).
“In order to get His holy people ready to serve as workers” (Beck).
“His gifts were made that Christians might be properly equipped for their service.”
(Phillips; see Burrill, 1993, pp. 46-55)

Ellen White consistently encourages pastors to train and equip members for ministry. She says, “Let the minister devote more of his time to educating than to preaching. Let him teach the people how to give to others the knowledge they have received” (White, 1902, p. 20).

White (1902) also states that “it is not the Lord’s purpose that ministers should be left to do the greatest part of the work of sowing the seeds of truth” (p. 21). She later comments on Jesus and His disciples, saying: “The Master Worker chose humble, unlearned men to proclaim the truths that were to move the world. These men He purposed to train and educate as the leaders of His church. They in turn were to educate others and send them out with the gospel message” (White, 1989, p. 17).

“In all His work He was training them for individual labor, to be extended as

their numbers increased, and eventually to reach to the uttermost parts of the earth. The last lesson He gave His followers was that they held in trust for the world the glad tidings of salvation” (White, 1989, p. 32).

In *Revolution in the Church* (1993, pp. 46-55) Russell Burrill states that whenever a pastor gives Bible studies, counseling, or visiting, he is acting in the capacity of a layperson and is not functioning as a pastor. What the pastor is paid to do is to train the members. If he is not doing that, then biblically he is not doing his job.

White (1974) comments that

sometimes ministers do too much; they seek to embrace the whole work in their arms. It absorbs and dwarfs them; yet they continue to grasp it all. They seem to think that they alone are to work in the cause of God, while the members of the church stand idle. She says, ‘this is not God’s order at all.’” (p. 113)

White (1902) states that “so long as church members make no effort to give to others the help given them, great spiritual feebleness must result” (p. 19).

Summary

The biblical view of equipping believers comes from God through the Holy Spirit. God has equipped each believer with gifts, skills and abilities to serve Him in different areas of ministry. He appoints leaders in His church to equip and empower His people for service. The researcher has taught many seminars at the Ephraim church, and also invited other presenters to present seminars on some specific topics with the purpose of equipping the members for ministry. He makes equipping and training the saints an ongoing process at Ephraim church, hoping that the priesthood of all believers’ concept becomes a reality in the lives of the members.

Needs and Objectives in the Ephraim SDA Church

The Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church recently purchased a church building that was a long-time-dream-come-true for the people. However, the building needs some improvement. We have applied for a permit that we expect to come soon; and upon receiving it we will begin our renovation process. We are working on improving our relationship with the community in order to become a more community-oriented church and showing our neighbors that we are here to serve them.

Lavin (1996) comments that

Christians belong to God and to one another. Both the horizontal and the vertical dimensions of faith are taken seriously. The biblical word for community is *koinonia* which means meeting together, encouraging, and supporting one another. *Koinonia* is fellowship in depth, in Christ, for mission. Hebrews 10:23-25 gives some hints of the nature of *koinonia*. (pp. 122, 123)

Our goal is to show Christ by helping and assisting others that are in need. A food pantry ministry has been established where food is served to the people in the community every other Wednesday. This ministry serves as an evangelistic tool to spread the word of God. As a result, we begin to see progress, some of the people have already responded in a positive way to our ministry. In addition to the various services that have been provided in the community, we also plan on providing assistance with home improvement needs.

As a church, we help in shaping people's lives in our community through our interaction with them, as well as by our example. Like White (1940) says,

Many have gone down to ruin who might have been saved if their neighbors, common men and women, had put forth personal effort for them. Many are waiting to be personally addressed. In this very family, the neighborhood, the town, where we live, there is work for us to do as missionaries. (p. 141)

A spiritual revival is also needed in the church. Through my pastoral observation, I notice that church members have the tendency to gravitate more toward social activities;

and often the spiritual is neglected. In initiating a solution to this issue, small groups were formed and meet in various homes for studying and praying. In addition, the Women's Ministry department meets early on Sabbath morning with some members to pray and meditate before Sabbath school starts. The Youth department meets every other Friday for vespers and to study the Bible. They are also responsible once a month for Wednesday night prayer meeting and for one Sabbath worship service a month.

The prayer ministry department meets with the church every second Saturday of the month from eight p.m. to midnight to pray, and they also meet every Tuesday from eight a.m. to twelve noon for prayer and fasting. The church holds one to two evangelistic series a year, and a week of prayer once a quarter. The Church voted a protocol department, who has as duty to make sure that everyone who enters the church premise feels welcome and at home. Visitors are contacted by mail or by phone, and are encouraged to come again or to join small groups.

We are positive that these spiritual oriented programs will help in raising the spiritual bar of the church. We expect to experience a reform and a revival in due time. We also encourage each member to seek the Lord for himself or herself, so that, as a church, we can grow together spiritually.

Strategies to Equip Members for Church Growth

The priesthood of all believers as stated in this research is a catalyst for change at the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church. The strategies used to equip members for church growth are the following: Training, equipping, empowering, and sending.

Members of Ephraim have been receiving training for the past two years via seminars, small group ministries, and Bible studies; which have empowered them to do

ministry at church and in the community; and as a result, more members are now involved in church activities as well as in witnessing and sharing their faith in the community.

The personal ministry department consistently distributes tracts and brochures to friends, family members, and in the community on a monthly basis with the name, address, and telephone of the church on them. We have begun to see big improvement in the church. Our revival attendance in 2011 has been doubled.

Church growth research indicates that 75%–90% of all new believers and new church members come from the “networks” of exiting members’ unchurched friends and relatives. This is in agreement to this statement found in the *Pastor’s Church Growth Handbook* by Arn (1979) who states,

The church is a training center where the people of God are equipped for their respective areas of ministry and mission. Nurture, indeed, comes as a by-product of being equipped and involved in ministry. My experience in Christian education is that a mission mentality in the church motivates people to training and produces astounding results in personal spiritual growth as well as church growth. (p. 134)

The church recently began to use the *Equipping for Ministry* series by Gerson P. Santos. Some of the core courses and advanced courses have been presented under the “Evangelism Certification Program.” Below are the seminar topics that have been and will be taught at the Ephraim church with PowerPoint presentations. The remaining topics will be offered as we move forward with our training and equipping of our members.

Core Courses:

1. Discovering and Understanding Your Spiritual Gifts
2. Spiritual Gifts

3. Principles of Christian Leadership
4. How to Teach Basic SDA Doctrines
5. Principles of Christian Witnessing
6. Prayer: Face to Face With God

Advanced Courses:

1. Small Group Ministries in the Local Church
2. Principles of Evangelism in the Life of Jesus
3. Methods of Door-to-Door Visitation
4. Principles and Methods of Obtaining Decisions
5. Simple Methods of Giving a Bible Study
6. Inductive & Relational Bible Study
7. Basic Teaching Skills
8. How to Interpret the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy

We have also used the “Discipleship Certification Program” from the *Equipping for Ministry* series by Santos (see equipped4ministry.com). Below is a list of those topics:

Core Courses:

1. Making Disciples
2. Discipleship
3. Equipping Disciples
4. Assimilating and Retaining New Members
5. Adventist Heritage
6. Combined Evangelism Program
7. Discipleship and Spiritual Growth
8. Reclaiming Ministry

The above seminars are part of many strategies which will be used to facilitate church growth at the Ephraim church. Due to the fact that church growth is a spiritual warfare, the researcher presented a seminar on prayer, because prayer plays an indispensable role in church growth. The book of Acts reports that the disciples spent less time in strategizing and more time in prayer. In order to devote themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word, they appointed seven deacons over the business of the church. The author of the book of Acts says that as a result of this decision, “The Word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:1-7).

Besides using seminars as a part of church growth strategies, the researcher challenged the members to follow Jesus’ method of evangelism, of which there were three different styles of evangelism. He used one-on-one evangelism, small group evangelism, and public evangelism; however, Jesus would not evangelize without being one with His Father, so He taught His disciples the need to be one with God and with one another. After training His disciples for three and a half years, Jesus prayed that the unity that existed between Him and the Father also would become a reality among His disciples. This prayer was answered shortly before Pentecost. In Acts 2:1, we learn that “the disciples were “all with one accord in one place.” The disciples were told to “wait” until they were endued with power from on high. They did not come together with an agenda or to strategize, but to wait. “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Anderson (2001) states that “Pentecost has more to do with empowering through the Spirit than being filled with the Spirit” (p. 44).

“Empowerment for ministry is the express purpose for which one seeks the ‘filling of the Holy-Spirit.’ Where there is empowerment, there is also the filling of the Holy Spirit. The evidence for the Spirit’s presence is found in the manifestation of the Spirit’s power” (Anderson, 2001, p. 45).

In order to perform ministry one needs to have total dependence on God, seeking Him for guidance through prayer. This step will be followed by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is obvious that no one can be equipped well enough to do anything for God without receiving power to do it. This is the reason why Jesus, before sending the disciples on mission to make other disciples, spoke to them, saying, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt 28:18). Crawford (1990) comments,

As Christ was entrusted with the authority of God for the establishment of the church, so we are entrusted with a similar authority for the continued expansion of His church. That authority is the biblical base platform of church growth evangelism (p. 19).

The Holy Spirit in us and with us allows us to grow. Church growth, according to Jesus, begins with each disciple. As the disciple grows in Christ, growth continues in the home, and then goes to the church, to the community, and to the world.

The Bible speaks on the need for each believer to grow in Christ. Paul, in Colossians 1:10, reminds his readers that they need to be fruitful in every good work, and to increase in the knowledge of God. And in Matthew 5:48, we are encouraged to be perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect.” The Psalmist in Psalm 92:12 declares, “The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in

Lebanon.” God expects His people to grow spiritually. When one grows in Christ, he/she will do the work of Christ which includes making disciples for the kingdom.

The following strategies are taught at the Ephraim church and are among the most effective methods for church growth:

One-on-One Evangelism

This method was used effectively by Jesus on numerous occasions. Through this method He was able to convince the Samaritan woman that He is the Messiah. The woman shared the news of her new found Messiah with her people, and as a result, almost an entire village believed and accepted Jesus as the Messiah. One-on-one evangelism is a very effective tool in soul winning. Each one wins at least one. Hull (1988) states that one-on-one provides a great deal of fine-tuning, but it takes too long and is an insufficient use of a person’s time. One-on-one is important to the discipling process, but becomes a problem when it is considered the primary method. One-on-one as a primary means for disciple making leads to waste. The disciple maker spends unproductive time with many who are not valid candidates. He suggests that in order to cover more people in less time, the church needs the small group, which consists of three to fourteen people. He claims that the small group is the most effective vehicle that exists for full-orbed disciple making (p. 174).

The researcher understands Hull’s position that one-on-one evangelism can become a problem when it is considered as the primary method or for the time it might be spent with non-valid candidates; however, he disagrees with his statement that one-on-one evangelism is an insufficient use of a person’s time because of the time it might

consume. He believes that those who enter the church through one-on-one evangelism or small group evangelism have a better chance to stay in church.

Small Groups

Another effective strategy for church growth lies in small group ministry. Jesus also used small groups to turn the world upside down. The success of the early church resided in small groups. Jesus trained the disciples, which was a small group, and commanded them to go to the community and to the whole world in groups of two to spread the gospel, and to witness for him.

Hull (1988) writes that

Jesus chose twelve for functional reasons. He planned to do a quality job of training; twelve was just about right. From the small group as training headquarters, Jesus ministered to the multitudes and did one-on-one as well. The small group gave Jesus the proper platform to continue ministry to the masses and those who personally approached Him without sacrificing the all-important training of His men. (pp. 174, 175)

After presenting two seminars on small groups, the researcher started four small groups at the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church, three for the adults, and one for the youth. One of the adult small groups existed before, but was not functioning with the structure of a small group. The main task was visiting people, praying with them, and once in a while conducting a Bible study.

Each of the four groups has a leader and a co-leader, and each group should have a minimum of five people. When any of the groups reach 12 members, a new group is formed with the co-leader becoming the leader of the new group. Three of the groups meet every week in one of the members' home, and sometimes they alternate. The youth meet mostly at the church and sometimes in homes.

The groups are making progress, and the church is beginning to see improvement in attendance on Sabbath. There are some people who are ready for baptism as a result of the small group ministries. Members are now being more aggressive than before in witnessing and in sharing their faith. We pray that this movement will bring spiritual success at the Ephraim church.

Public Evangelism

Jesus was also successful in public evangelism. He often taught large crowds about grace and forgiveness, inviting people to receive God's free gift of salvation. The gospel of Mark states that Jesus went out beside the lake and a large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them (Mark 2:13, NIV).

The researcher has taught these evangelistic methods with the Ephraim church members, hoping that by implementing them, the church will experience a successful priesthood.

The Pathway to a Successful Priesthood of all Believers

The goal of every leader is to be successful in their ministry. There are certain principles that one must implement in order to achieve success in ministry. The researcher is proposing in this section some principles that can be helpful in attaining the pathway to a successful priesthood. Mark Conner (2003) in his article, "Principles of Successful Ministry," states that "success is not being better than, or having a bigger ministry than someone else. It means reaching and maximizing your God-given potential. . . . It is consistently doing the basics extremely well that lead to success" (p. 1).

A Praying Ministry

The researcher thinks that prayer should be at the forefront of the principles leading to the pathway to a successful priesthood. Prayer is not only crucial in church growth, but it is also a must for personal spiritual growth. It opens the door to a relationship with God. Prayer is the water and the sunshine that cause our relationship with God to grow. It is also the source of our spiritual energy and strength to do effective ministry. It is the magnum, the glue that connects creature to His creator. True success can never be granted without that relationship with God. Jesus says: “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5).

A Valued Ministry

Every believer priest has a ministry that he/she should value, because it has divine origins, not human. We must see ministry as a sacred privilege and honor. Service to God must bring joy and a sense of accomplishment to our lives. Our calling is to be regarded as the highest and most important calling on earth (1 Tim 1:12).

A Lived Ministry

Believer priests are called to live by example; their lives should be a reflection of their preaching and their witnessing, not only because they represent God, but because of the influence they have on people. Their influence on others can be positive or negative depending on what they project with their words and actions. Paul advised the leaders at Ephesus to give careful attention to their own lives and *then* to the church (Acts 20:28).

Paul understood that life speaks louder than words; in other words, “*who you are* speaks louder than *what you say*.”

Paul invited people to follow him, to imitate his life, and to be like him as he followed Jesus (1 Cor 11:1).

Ministering Through Love

Pastors should keep in mind that ministry is about service; we show our love through our service; and service cannot be rendered where love is absent. No one can honestly serve God if he/she does not love Him. Love is the oil that keeps service burning. The more we love God, the more we desire to serve Him. As we love and serve God, our ministry to humankind will be a reflection of our love and service to God.

Love as attitude reveals a person’s character. Attitude is a choice that we make; and it is like clothing that we put on daily, it can be good or bad depending on our choice. Like Mark Conner says: “You can't control what happens to you but you can control what happens in you.” “A good attitude won’t stop you from having negative feelings, but it can prevent negative feelings from stopping you” (Conner, 2003, pp. 1-2).

A Growing Ministry

Continued growth and the pursuit of excellence should be the goal of every believer because it contributes to attaining the pathway to a successful priesthood. Good leaders always look for ways to improve themselves and their environment; they never stop growing even when achieving their goal. Pat Riley, an outstanding basketball coach, states: “Excellence is the gradual result of always striving to do better” (<http://www.ellisonresearch.com/greatquotes.htm>). We can achieve excellence through our

determination to learn, to grow, and to succeed.

Paul challenged Timothy to spiritual progress (1 Tim 4:12-16). He told him to devote himself to personal growth and the development of his God-given gifts and abilities. The result was that his progress was seen by all and his ministry was more effective.

A Shared Ministry

In most churches, the pastor is viewed as the professional with a special “calling,” and thus possesses a holy and unique status as compared to the members. As a result, the local church becomes a “spectator church” while the “pastor” does the work. However, in order for the church to experience a successful priesthood, pastors and members must work together by sharing leadership.

White (1915) points out that

many pastors fail in not knowing how or in not trying, to get the full membership of the church actively engaged in the various departments of church work. If pastors would give more attention to getting and keeping their flock actively engaged at work, they would accomplish more good, have more time for study and religious visiting, and also avoid many causes of friction. (pp. 197, 198)

The secret of our success in the work of God will be found in the harmonious working of our people. There must be concentrated action. Every member of the body of Christ must act his part in the cause of God, according to the ability that God has given him. We must press together against obstructions and difficulties, shoulder to shoulder, heart to heart. (White, 1944, p. 75)

White (1915) also states that “the work of God in this earth can never be finished until men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work, and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers” (pp. 351-352).

The above paragraphs show the importance of teamwork in attaining a successful priesthood. Good leaders believe in teamwork, and they do not keep ministries to

themselves but they share them with their followers.

A good follower often makes a good leader, just like a poor follower makes a poor leader. Good teamwork requires effort and commitment from both, leader and follower. They must strive to develop good relationships, friendship, trust, unity, loyalty, and genuine love.

“The New Testament writers most commonly refer to believers as brethren. Peter refers to the universal priesthood as ‘the brotherhood’ (1 Pet 2:17; 5:9). The terms brethren, brother, or sister occur approximately 250 times throughout the New Testament. These terms are particularly abundant in Paul’s letters” (Strauch, 1995, p. 110).

Summary

Even though the above principles may contribute to the pathway of a successful priesthood, one may attempt to apply all of them, and yet still feel unsuccessful. However, the researcher points out that God does not measure success according to the world’s standards. According to the world, success means great accomplishments, but to God success is the result of being faithful to Him in spite of failure. Success means remaining faithful to whatever God has assigned a person to do. What the world may see as failure, God sees it as success. One’s concern should never be, what do people say or think about my ministry? But it should rather be, what does God say and think about my ministry?

With this understanding of the meaning of true success, believers should not worry so much about the end result. Rather they should be concerned about being faithful to God and allowing God to take care of the rest. It is the responsibility of the Holy Spirit to provide good results; the believer’s responsibility is to remain faithful. Our focus

should change from pleasing humanity to pleasing God. Staying faithful to God regardless of the end result should be our motivation.

And as God told Ezekiel, “The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says.’ And whether they listen or fail to listen--for they are a rebellious house--they will know that a prophet has been among them” (Ezek 2:4-5).

Paul wrote to Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15, NIV). We are reminded to keep an eye on the approval of God, not of humanity. The researcher believes appearing without shame before God defines success in any ministry.

CHAPTER 5

STRATEGIES FOR TEAMING PASTORS AND LAITY FOR A SUCCESSFUL MINISTRY: IMPLEMENTATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Introduction

The priesthood of all believers as stated in this research is about getting all believers involved in the work of ministry. Whenever God's people get together for a common cause they can accomplish great things because Jesus is in their midst. Pastors and members working together under the power of the Holy Spirit is the best thing that can happen at the Ephraim Church. This union will greatly boost the ministries of the church and contribute to both her spiritual and numerical growth. This part of the research deals with strategies used for pastors and members to work together for a successful ministry at the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church. It also illustrates the implementation of these strategies.

This project was implemented from June 2010 to April 2011 at the Ephraim Church where the researcher serves as pastor at the Greater New York Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The focal point of the training was to equip and empower members of the Ephraim Church to function as disciples, in order to bring radical changes in their church as well as in their community.

The researcher observed the positive responses of the members to these strategies on the priesthood of all believers. The participants were enthusiastic about these seminars

and they demonstrated the desire to learn more about the concept of the priesthood. He informed the participants that the research may have a broader impact on other Seventh-day Adventist churches in New York.

He presented six seminars with PowerPoint in a seven-month period in order to teach the concept, the benefits, and the implementation of the priesthood of all believers. One post-seminar survey was taken three months after the completion of the seminars (see Table 4).

He presented those seminars on Sabbath afternoon from 3 to 4 p.m. The attendance was between 20 to 40 participants. We did not always have the same participants at the seminars; however, about 75% of the people who took the pre-seminar survey were faithful attendees. The seminars were made available to all the members of the Ephraim Church because our goal was to get everybody on board so that the members could benefit from the training since the priesthood of all believers includes all members, regardless of age or gender.

These seminars were designed for one hour; but at times, they went beyond that hour, depending on the discussions that followed. The format followed was: Song service, welcome, and prayer—10 minutes; presentation of subject—30 minutes; questions and answers—15 minutes; closing remarks/final prayer—5 minutes.

Seminar One

The first seminar of this project was titled “Priesthood and Freedom.” After opening prayer, the researcher shared with the participants what he wanted to accomplish through that seminar. He then defined the term “priesthood.” This seminar was an introduction to the concept of the priesthood of all believers. He illustrated to the

participants how God instituted the priesthood in response to the problem of sin. The sin of Adam and Eve brought humanity into spiritual and physical slavery, but God, through His Son, desires to restore humanity by freeing humanity from all types of slavery. The priesthood system is part of God's plan to restore fallen human beings. It gives them free access to God through the blood of Christ. He utilized Exodus 19:25 to show God's great desire to make His people a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

After presenting the topic, he gave the participants 15 minutes for questions and answers. He facilitated the discussion. An interesting result revealed that the concept of the priesthood of all believers met some resistance from most of the participants. They were on defense due to a misunderstanding. A lot of them thought that the researcher came with the priesthood of all believers' concept just to advance his personal agenda. They thought that his motive was to persuade them to accept the ordination of the first and only female elder of the Ephraim Church. Nevertheless, he proceeded with the seminar hoping that the misunderstanding would be clarified as we moved forward. They prayed to end.

Seminar Two

The second seminar entitled "Priesthood and Leadership" taught the participants the concept that every priest is a leader in his/her particular ministry. The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to the believers for the purpose of building up the body of Christ, which is the Church, by leading people to God. Every believer can lead through his/her gift(s).

This seminar provided some ways to build constructive relationships between pastors and members. The researcher shared with the participants a comment from White

(1979, p. 274) describing “the web of humanity” that connects us all. At that juncture, the researcher gave his personal experience on how he built good relationship with the members of his churches over his years in ministry.

The participants were then asked to divide into four groups. Group one had 7 participants, group two had 8, group three had 7, and group four had 6, which gave a total of 28 participants. They were asked to think of at least three ways that could help improve the pastors/laity’s relationship. The result is listed in Figure 4.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Clergy and laity to spend more time together.	Take time to listen to each other	Pastors needs to get to know their members	Show interest
Trust	Respect each other	Pray together more often	Trust and love
Mutual respect Love	Plan together	More visitations	Spend more time in prayer

Figure 3. Ways to improve clergy/laity relationships in the church. Participants: 28.

When examining the suggested proposals made by the groups, one can easily notice that all four groups have many things in common. For instance, all the groups suggest that pastors and members should spend more time together in prayer. Groups 1 and 2 and 4 say trust, mutual respect, and love is a must for a healthy pastors/members relationship. All of the above suggestions are essential in having and maintaining a good clergy/laity relationship. After discussing the suggestions, the meeting ended with prayer.

Seminar Three

The third seminar, “Priesthood of all Believers and Spiritual Gifts,” taught the participants how to discover their spiritual gifts and how to use them in their God-given ministry. The participants were given a brief definition of the term, and then a list of spiritual gifts provided by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. After discussing the gifts, the researcher asked the participants to write down the gifts that they think they have or may have and the gifts they would want to have if they were able to choose. The result was that 70% of the participants identified where they think they are gifted, about 23% of them were not so sure of their gifts but mentioned a few that they think they may have, and about 7% were unable to identify their gift(s). The researcher encouraged those who were able to identify their gifts to put these gifts to use. And he explained to those who were not sure of their gift(s) that often spiritual gifts are discovered when they are busy doing the Master’s business. He concluded by encouraging them to continue to pray and ask God to reveal to them the gift(s) that He has blessed them with.

Seminar Four

This seminar, “Priesthood and Spiritual Growth,” focused on the believers’ daily walk with Christ. It also provided the participants with spiritual growth tools that are designed to address key areas that influence members’ development as Christ’s followers (see Appendix B).

Seminar Five

The fifth seminar, “Priesthood and Small Groups,” focused on developing strategies for making small groups work at the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church. It

dealt with formation of small groups, life of small groups, and other things related to small groups (see Appendix B).

Ellen White (1974) comments,

In our churches let companies be formed for service. In the Lord's work there are to be no idlers. Let different ones unite in labor as fishers of men. Let them seek to gather souls from the corruption of the world into the saving purity of Christ's love. (p. 115)

Seminar Six

This final seminar, "Priesthood and Evangelism," focused on the mission and role of a disciple. The participants were taught different methods they could use to win souls for Christ. We shared with them White's statement (1905) on the ministry of Jesus:

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." 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 counseled. 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. (pp. 143-145; see Appendix B)

The researcher also discussed the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19 then ended the seminar with prayer.

Teaching the Local Congregation the Benefit of Teamwork Ministry

Subsequent to presenting the six seminars related to the project, the researcher also added additional ones on a monthly basis. One of the seminars presented was in the area of teamwork as it seemed that this was a problem the church was encountering in that some members as well as some departmental leaders often would compete with each

other. The members and departmental leaders would perform their task with the tactic of a “one man show” and try to get things done on their own. Consequently, this type of behavior would cause the church to suffer. The seminar on teamwork taught the participants the importance and the benefits of working together.

In order to encourage His disciples to work as team, Jesus told them that “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there He is in the midst of them” (Matt 18:20). This text shows that working together as team and praying together invites the presence of Jesus. In contrary to having a team spirit, the absence of teamwork can also deprive believers or a church of the presence of Jesus.

The researcher taught the participants that the church is a team with many players. Though each player has his/her distinct role to play, one player’s role is as important as the next player. He presented to them Jesus as the Captain of the team, the Head of the Church, who keeps the Church moving forward. So with that understanding, the participants understood the need to join forces together to play as a team and win as a team.

He also used the pyramid model proposed by Patrick Lencioni in his book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* (2002) that is designed to strengthen the clergy and laity relationship. This model creates an environment of trust among members and leaders at the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church. Lencioni states that the most important action that a leader must take to encourage the building of trust on a team is to demonstrate vulnerability first (2002, p. 201).

In one of the pyramids, Lencioni describes trust as the foundation of a good relationship. One of the best examples that can demonstrate the value of trust in a

relationship is that of a married couple. God designed man and woman to be relational beings just like He Himself is a relational being. The relationship between couples can only grow and survive when it has trust as foundation. In the absence of trust, love will shrink and will eventually die, because love is built on trust. The absence of trust is the absence of love, and vice versa. So husband and wife must fully love and fully trust each other in order to have a healthy relationship.

Teamwork is so important that God, in the beginning, created teams of creatures, and also designed Adam and Eve to be a team. He made man and woman in His image. Burrill (1997) comments that “man is not complete without woman, for the totality of the two equals the image of God. Male or female alone is not the image of God, for God is triune and human is a minimum of two people living in community with each other” (p. 22). In the beginning, the only thing that God declared to be “not good” was the fact that man was alone and did not have his teammate. God took no time to make it good what He Himself perceived to be “not good,” and gave Adam his teammate.

The best model of teamwork exists in the Godhead. The first verse in the Bible presents God as a team. Three distinct separate persons are united at creation, redemption, and recreation. They are Three, yet One in everything; they work together unselfishly, and harmoniously.

The Genesis story confirms the presence of all three Persons participating together in the works of creation (Gen 1:1-2, 26). In the New Testament, we see that the apostle John corroborates the fact that Jesus was among the Beings who created the worlds. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without

Him nothing was made that was made” (John 1:1-3). Saint Matthew also highlights the presence of the Father and the Holy-Spirit at Jesus’ baptism. He writes that John the Baptist saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt 3:16-17). Both the Old and the New Testament present the three persons of the Godhead working as a team.

The spirit of teamwork and unity permeates the entire Bible; it is always a great blessing when used under the influence of the Holy-Spirit. In order to illustrate the benefit of a team, Solomon wrote:

Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevails against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken. (Eccl 4:9-12)

Solomon could not have put it better. It is a scientific fact that as folds of a rope are added, the strength of the rope increases exponentially. This is the same for humans, when unite we become stronger, just like when we divide we become weaker. Proverbs 11:14 says, “In the multitude of counselors there is safety.” Team ministry provides needed balance and safety; it provides protection and encouragement during times of opposition. “One can chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight” (Lev 26:8; Deut 32:30).

The authors of a 2001 nature article stated that pelicans that fly alone, beat their wings more frequently, and have higher heart rates than those that fly in formation. It follows that birds that fly in formation glide more often and reduce energy expenditure (Weimerskirch, 2001).

Concerning the Church, White (1915) comments that “the work of God in this earth can never be finished until men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work, and unite their efforts with the ministers and church officers” (pp. 351-352).

The seminar on teamwork has been a success at the Ephraim Church. The church has experienced great improvement in the area of working together. The researcher witnessed a spirit of togetherness among the members and more leaders and members are working together as a team. Departmental leaders often do a special day together, and they have had great success. The Holy Spirit unites members and leaders to work together for the advancement of the work of God.

Designing Effective Local Church Mission Structure

Burrill (1994) states that

the Seventh-day Adventist Church originated with a strong mission orientation. All the resources of the early Adventist church were dedicated to the furtherance of the message. The finances, the personnel, the time and efforts of the church—all were mission-driven. As the church has grown, it has continued to have a strong mission emphasis, especially in the world church, consistently maintaining a growth rate of seven percent per year. (p. 97)

According to White (1940), “every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary” (p. 195). So mission is the duty of every Christian. Russell Burrill in his book *Radical Disciples*, states:

At the heart of Adventist mission has been the preaching of Christ’s message to all the nations in order to hasten the advent of our Lord. The second coming of Christ has been the spark that has ignited Adventist mission for over a hundred and years. (1996, p. 77)

Based on observation, very few members at the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church understood their mission or why the church exists. In order to address the

situation, we came with ways to transform our local church into a mission-driven church. The researcher used the small groups as a place where believers at the Ephraim Church received training on their calling and their role as missionary. The members are now doing missionary work in their community and in their neighborhood.

The researcher developed a mission statement for the church that is read by the congregation every Sabbath during the divine hour, and also used the Principles of Evangelism in the Life of Jesus Seminar by Gerson Santos, through which he discusses the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:18-20. (See Appendix D.)

Jesus does not expect people to come before we go, but He expects them to come as we go to minister to them. He promised to be with every believer as he/she labors for the kingdom. The researcher observed the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church is slowly developing that mission mentality and going in that direction.

Promoting Healthy Pastor-Member Relationships

“Pastor” derives from the Latin “pastor” meaning “shepherd.” The role of a shepherd is to care for sheep. They develop a good relationship and friendship with the sheep; one that is built on love and trust. The shepherd would do anything to save his/her sheep, and the sheep feel safe with their shepherd.

Every human being would love to be treated like a sheep that is being led by a good shepherd. I can understand why David would compare God with a shepherd in the 23rd psalm. This psalm is one of the most famous psalms, if not the most famous one.

David himself was a shepherd and knew what it takes to be a shepherd. On many occasions, he risked his life for his sheep, trying to save them from a lion, a bear, or from

anything that may have been a threat to his sheep. It takes a good shepherd to know a Good Shepherd. He called God “my Shepherd.”

Jesus told the parable of the lost sheep, describing the role of a good “pastor” or shepherd. He said: “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? (Luke 15:4, NIV).

This parable is referring to Jesus Himself who left behind the other worlds in safety, and came down to earth to seek and save the lost sheep of Israel. Jesus said, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt 15:24). Jesus refers to himself as the “good shepherd:

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.¹² But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. (John 10:11, 12)

In his self-reference, Jesus becomes a model of what the role of a pastor should be to his members. A pastor is to be seen by his sheep as a good shepherd, one who makes them feel safe and who is willing to sacrifice his/her life for them if necessary.

I experienced good pastor-member relationships at the Ephraim Church. Most members of the church show respect for their pastor, and it is mutual. But this has not always been the case in times past; it has improved over time. Pastor and member relationships always need improvement and maintenance.

The researcher presented a seminar on managing conflict constructively to facilitate pastor-member relations. The seminar served to identify any area of conflicts and how to deal with them immediately in a Christ-like manner.

Schey and Kallestad (1996) write that “the study of God’s Word and prayer, not

management theory books, create the passion for team ministry and prompt our desires to yield to his will. It's God who is the instigator and sustainer of healthy functional team relationships" (p. 111).

It is a necessity for pastor and members at the Ephraim Church to work together as brothers and sisters in order to hasten the soon coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Formation of Small Groups for Community Ministry

It is becoming more evident today that a small group ministry is among the most effective ways to reach people for Christ. There are definitions of small groups out there. In the book *Step by Step Small Group*, a small group is defined as "an intentional face-to-face gathering, varying in size, regularly meeting together to accomplish agreed upon Christian purposes" (Stark & Keifert, 1994, p. 1).

E. Stanley Ott writes, "A small group is a band of seven to twelve persons (or possibly as few as two or three) who gather regularly to discuss a biblical text, share joys and concerns, pray for one another, and send each other to ministry" (1994, p. 5).

Ellen White in her time saw the need for small groups, when she said:

Let small companies assemble in the evening, at noon, or in the early morning to study the Bible. Let them have a season of prayer, that they may be strengthened, enlightened, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. . . . Angels of God will be in your assembly. You will feed upon the leaves of the tree of life. What testimonies you may bear of the loving acquaintance made with your fellow workers in these precious seasons when seeking the blessing of God. (1948, vol. 9, p. 195; see Appendix C)

White also said, “One who cannot err [has advised the formation of small groups] as a basis of Christian effort” (1948, pp. 21-22).

Burrill (1997) points out that “the purpose of small groups is to give Christians a place where they can grow together. If intellectual knowledge alone is being attained from the study, then the small group is a failure, because its true purpose is spiritual growth, not intellectual attainment (p. 54).

Stark and Keifert (1994), Ott, (1994), White, and Burrill (1997), agree that when people meet in small groups, they gather to fellowship, pray, and study the Bible for their spiritual growth.

Taking these counsels into consideration, the researcher started four small groups at the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church that have for their objective to grow spiritually, knowledgeably, and numerically. He trusts that through small group ministries our church will be transformed by the power of the Holy-Spirit.

I saw jets of light shining from cities and villages, and from the high places and the low places of the earth. God’s word was obeyed, and as a result there were memorials for Him in every city and village. His truth was proclaimed throughout the world. (White, 1948, vol. 9, p. 28)

Burrill (1997) states that “any group (a small group or even a church) that is not regularly reproducing is neither healthy nor a biblical fellowship. Inherent in the ‘DNA’ that God placed in the first group is the urge to go forth and ‘multiply’” (p. 82).

The small group activities of the early church consisted of four things: study of the teachings of Jesus, which they learned from the apostles; fellowship; breaking of bread; and prayer” (p. 59). The Bible study was more like a dialogue where believers were free and encouraged to ask questions, instead of a one way conversation. (p. 82)

The Ephraim small groups are composed of five to seven people. When the group meets with 12 people, a new group is formed with the new members of the group, and the

co-leader of the group serves as the leader for the new group. The groups meet once a week on different days in homes for one hour and ten minutes. The format used for group meetings includes: Fellowship—15 minutes; testimonies—15 minutes; prayer—10 minutes; study the Word—30 minutes (see Appendix C).

Fellowship: We begin with prayer, and follow with praise songs. The group leader may pray or may ask one of the group members to lead in prayer.

Testimony and Confession: We share testimonies, and also confess sins to each other.

Season of Prayer: We spend time praying for each other, the church, and the community.

Bible Study: The group leader leads the group into the Bible study time. The group leader reads the verses or asks a member to read it. After the verses are read, he/she gives time for discussion. This part usually takes 30 minutes.

Our small group lessons are taken from the book *Reaching the Lost Through Groups* by Don James (2001), which is a set of Small Group Study Guides (see Appendix C). The book has 48 weekly lessons. Each lesson has four parts as follows: (a) sharing my life with others, (b) discovering His Word together, (c) my commitments for Him, (d) application.

Meeting Needs Through Small Groups

Small groups provide a safe environment where people feel more comfortable to mutually disclose their feelings and sharing. It is also the place where needs are more likely being met. Russell Burrill states that “we need to be in a group in order to hold

each other accountable for our life in Christ, to truly care for one another, and to adequately witness for Christ” (Burrill, 1997, p. 54).

Ellen White asserted that “while preaching a message of end-time restoration, the church is not to neglect ministry to the physical needs of people” (Burrill, 1996, p. 107). Burrill advises pastors and churches to use Jethro’s model of leadership in their church meaning,

Instead of pastor being the primary care giver in the church, the pastor releases the role of caregiver to his people, who care for each other. Such a system of caring for people does a better job than any pastor alone can do adequately. (Burrill, 1997, p. 40)

The Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church has several groups that act as support groups. Among them are: The Community Service department, Women’s Ministry department, Family Ministry department, and Deacons department. These departmental leaders and staff have been doing a very good at meeting people’s needs. They are very active in ministry, and have been a tremendous blessing for the church.

As an advocate for the priesthood of all believers, I give the members room to expand their ministry and to be the disciples that they are called to be.

Burrill (1997) states,

The purpose of small groups is to give away power, to give away the priesthood. . . . The small groups must be places where power is dispersed among the people. . . . When pastors do this, they will empower their people to perform ministry to each other rather than being dependent upon the pastor to be the chief performer of ministry in the congregation. (p. 41)

In 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, Paul gives the analogy of the human body to speak of the Church, stating that as the body is one, and hath many members, the same, all the members of the body of Christ, the Church, are one, yet many members.

According to Paul, each believer should use his/her spiritual gift to be a blessing

for the rest of the body of Christ. In Galatians 6:2, Paul beautifully says: “Bear ye one another’s burdens.” Smith (1996) states that, “small groups enable members to share faith and open themselves to the whole dimension of being cared for in Christian community” (p. 22).

Getting Laity Involved in a Soul-Winning Ministry

Burrill (1996) states that “we have done a fairly good job with the front door of the church. Thousands of people enter into membership every year, but many do not progress in their discipleship beyond the pre-baptismal instruction. Therefore, the church needs to develop an ongoing strategy to see that people are disciplined after baptism” (p. 112).

Burrill gives some steps to follow in order to keep the back door of the church close and get laity involve in soul winning. He suggests his plan in the following order:

1. People should immediately be placed in a small, caring group upon entering the church.
2. People should be ordained into ministry at the time of their baptism through the laying on of hands, as taught in the New Testament.
3. People must be lead to discover their spiritual gifts. Then they must be placed in a ministry in harmony with those gifts.
4. People immediately must be led to identify their extended family and begin the disciple-making process within the networks that have been opened by their coming to Christ.
5. People must be taught not to depend upon the visitation or sermons from an ordained, salaried pastor as the source of their spiritual life.

By using the above steps suggested by Burrill, laity are discouraged to be clergy dependent; they are guided to minister to others instead of waiting for others to minister unto them. That is the whole concept of the priesthood of all believers. Each believer is a disciple and has a ministry to do for God.

Burrill (1996) declares:

If we are serious about implementing the ministry of the laity and creating churches that are independent of clergy care, then new converts have to learn that Adventists follow a biblical pattern of pastoral coverage. In that pattern, care is provided mutually for each other by the believers, not by the ordained minister. (pp. 112, 113)

The researcher developed an ongoing training at the Ephraim Church using the “Discipleship Certification Program” by Gerson Santos (Greater New York Conference) to prepare members to get ready for an outreach ministry.

I used Santos’ seminars on “How to Organize an Annual Outreach Program in Your Church.” Figure 4 provides the “steps to follow for the combined evangelism strategy” taken from Santos’ Discipleship Certification Program (2007, p. 6).



Figure 4. Eight steps of evangelism strategy.

The researcher provided a training program that equips members to become disciples instead of members. He also organized visitation teams, invited people to join our small groups, taught them how to witness, how to give Bible studies, how to get decisions, how to conduct small group ministries, and how to participate in evangelistic meetings. He also provided training for the new members on discipleship, connecting them with others, integrating them in the church, and empowering them.

Based on a study done of over 460 pastors, Smith (1996) concludes that “empowering God’s people, as individuals and as a community, is the foundation of fruitful ministry. Pastors who themselves have been empowered, and who focus on empowering others, are much more likely to be effective” (p. 22).

Every month, under the leadership of the Personal Ministry Director, believers at the Ephraim Church get involved in a big get-out-to-witness movement in the community. Members are organized in groups of two or more to go out to spread the good news about Jesus. They give out brochures in English, French, and in Spanish with the church name, address, and phone number on them.

We encourage every member to be active in soul winning. Ellen White has written much on the topic of soul winning. “The essential Latter Rain cannot come until the largest portion of the church are . . . laboring together with God” (1896). Winning one soul for Christ makes heaven and earth rejoice. “In order to enter into His joy, the joy of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice, we must participate in His labor for their redemption” (1940, p. 142).

When the churches are left to inactivity Satan sees to it that they are employed. He occupies the field, and engages the members in lines of work that absorbs their energies, destroy spirituality, and cause them to fall as dead weights upon the church. (1948, vol. 6, p. 425)

Parallel Strategies for Church Growth

There are a lot of books written on church growth, seminars given, and website information available on church growth. Many leaders and churches keep switching from one strategy to the next trying to find the right one to grow their church; yet, they still cannot experience growth in their church. Some suggest that if we would use more contemporary music in our worship service or be a bit more liberal, more people would join the church. However, the Bible reveals church growth to be a divine prerogative. We can preach, give Bible studies, have the best music, and be as liberal as we can be, but if God does not add, the church will not grow. By the same token, when we faithfully do our part by spreading the gospel of Jesus-Christ as God requires of us, He will reward us

by adding to the church daily those that were saved (Acts 2:47). It is God's responsibility to grow His church, not human's.

In the book *The Purpose Driven Church*, Rick Warren states that in order for a church to grow it must become healthy. Warren (1995) states that "God provides every tool necessary to facilitate church growth. We have spiritual gifts, and talents available to produce a healthy church. However, some churches are still not growing" (pp. 85-94).

In such a case, it would be wise for the pastor and members to get together to pray to discover the causes for the stagnant state of their church. We need to go back to study methods that Jesus used to grow the Church. The life and ministry of Jesus hold all the secrets for church growth. All that we need is to study His life and ministry and do likewise. And the result that He had will also be ours.

Ellen White advises us to learn from Christ the science of soul saving (1905). She said,

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior 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." (1905, p. 143)

Christ's Methods are: (a) He mingled with men as One who desired their good, (b) He showed sympathy, (c) He ministered to their needs, (d) He won their confidence, and (e) He bade them, "Follow Me." Jesus socialized with people in order to win them for the kingdom. "While we should cultivate sociability, let it not be merely for amusement, but for a purpose. There are souls to save" (White, 1948, vol. 5, p. 599).

Gerson Santos in his book *Principles of Evangelism in the Life of Jesus* has gathered many quotes on soul winning from Ellen White's book *Christian Service* (1944; see Appendix D).

1. “My brothers and sisters, visit the people who live close to you, and for the sympathy and the kindness, make sure you reach their hearts.” (p. 144)
2. “...helping where it is needed.” (p. 142)
3. “Sympathize with them, pray with them, take advantage of the opportunities to do good to them, and when possible, get together with a few people and read the Bible to their darkened minds.” (p. 145)
4. “There is no need to spend much time in doctrinal themes; speak of the work and the sacrifice of Christ.” (p. 142)
5. “Christ crucified: speak of this truth, pray about it and sing it and it will shatter and it will win souls.” (p. 163)
6. “Tell them how you found Jesus and how blessed you have been ever since you put yourself in His service.” (p. 156)
7. “Speak to them about the happiness and joy that accompany Christian life.” (p. 156)
8. “This way you will win their hearts and you shall speak to them about the Savior.” (p. 128)
9. “God’s angels will assist you in accompanying you to the homes of the people you visit. (p. 147)
10. “I am with you always,” is his promise. (p. 144)

Stewart (2001), in his book *The Empowerment Church*, provides a list of 12

reasons why churches grow:

1. Churches grow when they have a vision for the future.
2. Churches grow when they prioritize the study of God’s word as part of the personal and corporate life of congregations.
3. Churches grow when they are open to the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit.
4. Churches grow when they prioritize spiritual growth along with numerical growth.
5. Churches grow when they intentionally disciple others to Christ by evangelizing communities.
6. Churches grow when they continue to care and nurture God’s people.
7. Churches grow through risk-taking, innovation, and stepping out on faith.
8. Churches grow when they corporately repent of their sins and look critically and constructively at themselves in order to grow and change.

9. Churches grow when they mobilize and nurture spiritual, human, and material resources for kingdom building.
10. Churches grow when climate of healing, openness, hospitality, and positive change, where there is no fear of failure, is cultivated.
11. Churches grow when they develop relevant ministries and programs for empowerment and edification that reach people on the grounds of their ultimate concerns.
12. Churches grow when they emphasize the anointing, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and doing the word of God. (pp. 112, 113)

The researcher observes some similarities in the lists provided by Stewart and that of Ellen White. Both of them agree with the methods used by Jesus to reach people. They believe that we need to mingle with people, show them sympathy, minister to their needs, and win their trust.

In January 2011, at the Ephraim Church some adjustments were made in our strategies for church growth starting with a new format for the worship service. A praise team was formed to lead the song service to get the people participating in singing and praising. The congregation enjoyed the new format more because of their active participation. Church members also started a food pantry, where every other week food is served to the people in the community.

The Effects of a Priesthood of All Believers

This section focuses on the overall result of the effectiveness of this project upon the members of the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church. Participation was strong from the first to the last seminar. Three months after the seminars, a post-seminar survey was given. A comparison between the answers from the pre-seminar survey and the post-seminar survey was made. See Table 4 for the results.

Table 4

Post-Seminar Survey

1. What is your gender?

Male	Female			
13	21			

2. What is your current marital status?

Single	Married	Divorced	Separated	Widowed
21	11			2

3. What is your current age?

Less than 18	18 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 or older
	60%	18%	12%	10%

4. Are you a member of the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church?

Yes	No	Don't Know	May be	
100%				

5. How important is your church to you? (select one):

Extremely Important	Important	Uncertain	Not Important	Not very Important
24	8	2		

6. Are you satisfied with the direction that your church is going?

Yes	No	No Opinion		
83%	13%	4%		

7. If no, what are the reasons of your dissatisfactions?

Lack of unity	Hypocrisy	Lack of love		
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8. How do you describe your church growth in the past five years?

Growing	Decline	Static	Uncertain	
55%	36%	7%	2%	

9. What would you like to do to help your church to grow?

Small group	Bible study	Prayer Ministry	Uncertain	
70%	15%	80%	5%	

10. Did you understand the concept of the priesthood of all believers' seminars?

Yes	No	Uncertain		
95%	5%			

11. Do you believe in the priesthood of all believers, meaning that all believers in Christ are priests?

Yes	NO	Uncertain		
85	15%			

12. Circle the answer(s) that reflect(s) your understanding of the following sentence:

- a. Every believer is a priest 85%
- b. Only the Clergy are called to be priests only 10%
- c. God only calls some special people to the priesthood 5%
- d. Not all believers are priests 5%
- e. Only men can be priests 55%
- f. Jesus died for my sins; therefore the priesthood ministry is no longer needed 34%
- g. Since Jesus is our High Priest in heaven we no longer have need of earthly priests 4%

13. Do you believe that GOD has called you to be a priest?

Yes	No	Uncertain		
91%	6%	3%		

14. If yes, explain

15. Circle the answer(s) that reflect your understanding of the following sentence:

- a. Preaching is the work of the pastor of the church 100%
- b. Pastors are responsible for doing ministry because they are paid for that 80%
- c. Pastors have been chosen by God to do priestly duty 100%
- d. Clergy and members are equally responsible for the spiritual well being of the church 92%
- e. Clergy are closer to God than Laymen because they have received special calling 5%

Responses to Questions

The post-seminar survey took place at the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church with 34 participants, which gives an additional of 9 more participants than the pre-seminar survey. The 34 participants were comprised of 13 males and 21 females ranging from young adult (18 to 21) to adult (21 to 50+), 21 singles, 11 married, and 2 widows. All of the participants are church members of the Ephraim Church.

In this section I will be discussing the answers given by the participants on the following questions:

Question #5—How important is your church to you? In the pre-seminar survey about 80% of the participants answered positively to this question; however, in the post seminar survey the percentage increased to about 98%. Most of the participants consider church to be very important as well as an integral part in their lives.

Question #6—Are you satisfied with the direction that your church is going? Those that said no in the pre-seminar survey were 40% compared to only 13 percent in the post survey with 4 of no opinion. In conjunction to question #6, question #7 prompted a comment as to why they are dissatisfied and their answers were as follow: the church has too much hypocrisy in it, a lack unity, and a lack of love. The answers are different from the ones in the pre-seminar survey. The focus is no longer on a lack of leadership

but rather on relationship. This shows that more time is needed to focus on improving relationships among the members and leaders.

Question #8—Is your church growing in the past five years? The findings of the post-seminar shows that 55% of the people believe that the church is growing compared to only 40% in the pre-seminar survey. This 15% increase suggests that members are beginning to feel more hopeful than before.

Question #9—What would you like to do to help your church to grow? Of the participants 70% would participate in small group, 15% would give a Bible study, 80% would participate in prayer ministry, and 5% of them were uncertain.

Question #10—Did you understand the concept of the priesthood of all believers' seminars? Of the participants 95% claimed to understand the concept of the priesthood very well, with 5% claiming not to understand. This finding proves that the training has been a success in integrating the concept of the priesthood of all believers in the mind of members of the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Question 11—Do you believe in the priesthood of all believers, meaning that all believers in Christ are priests? Eighty-five percent responded affirmatively, with 15% not believing that all believers are priests. Now a big shift can be seen, 80% of the participants in the pre-seminar survey did not see themselves as being part of the priesthood of all believers, compared to only 15% in the post-seminar survey.

Question #12 asked the participants to circle the answer(s) that reflect(s) their understanding. Eighty-five percent circled every believer is a priest. Compared to 20% in the pre-seminar survey, 10% think that only clergy are called to be priests. We see a significant improvement in the way they now see the priesthood. Five percent think that

God only calls some special people to the priesthood compared to 20% in the pre-seminar survey. Five percent of them do not believe that all believers are priests compared to 25% in the pre-seminar survey. Those that think only men can be priests were 55%, compared to 70% in the pre-seminar survey. Five percent circled that there is no longer a need for earthly priests because Jesus is our High Priest in heaven, compared to 30% to pre-seminar survey.

Question #13—Do you believe that GOD has called you to be priests? Ninety-one percent of the participants think that they are priests compare to only 22% in the pre-seminar survey.

Question #15 asked the participants to circle the answer(s) that reflect their understanding of the following sentences:

1. Preaching is the work of the pastor of the church, but the pastor alone—100% agreed.
2. Pastors are responsible for doing ministry because they are paid for that—About 80% agreed.
3. Pastors have been chosen by God to do priestly duty—100% agreed.
4. Clergy and members are equally responsible for the spiritual well being of the church—92% agreed compared to 41% in the post-seminar survey.
5. Clergy are closer to God than laymen because they have received special calling—5% agreed.

The members of the Ephraim Church are very much involved in ministry and more active than they used to be. The people expect to become a stronger church and to see a better result in the months and years to come as a result of the teaching of the priesthood of all believers in the church.

Strategies to Equip and Empower New Members for Ministry

The new members that enter the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church are encouraged to join a small group where they can learn more about witnessing,

discipleship, and how to live their Christian faith.

Burrill (1996) suggests that “people should immediately be placed in a small, caring group. If they have not joined a small group already, this should be the first priority. . . . The small group setting is the best place to nurture such discipleship” (p. 112).

The researcher provided a list of differences that exist between a member and a disciple to the project participants, to the members of the church, and also to all new converts. This list is found in the book *Discipleship Essentials* by G. Ogden (1998; see Figure 5).

Discipleship is a spiritual process that demands an ever-expanding, multi-generational discipling network. This idea brings together three elements which allow the Holy Spirit to bring about accelerated growth in a believer, the Word of God, transparent relationships, and mutual accountability. (Ogden, 1998, p. 9)

Disciples have a duty to win others to Christ through their circle of friends, acquaintances, and community. Russell Burrill, in his book *Radical Disciples* comments on Jesus’ understanding of what it means to become a disciple in five points:

1. A disciple is one who is willing to endure persecution and ridicule for the sake of Christ. Such a disciple maintains the attitude of a learner, being always teachable.
2. A disciple is one who lives in total allegiance to the Lordship of Christ, being willing to forsake all—poverty, family, friends, etc.—for the cause of Christ.
3. A disciple is one who understands and keeps the basic teachings of Jesus.
4. A disciple is one who has given evidence that agape love has been found in his life because of his connection to Christ.
5. A disciple is one who is bearing fruit by creating other disciples for Jesus.

Member	Disciple
The member wants to receive bread and fish;	the disciple is a fisherman.
The member wants to grow;	the disciple wants to reproduce.
The member is won over;	the disciple is formed.
The member does not want to leave the church pew;	the disciple is willing to go out and to serve.
The member likes to be comfortable;	the disciple is willing to sacrifice.
The member gives out part of his resources;	the disciple surrenders his life.
The member remains on the routine;	the disciple is an innovator.
The member waits to receive his task;	The disciple looks for his responsibilities.
The member complains;	the disciple obeys and denies himself.
The member waits for opportunities;	the disciple creates opportunities.
The member waits to be visited;	the disciple goes out to visit.
The member remains in the bunker;	the disciple goes out on the battlefield.
The member guards the conquered territory;	the disciple goes on new exploits.
The member keeps the tradition;	the disciple breaks paradigms.
The member dreams about the ideal church;	the disciple works to make it a reality.
The member's goal is to be in heaven;	the disciples' goal is to win souls to be with him in heaven.
The member preaches the gospel to win new members;	the disciple to make new disciples.
The member attends evangelistic meetings;	the disciple does evangelism.
The member waits for the revival;	the disciple participates in it.
The member is happy sitting in the church pew;	the disciple is happy carrying the cross.
The member says, "I will think about it;"	the disciple says, "Here am I, send me".
The member is valuable;	the disciple is indispensable.

Figure 5. Differences between the member and the disciple.

Burrill (1996) states, "If we want revolutionary churches that are producing disciples instead of only church members, then we must begin with the easiest group from whom to make disciples—new converts" (p. 106).

The purpose of new members joining small groups ministries at Ephraim Church is to allow them to grow in Christ so that they can become mature Christians in order to fulfill the gospel Commission (Matt 28:16-20). The researcher empowered the Ephraim members to go and be the disciples that God calls them to be. Smith (1996) defines

empowering as “the ability to establish a climate in which people feel free to grow, learn, explore, and use their gifts in Christian ministry without fear of retribution” (p. 22).

At the Ephraim Church, we usually provide new members with a Bible, a Seventh-day Adventist *Church Hymnal*; and we also encourage them to get a copy of the *Church Manual*, the *Twenty-eight Fundamental Beliefs of the Church* online or at a book store.

As Burrill (1996) acknowledges, “We need to call and bring disciples to Christ, but after baptism, they must now to enter a life of constant learning about Jesus, which is the final part of the Great Commission” (p. 112).

Summary

This chapter covered different strategies used at Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church and how they were implemented. It started with a pre-seminar survey through which 25 people participated. Then it followed by six seminars that are part of this project. However, more than 20 different seminars were presented by the researcher and by others guests at the Ephraim Church. The seminars covered many topics relating to the social, spiritual aspects of church life. Among the topics of discussion were the following: the benefit of teamwork, how it can make work easier, make the church stronger, and lead to success. We discussed how it is crucial for pastors and laity, leaders and followers to develop good relationships. We also designed a mission structure through the examples of the early Apostolic Church and the early Adventist Church to teach members of the Ephraim Church how to be mission-oriented Christians.

The researcher taught seminars on small groups ministries, and raised four active small groups at the Ephraim Church. These groups are involved in meeting needs in the

church and in the community. We used seminars on “How to Organize an Annual Outreach Program in Your Church” (Figure 5) and other related seminars to get laity ready and equip them for soul winning. We discussed parallel strategies that can be helpful for church growth. We discussed the effect of the priesthood of all believers and made comparisons between the pre-seminar survey and the post-seminar survey. We saw how the members of the Ephraim Church have grasped the concept of the priesthood, and how their mindset has improved. And finally, we discussed how we can keep the back door of the church closed by providing training and instruction to our new converts, and to keep them busy for the Lord.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The project research has been a great learning experience for the researcher as well as for the members of the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church. Though it needs more time to see the full effect of it, but the seed of the concept of the priesthood of all believers were sown in the mind of the believers, and the harvest one day will be plentiful. The implementation of the priesthood of all believers was focused toward taking the people back to where they belong, the priesthood.

In addition, this study covered many aspects of the priesthood. It stresses the practical aspect of stewardship to build a constructive relationship with God. It prepares believers for ministry and to be good stewards. Just like stewardship is a lifestyle, ministry is a lifestyle, something that you breathe, live, and die for. Ministry is about serving God and men.

This research is significant because most Christians do not understand that they are part of God's priestly kingdom. It is imperative that pastors train members of their church, empower them, and hold them accountable for their ministry at church as well as in the community.

This study also improved relations between pastors and members. The seminars were designed to build stronger relationships with God, the church, and the community.

Many members have expressed their appreciation for the change that took place in the life of the Ephraim Church and the blessings received from the experience.

There is a desire in the people to work more for the Lord. More people realize that ministry is not the work of the pastor alone, but of all believers. The researcher challenged the members to get more involve in ministry. He got the youth, young adults, male and female involved in ministry and gave them the opportunity to preach God's Word on Wednesday nights, Saturday, week of prayer, and even in an evangelistic crusade.

He selected the first elder of the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist church to preach his first evangelistic meeting. The meeting was a success; there were six precious souls added to the church. He helped the nominating committee to nominate a woman to serve as elder for the first time in the history of the church. The female elder is serving her third consecutive year as elder, and she is also doing a great job.

The objective of this research to a large extent was accomplished. However, the ten-month meetings were not adequate to experience the full benefit of the priesthood of all believers teaching. Nevertheless, the participants who completed these training sessions understood ministry in a new light, and formed a new group of believers who are promoting the priesthood of all believers.

Recommendations

The researcher is pleased and blessed by this project because many of the participants experienced a raised level of spiritual consciousness. Some members have expressed how this project helped improving their relationship with God and strengthened their ministry.

The church grew both spiritually and intellectually as a result of this project. However, some recommendations are necessary since the concept of the priesthood is new to the members of the Ephraim Church. The following are recommended:

- A. More time to be given to the implementation of the priesthood of all believers project. Two or three years are needed to get the rest of the members at Ephraim Church to be familiarized with the concept of the priesthood and to get the participants more involved in ministry.
- B. It is imperative that pastors do more training that focuses Unity in the church, teamwork, conflict management and relationship program.
- C. That a quarterly follow-up meeting for all who were trained using this priesthood of all believers concept to evaluate and to report on the progress of the small groups ministries.
- D. New converts will be introduced to the priesthood of believers via small group.
- E. That more Seventh-day Adventist churches in New York give study to the concept of the priesthood of all believers.
- F. That the Greater New York Conference and the Northeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists implement in all their churches the concept of the priesthood of all believers.

Conclusions

The priesthood of all believers concept advocated in this research prepared, equipped, and empowered more than 30 members at the Ephraim Church to perform various ministries according to their spiritual gifts. Through six interactive seminars the participants in the project learned key concepts on the priesthood of all believers. The

teaching of the concept of the priesthood is an important way to show equality among believers. It is a way to show support to the ministry of the laity. Every positive effort was made to train and equip laity to prepare them for ministry.

This concept creates a friendly environment for all believers to work together as a team and it fostered a spirit of unity and togetherness among leaders and followers. This research provided many practical and spiritual life-changing lessons to both participants and researcher.

Finally, participants were observed to be motivated, involved, and satisfied; the majority of them show great appreciation for the project. They claim that the priesthood concept has taught them responsibility and independency, and now they are more committed to do the will of God. They are ready to function as priests and are willing to help spread the priesthood of all believers' concept at Ephraim Church as well as at other churches in the New York areas.

APPENDIX A

PROJECT ABSTRACT

June 2010

Project Title

**PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS: A CATALYST FOR CHANGE
IN THE EPHRAIM SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH**

Researcher

Reginald Barthelemy is an ordained Pastor, and is currently served as Stewardship Director at the Greater New York Conference

Project Dates

June 2010-April 2011

Justification for Project

- A. The concept that all born-again Christians belong to the priesthood is new to many Christians. This teaching is often referred to as the priesthood of all believers. Therefore, this project attempts to help believers understand this concept.
- B. Many believers fall into the idea that the priesthood belongs to the clergy, as a result they don't do the ministry that God has called them to do, they count on the pastors quipping can solve much of the ideas of the lay people, and thus a stronger priesthood including the laity will labor in unison to fulfill the gospel commission.
- C. As members of the Church of God, part of our vocation as Christians is to proclaim the good news in word and deed, lift one another up in prayer, mutual concern, and active support.
- D. Dederen in his article, "The priesthood of all believers", commenting on (Col 2:12; 3:1; cf. Rom 6:1-4), states that, "Baptism is the anointing and consecration of every born-again believer as priest of Christ. It is the sign of our universal call. It signifies a new identity."
- E. Ellen White concurs (Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, 822.) By virtue of our union with Christ we partake of a priesthood that is derived from His. His priestly standing before God is imputed to every Christian believer by calling us "priests unto God."

Project Summary

This project focuses on teaching the concept of the priesthood of all believers to the members of the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church in order to get them ready for ministry. A series of six seminars was given to train, equip and empower the members; the training last ten months from June 2010 to April 2011

Authorization

This project has been approved by Andrews University and by the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The Conference provided some financial assistance towards the dissertation.

APPENDIX B

SEMINARS 1–6

SEMINAR #1: PRIESTHOOD AND FREEDOM

The purpose of this seminar is to demonstrate that the priesthood was established by God in response to the problem of sin. Sin brought men into spiritual and physical slavery, but God, in His love came with the plan of salvation to set men free from all types of slavery.

This seminar is divided into four parts:

- 1) From sin to priesthood.
 - a. Definition of priesthood
 - b. Definition of believer
 - c. The basis of the priesthood of all believers
 - c. What is a priest:
 - d. Who can be a priest?
- 2) From Egypt to priesthood.
 - a. Egypt, a symbol of physical slavery, the place where God’s people are being oppressed. God through Moses took His people out of Egypt.
 - We learn that “Three months after Moses took the Israelites out of slavery from Egypt, God told them they would be a priestly kingdom.” (Exod. 19:6).
- 3) From the world to priesthood.

The world is a symbol of spiritual slavery, the place where God’s creatures are in captivity. God through His Son and through the Church calls people from the world

which is also a symbol of darkness to His marvelous light and to be a royal priesthood. “You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ ... But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:5-9).

- 4) Two types of pastors:
 - a. pastor
 - b. lay pastor
- 5) Conclusion

SEMINAR #2: PRIESTHOOD AND LEADERSHIP

The objective of this seminar is to show that every disciple is a leader, because the Holy-Spirit has given to every believer one or more spiritual gifts to use in order to buildup the body of Christ by leading people to God.

1. What is a leader?
2. The difference between a leader and a spiritual leader.
3. Characteristics of a spiritual leader
4. Leading like Christ (Psalm 23).
5. How to lead effectively.
6. Leadership and kingdom building.
7. Be prepared to follow.
8. Conclusion

SEMINAR #3: PRIESTHOOD AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The purpose of this seminar is to teach members of the Ephraim Church about spiritual gifts and how to use them in their God's given ministry.

1. What is a spiritual gift?
2. Different types of gifts. (Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4;)
3. The Purposes of Spiritual Gifts
4. Why do some believers deny the existence of spiritual gifts?
5. What do spiritual gifts mean to you and your church?
6. If you could choose a spiritual gift in order to serve God better, what would it be?
7. How to use your gift(s).

SEMINAR #4: PRIESTHOOD AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

This seminar is intended to help members of the Ephraim Church grow spiritually in their Christian walk of faith. It also provides spiritual growth tools that are designed to address key areas that influence members' development as Christ followers.

1. Spiritual growth - What is it?
2. Understand the dynamics of spiritual growth.
3. Grow in your own spiritual walk with God.
4. Understand how to apply spiritual growth tools for spiritual growth.
5. Explore ways of helping others grow spiritually.
6. Strengthen your spiritual leadership ability.
7. Spirit-Filled Spirituality: walking in the power of the Spirit
8. Spiritual growth benefits, tips and suggestions
9. Conclusion

SEMINAR #5: PRIESTHOOD AND SMALL GROUPS

THE POWER OF SMALL GROUPS

By Gerson Santos

1. Introduction

Divine Instructions:

The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men (AA, 9), its mission is to preach the gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:19-20).

This task will never be finished until the membership unites in the work (GW, 352), and the essential Latter Rain cannot come until “the largest portion of the church are... laborers together with God.” (RH 7/21/96).

The greatest help that can be given our people is to teach them to work for God, and to depend on Him, not on the ministers (Testimonies, 7:19).

Every church should be a training school for Christian workers (MH, 149).

“One who cannot err” has advised the formation of small groups “as a basis of Christian effort” (Testimonies, 7:21-22).

A Small Group is:

a group of people from the community that get together every week at home to help each other to strive in their life, to experience a revival in Jesus and fulfill their mission in the community.

Small Groups Goals:

- Fellowship
- Revival
- Mission
-

Why Small Groups?

People tend to be individualist, not because they like, but because the society is like that.

Small Groups Objectives:

- Quality Growth
- Quantity Growth
-

Small Groups Results:

- Friendship
- Fellowship
- Spirituality
- Life of Service
- Personal Testimony
- Hope and Faith
- New Leaders
- Constant Growth

SMALL GROUP

A new style of Christian Life

“Let small companies assemble in the evening, at noon, or in the early morning to **study the Bible**. Let them have a season of **prayer**, that they may be strengthened, enlightened, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit... Angels of God will be in your assembly. You will feed upon the leaves of the tree of life. What **testimonies** you may bear of the **loving acquaintance** made with your fellow workers in these precious seasons when seeking the blessing of God.” (Test., 7:195)

2. Biblical Basis

Moses (Exodus 18:1-19:6)

Jesus (Luke 6:13; Mark 3:13)

Apostolic Church (Acts 5:42)

SEMINAR #6: PRIESTHOOD AND EVANGELISM

The purpose of this seminar is to demonstrate that every believer is called by God to “go and make disciples of all nations.” It is designed to equip members of the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church for effective evangelism in their community, and to teach them how to share the gospel with their unchurched family members, neighbors, friends, co-workers and strangers in a friendly and comfortable way.

1. What is evangelism?

2. Biblical basis for evangelism:

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matthew 28:19 (KJV)

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1:8 (KJV)

3. How to evangelize Jesus way?

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.” 2 Timothy 4:2 (KJV)

“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.” Mark 1:14-15 (KJV)

Different types of Evangelism:

1. Prayer evangelism (Luke 10:2).
2. **Personal evangelism:** practical things you can do to share your faith with others.

3. **Event evangelism:** How to make any event an evangelistic event.
4. **Child evangelism:** How to reach parents through their children.
5. **One-on-one evangelism**
6. **Small groups evangelism**
7. **Public evangelism**
8. **Conclusion**
9. Prayer

APPENDIX C

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL ON SMALL GROUPS

BY GERSON SANTOS

The Small Group Leaders

- **Leader**
- **Associate Leader**
- **Secretary**
- **Host**
-

Qualities of the Small Group Leader

The SG leader should:

- Be a disciple
- Be faithful
- Be willing to serve
- Be led by the Spirit
- Desire of saving souls

Responsibilities of the Small Group Leader:

1. Cares for the group's overall goals, agenda and growth in love and unity.
2. A lead the meetings, but often shares this with others.
3. Identifies abilities and gifts in others and finds ways to use them in group ministry
4. Manages conflict within the group
5. Develops awareness of the spiritual state of each group member.
6. Works in consultation with church pastor and others to deal with matters beyond the scope of the group.
7. Communicates the aims and vision of the group with the larger church, and vice-versa.
8. Keeps the goal of growth through conversion fresh in the minds of members, or delegates this responsibility to someone else.
9. Trains as assistant leader for readiness to assume leadership in new group.
10. Works as a team with the host/hostess. This person should be someone who demonstrates a genuine care for people, and the ability to put people at ease. He/she is responsible for one or more of the following, according to ability and time available (duties not undertaken by the host/hostess should be delegate to other group members, not carried by the group leader):
 - a. Welcoming group members
 - b. Leading the "ice breaker" or initial sharing period
 - c. The prayer ministry of the group

- d. General pastoral care of members.

(David Cox – Think Small Groups, 90-91)

Responsibilities of the Small Group Assistant Leader:

1. Recruit a host/hostess to see that child care, refreshments, and appropriate seating for the group is available.
2. Follow up with all prospects and members through personal visits, phone calls, and correspondence.
3. Set out an open chair for each meeting as a constant reminder to the group of the need for new participants and new conversion growth.
4. Accept responsibility for developing relationships with (and extending invitations to) the group, and to unchurched, and unbelieving people.
5. Submit a monthly report to the coordinator for your group.
6. Birth a new group when sufficient growth occurs.
7. Pray for each member and prepare for each meeting.
8. Notify pastoral staff of acute crisis conditions requiring response.

Responsibilities of the Small Group Host/Hostess:

1. Provide a home (or a comfortable meeting place), and arrange chairs in conjunction with the leader. (A circle is preferred.)
2. Set up the simple refreshments before the meeting time in order to be ready to greet the guests and regular attendees.
3. Have extra material. (Bibles, paper, and pens)
4. Have a genuine interest in each guest and greet him or her at the door with a warm smile.
5. Set the atmosphere of love and acceptance for everyone, calling them by their first names and introducing guests to others.
6. Wait until guests have left before cleaning up and rearranging furniture.

(J. Arnold - Starting Small Groups, 33-34)

5. Small Group Program:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------|
| 1. Fellowship | 15 min. |
| 2. Testimonies | 15 min. |
| 3. Prayer | 10 min. |
| 4. Study the Word | 30 min. |

“Let **small companies** assemble in the evening, at noon, or in the early morning **to study the Bible**. Let them have **a season of prayer**, that they may be strengthened, enlightened, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. This work Christ wants to have done in the heart of every worker. If you yourselves will open the door to receive it, a great blessing will come to you. Angels of God will be in your assembly. You will feed upon the leaves of the tree of life. What **testimonies** you may bear of the **loving acquaintance** made with your fellow workers in these precious seasons when seeking the blessing of God... Christ will come into your hearts. It is by this means only that you can maintain your integrity” (Test., 7:195).

“In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers” (Test., 9:19).

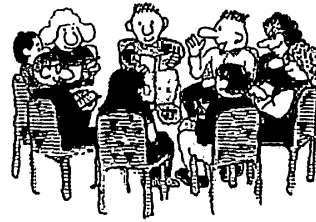
“Time is short, and our forces must be organized to do a larger work” (Test., 9:26-27)
“I saw jets of light shining from cities and villages, and from the high places and the low places of the earth. God's word was obeyed, and as a result there were memorials for Him in every city and village. His truth was proclaimed throughout the world“ (Test., 9:28).

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL ON SMALL GROUPS

By DON JAMES

Published by
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Reaching the Lost Through Groups



These study, application and activity lessons will take your groups from community into evangelism in one year. After developing a strong prayer base, plan to build community with the Trinity, with one another, then expand to neighbors and friends, continuing to use prayer as the base. The lessons are designed with four destinations in mind: prayer, friendship evangelism, discipling, and keeping the harvest.



Open Home Ministries is a resource, consulting and training ministry for churches with a vision to build community and establish effective outreach based upon cell groups and holistic groups.

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**A Year's Plan for
Reaching the Lost
Through Small Groups and Cell Groups**

1

Theme: *Praying In The Spirit*
Key Text: *"If My people will humble themselves and pray." 2 Chron.
7:14*

Prayer Warriors In The Old Testament

- Wk 1: 2 Samuel 7:18-29 - Praise God For His Blessings
- Wk 2: 2 Chronicles 32:1-23 - Call on God for Deliverance
- Wk 3: Nehemiah 1:1-2:9 - Mediating for Others
- Wk 4: Daniel 6:1-28 - God Is Able
- Wk 5: Group Social To Help Build Community

Instruction & Modeling For Prayer Warriors in the Gospels & Acts

- Wk 6: Mark 11:20-26 - Fathoming the Faith Needed
- Wk 7: Luke 18:9-14 - Cues For Equality
- Wk 8: Acts 4:23-31 - Faith and Prayer That Gets Results
- Wk 9: Acts 16:16-40 - Conflicts, Abuse, and Prayer

Prayer Walks

- Wk 10: Genesis 4:1-5, 32; Hebrews 11:1-40, Jude 1-16 - Walking With God
- Wk 11: Joshua 1:1-18 - Claiming The Land
- Wk 12: Joshua 5:13- 6:27 - Satan's Stronghold
- Wk 13: Acts 8:26-40 - Walking In The Spirit

2

Theme: *Friendship Evangelism*
Key Text: *"A farmer went out to sow his seed..."*

Reaching Out To Others

- Wk 14: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16 - Giving Myself To Others
- Wk 15: John 4:39-42 - Giving Our Time To Others
- Wk 16: Matthew 9:9-13 - Seeing Others Through The Eyes Of Jesus
- Wk 17: 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 - Listening To Understand With Spiritual Discernment

Getting Together With Others

- Wk 18: 1 Corinthians 9:1-27 - Giving Up My Rights For Others
- Wk 19: Romans 1:8-17 - Our Obligation
- Wk 20: It's Time For Another Group Social!
- Wk 21: John 4:1-26 - Communication That Counts
- Wk 22: Galatians 3:1-14 - Handling Distortions

Launching Free Market Groups

- Wk 23: 1 Corinthians 9:19-27 - Living A Disciplined Life
- Wk 24: Romans 10:16-19 - The Gospel In Reverse
- Wk 25: Acts 8:26-40 - Listening To God's Voice
- Wk 26: Luke 9:1-6 - Authority And Power

3

Theme: Sharing Life With Others

Key Text: "I have become all things to all men..."

Preparing For Bible Study

- Wk 27: Genesis 3:1-7 - An Eye Opening
- Wk 28: John 14:11-14 - A supernatural Relationship
- Wk 29: Acts 16:16-40 - Reaching Out To An Entire Family
- Wk 30: Luke 10:1-16 - Searching For That Person Of Peace

Deepening Your Relationships

- Wk 31: Matthew 9:35-10:1 - Working For A Greater Harvest
- Wk 32: Acts 10:1-23 - Convictions Of The Holy Spirit
- Wk 33: Matthew 9:9-13 - Righteousness Is More Than Skin Deep
- Wk 34: Acts 2:41-47 - 100% Devoted To God

Breaking Down Barriers

- Wk 35: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 - Holy Spirit Power
- Wk 36: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 - Sowing Seeds Generously
- Wk 37: Socials Develop Community
- Wk 38: 1 Corinthians 1:17-25 - The Totality Of Life
- Wk 39: 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2 - Now Is The Day Of Salvation

4

Theme: Keeping The Harvest

Key Text: "He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him." Psalm 126:6

Reaching Broader And Deeper

- Wk 40: Genesis 13:8-17 - Claiming The Land God Has Given Me
- Wk 41: Acts 18:1-3 - Connecting With Those Of Like Interests
- Wk 42: Jude 17-25 - Continually Reaching Out For The Harvest
- Wk 43: Isaiah 6:1-8 - Volunteering For God

Presenting The Gospel

- Wk 44: John 3:1-21 - Caring Enough To Share Life
- Wk 45: Matthew 20:20-28 - Serving Others
- Wk 46: Luke 14:15-24 - Excuses Can Be Costly
- Wk 47: Acts 10:23-48 - Being Jesus' Ambassador

Making Disciples

- Wk 48: Titus 2:1-15 - Growing Up In Christ
- Wk 49: Philippians 2:1-16 - Being An Example For Others
- Wk 50: John 4:34-37 - The Harvest Is Ripe
- Wk 51: 2 Timothy 1:6-14 - Remaining Faithful to Him
- Wk 52: Socials Help Bring Closure To Groups

**A Year's Plan
for
Reaching the Lost
Through Small Groups
and Cell Groups**

Suggested Group Lessons and Actions Plans

Week	Lesson
1	1 Praise God for His Blessings Time with the Father before implementing any plans
2	2 Call on God for Deliverance Moving towards a planned ministry and target
3	3 Mediating for Others Establishing Intercessor Prayer Warriors
4	4 God Is Able Plan for a group social next week, build community
5	Group Social to Help Build Community Group potluck, birthday, visit to the zoo // establish a group covenant
6	5 Fathoming the Faith Needed Continue building community
7	6 Cues For Equality Serve and share in other's needs, ministering to them
8	7 Faith and Prayer That Gets Results Reach out to others by two's, finding that person who is receptive
9	8 Conflicts, Abuse, and Prayer Invite your contact to different gatherings your group is having
10	9 Walking With God Start planing a half night of prayer and prayer walks
11	10 Claiming The Land Begin prayer walking weekly
12	11 Destroying Satan's Stronghold Search for that Person of Peace, looking for the Savior
13	12 Walking In The Spirit What is the Person of Peace's awareness of the gospel?
14	13 Giving Myself To Others Developing a trust relationship with two unbelievers
15	14 Giving Our Time To Others Be faith to your calling and God will bless
16	15 Seeing Others Through The Eyes Of Jesus Believing in others when they don't believe in themselves
17	16 Listening With Spiritual Discernment Invite your unbeliever friends to your group activities
18	17 Giving Up My Rights For Others Sharing your life with unbelievers
19	18 Our Obligation Establishing Share Groups
20	It's Time For Another Group Social Continue building community among yourselves
21	19 Communication That Counts Set captives free from their enemies
22	20 Handling Distortions Share Christ in total life
23	21 Living A Disciplined Life The agenda and objective of a Share Group
24	22 The Gospel In Reverse Topic ideas for the Share Group
25	23 Listening For God's Voice Opening a way for the Gospel
26	24 Authority And Power Pray for the harvest
27	25 An Eye-Opening Experience Prepare your testimony
28	26 A Supernatural Relationship Begin giving Discover Bible Lessons 1-6
29	27 Reaching Out To An Entire Family Planning your Share Group ending

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|--|
| 30 | 28 Searching For That Person Of Peace
Sharing within your Share Group | 48 | 45 Growing Up In Christ
Moving out for the Kingdom |
| 31 | 29 Working For A Greater Harvest
Now begin moving into the lives of your friends | 49 | 46 Being An Example For Others
Overview of moving towards the harvest |
| 32 | 30 Convictions Of The Holy Spirit
Become aware where the Holy Spirit is moving | 50 | 47 The Harvest Is Ripe
GO! |
| 33 | 31 Righteousness Is More Than Skin Deep
Growing in Christ takes time, be patient | 51 | 48 Remaining Faithful To Him
What is your highest priority? |
| 34 | 32 Devoted To God 100%
Build on relationships | 52 | Socials Help Bring Closure To Groups
Have a social, then multiply your group |
| 35 | 33 Holy Spirit Power
Build a Gospel bridge | | |
| 36 | 34 Sowing Seeds Generously
Three areas of seed sowing | | |
| 37 | Socials Develop Community
Invite your pre-Adventist friends to join your group social | | |
| 38 | 35 The Totality Of Life'
Know the barriers that keep others from accepting Christ | | |
| 39 | 36 Now Is The Day Of Salvation
Know the timing | | |
| 40 | 37 Claiming Strange Lands For God
Sowing that we may reap | | |
| 41 | 38 Connecting With Those Of Like Interests
Understanding Target Groups | | |
| 42 | 39 Continually Reaching Out For The Harvest
A Target Groups agenda | | |
| 43 | 40 Volunteering For God
Guiding the new convert | | |
| 44 | 41 Caring Enough To Share Life
Giving the Gospel Presentation | | |
| 45 | 42 Serving Others
Setting ourselves free in Christ | | |
| 46 | 43 Excuses Can Be Costly
Understanding what to say when someone says, "No" | | |
| 47 | 44 Being Jesus' Ambassador
Making time to serve | | |

LESSON 1

PRAISE GOD FOR HIS BLESSINGS

Sharing My Life With Others

1. Was there a time when you were so blessed you just kept praising God?
What happened?
2. How do you usually react when someone gives you something unbelievable?

Discovering His Word Together

- 2 Samuel 7:18-29
3. What had God just promised David through Nathan (verses 1-17)?
 4. How did David respond to God's promise?
 5. What events did David credit to God?
 6. Because of David's gratitude, what names did he use in addressing God?
 7. Why was David surprised at God's promise?
 8. How was God using Israel to make a name for Himself?

My Commitments for Him

9. Looking at your past, present and future, how can you praise God?
10. Each day of this week will you share with someone a blessing that you have received?

Prayer Goal

That I will be in praise continually for the love God always gives me.

APPLICATION

Challenge Your Group's Purpose

As this new year gets under way, we challenge you to plan and implement a purposeful ministry outside the group. Why? With Jesus' coming very soon, we, with you, seek for ways to do His bidding. Nurture, outreach, bathing all our plans in prayer, are all important. Combining these and using your various spiritual gifts in your small group, you become an effective team for God. Let's look at Jesus' example for a plan. When Jesus prepared for His ministry, He spent time in prayer alone with His Father. So before you begin laying plans, before you choose a ministry, or target an area or a people, before you share with your best friend, you need to spend time with the Heavenly Father. Spend personal quiet time, pray, ask Him questions and listen to His voice for direction.

APPENDIX D

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL ON EVANGELISM

by Gerson Santos

Principles of Evangelism in the Life of Jesus

God's Purpose for His Church

The church is God's appointed agency for the _____ ____ _____. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. (AA, 9)

The Great Commission

“Go ye therefore, and _____ of all nations, baptizing them... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen”. (Mathew 28:19-20)



To each of us

To each of us have been given the commission, as it is given to every disciple of Christ. Accepting Christ, we accepted this commission. (Letter 262, 1903)

The Saviour's commission to the disciples included all the _____. It includes all believers in Christ to the end of time. It is a fatal mistake to suppose that the work of saving souls depends alone on the ordained minister. (DA, 822)

Discipleship

“The first disciples went forth preaching the word. They revealed Christ in their lives. And the Lord worked with them... These disciples prepared themselves for their work. Before the day of Pentecost they met together, and put away all differences. They were of one accord. They believed Christ's promise that the blessing would be given, and they prayed in faith. They did not ask for a blessing for themselves merely; they were weighted with the burden for the salvation of souls. The gospel was to be carried to the uttermost parts of the earth, and they claimed the endowment of power that Christ had promised. Then it was that the Holy Spirit was poured out, and thousands were converted in a day.

So it may be now. Instead of man's speculations, let the _____ be preached. Let Christians put away their _____, and give themselves to _____ for the _____. Let them in faith ask for the blessing, and it will come.” (DA, 827)



Jesus' Method Works!

Learn from Christ the science of soul saving. (R&H, Mar. 30, 1905)

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. (MH, 143)

The Savior 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.' (MH, 143)

Jesus' Method of Witnessing

Socialized

While we should cultivate sociability, let it not be merely for amusement, but for a purpose. There are souls to save. (5T, 599)

Sympathized

Served

Jesus' Method of Witnessing

_____ + _____ + _____ = _____

Christ's Methods

- He got along with _____ .
- He ministered _____ .
- He sympathized and empathized with the people.
- Won their _____ .
- Said: "Follow me".
- "Christ made the presentation of his message precede for acts of love and benevolence." (CS, 142)

- “He did not any human being for granted.” (CS, 151)
- “Jesus saw in every soul a human being who should be called to His kingdom.” (CS, 149)
- “He makes an invitation: ‘Come to me all that are weary and I will bring rest to your life.’” (MH, 20)
- “God retains his blessings because His people do not work in harmony with his methods.” (7T, 18)
- “Now is the time for us to follow the correct learning methods and to imitate the example of Christ.” (Ev, 44)
- “If we follow the example of Christ in doing goodness, our hearts will open up as well as His.” (CS, 150)

“F O R T” Principle

Family

Occupation

Religion

Testimony

Personal Testimony

- My life before I accepted Christ.
- How I became a Christian.
- My life since becoming a Christian.

Your personal testimony of what Jesus Christ has done and is doing in your life is a powerful, essential response to becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ.

The best example of this is when the man, freed from Satan's grasp, had but one message to share: **THAT JESUS HAD TORN HIM LOOSE FROM SATAN'S GRIP.**

If you are a sinner, if you trust in Jesus Christ for eternal life, then you have a special testimony to share. I suggest that you consider designing a short, 3-point testimony...

1. Tell about your life before you knew Christ, without the gory details.

2. Tell how you came to know Jesus Christ as your personal friend.

3. Tell what God is doing in your life and what this means to you.

After your 3 minutes testimony ask your friend if there is any reason why he would not want to invite Jesus to be his personal friend.

APPENDIX E

EPHRAIM SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
PRE-SEMINAR SURVEY

By: Pastor Reginald Barthelemy

Date:

Time: 3:00-4:00

Direction: Please take a few minutes to answer these questions pertaining to your personal view of the church.

7. What is your gender?

Male	Female			
9	16			

8. What is your current marital status?

Single	Married	Divorced	Separated	Widowed
18	7			

9. What is your current age?

Less than 18	18 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 or older
	75%	20%	4%	1%

10. Are you a member of the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church?

Yes	No	Don't Know	May be	
100%				

11. How important is your church to you? (select one):

Extremely Important	Important	Uncertain	Not Important	Not very Important
15	4	3	2	1

12. Are you satisfied with the direction that your church is going?

Yes	No	No Opinion		
60%	40%			

7. If no, what are the reasons of your dissatisfactions?

Lack of leadership	fake leaders	Lack of love	lack of prayer	
--------------------	--------------	--------------	----------------	--

8. Is your church growing or declining in the past 10 years?

Growing	Decline	Uncertain		
40%	60%			

9. If declining, Please circle the answer that most closely reflects how you feel using the following answer key: (SA) Strongly Agree (A) Agree (NO) No Opinion (D) Disagree (SD) Strongly Disagree.

- a. A lack of leadership and vision
SA A NO D SD
- b. Migration (Some members left the State)
SA A NO D SD
- c. A lack of a clear sense of our mission as members
SA A NO D SD
- d. Loss of hope in the future
SA A NO D SD
- e. A lack of team work spirit
SA A NO D SD
- f. A lack of training
SA A NO D SD
- g. Apostasy
SA A NO D SD

10. Do you want to participate in the priesthood of all believers seminars?

Yes	No	Uncertain		
75%	25%			

11. Do you believe in the priesthood of all believers, meaning that all believers in Christ are priests?

Yes	No	Uncertain		
20%	80%			

12. Circle the answer(s) that reflect your understanding of the following sentence:

- a. Every believer is a priest (20% believed that every believer is a priest)
- b. Only the Clergy are called to be priests
- c. God only calls some special people to the priesthood (20%)
- d. Not all believers are priests (25%)
- e. Only men can be priests
- f. Jesus died for my sins; therefore the priesthood ministry is no longer needed
- g. Since Jesus is our High Priest in heaven we no longer have need of earthly priests (30%)

13. Do you believe that GOD has called you to be a priest?

Yes	No	Uncertain		
22%	78%			

14. If yes, explain

15. Circle the answer(s) that reflect your understanding of the following sentence:

- a. Preaching is the work of the pastor of the church
- b. Pastors are responsible for doing ministry because they are paid for that
- c. Pastors have been chosen by God to do priestly duty (about 60%)
- c. Clergy and members are equally responsible for the spiritual well being of the church (about 41%)
- d. Clergymen are closer to God than Laymen because they have received special calling.

Comments to Responses

The pre-seminar survey took place at the Ephraim Seventh-day Adventist Church with 25 participants, 9 males and 16 females ranging from young adult (18 to 21 years) to adult (21 to 50+); 18 singles and 7 married. All of the participants were church members

of the Ephraim church. In this section the researcher will be discussing the answers given by the participants on the following questions:

Question #5 How important is your church to you? About 80% of the participants answered positively to this question. Collectively they consider church to be very important as well as an integral part in their lives.

Question #6 Are you satisfied with the direction that your church is going? Sixty percent of them said yes and 40% said no. In conjunction to question #6, question #7 prompted a comment as to why they are dissatisfied and their answers were as follow: A lack of leadership, fake leaders, lack of love, and lack of prayer. This group seems to lack trust in their leaders and sees them as being incompetent.

Question #8 Is your church growing or declining in the past 10 years? Forty percent of the participants expressed that the church has been growing for the past 10 years, while 60% claimed that the church is declining. The researcher thinks that at the time this pre-seminar survey was taken, the church was in a cruising mood, meaning that progress was very slow, but was walking towards it. So he thinks that there was a slow growth instead of a decline.

When asked to give reasons for the decline through a pool of multiple choice, their answers were: 60% strongly agree that there is a lack of leadership and vision, less than 20% agree that migration might be a contributing factor of the decline, about 40% believe that the decline is due to the church not having a clear sense of its mission, 50% agree that the decline is due to lack of a teamwork spirit, about 70% agree or strongly agree that there is not enough training. According to the participants, the two major

factors leading to the causes in decline are the following: A lack of leadership and a lack of training.

Question #10 asked the participants if they would like to participate in the priesthood of all believers' seminars. Seventy-five percent of them volunteered to participate, while 25% declined.

Question #11 asked the participants if they believe that all believers in Christ are priests. Eighty percent of the participants did not see themselves as being part of the priesthood of all believers. They understood that ministry is the job of the priest (pastor).

Question #12 asked the participants to circle the answer(s) that reflect their understanding. Among the ones circled were: 20% believed that every believer is a priest, 80% think that only clergy are called to be priests, 20% think that God only calls some special people to the priesthood, 25% of them do not believe that all believers are priests, 70% think only men can be priests. Thirty percent circled that we no longer need earthly priests, because Jesus is our High Priest in heaven.

Question #13 asked the participants if they believe that GOD has called them to be priests. Twenty-two said yes, while 78% said no, but declined to give any reasons as to why they believe that.

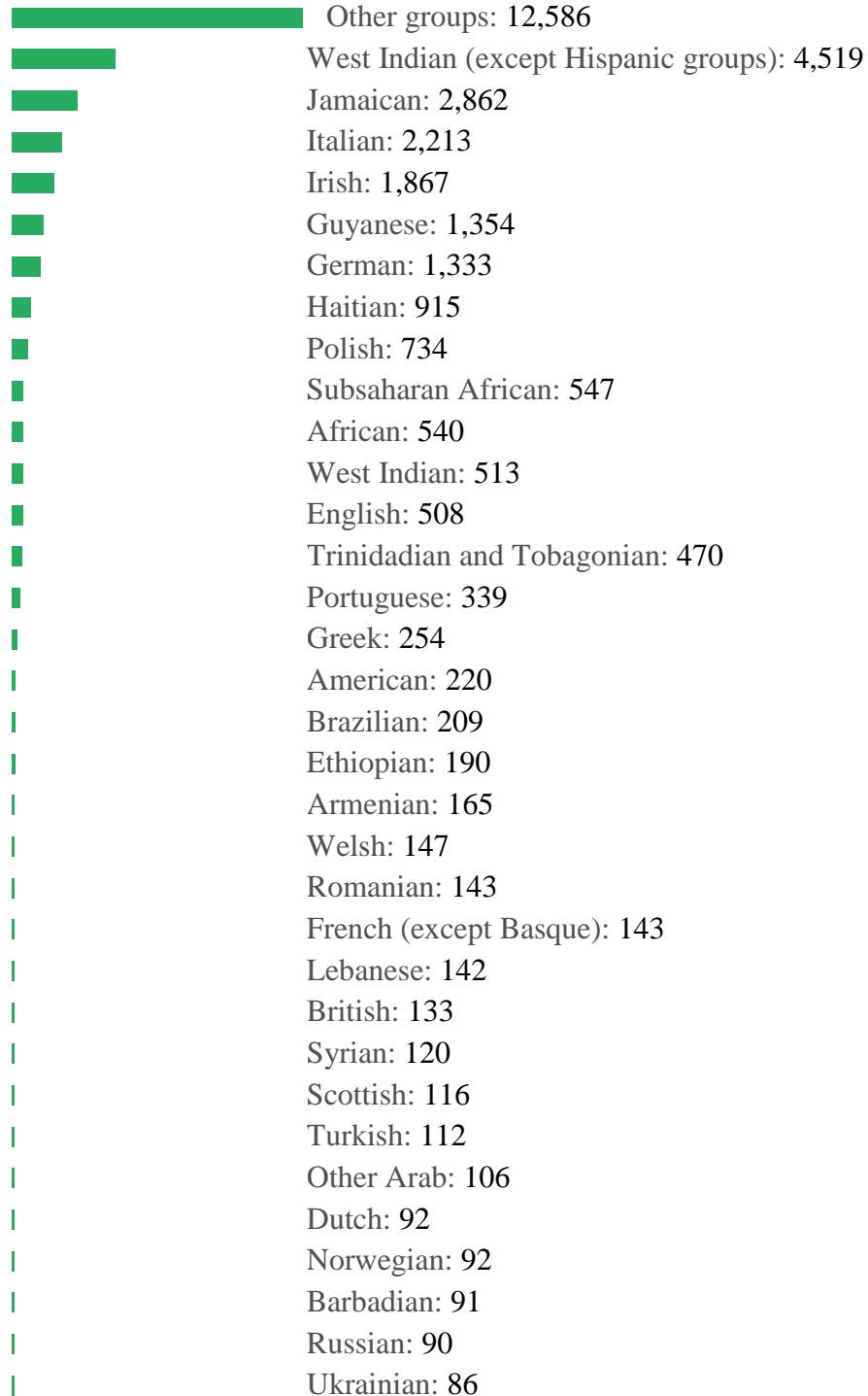
Question #15 asks the participants to circle the answer(s) that best reflect their understanding of the following sentences: 100% agreed that preaching is the work of the pastor of the church, but not only the pastor. About 55% think that pastors are responsible for doing ministry because they are paid for that. About 60% believe that pastors have been chosen by God for a priestly duty; and lastly, about 41% think that clergy and members are equally responsible for the spiritual well-being of the church.

The researcher admits that a lot of the terms and ideas used in the pre-seminar survey were new to the participants so the answers given might be in accordance to their understanding of the terms at that time.

APPENDIX F

FIRST ANCESTRIES REPORTED

Adapted from <http://www.city data.com/zips/11701.html#ixzzloaGzRCjJ>



■	Northern European: 83
■	Liberian: 79
■	British West Indian: 75
■	Croatian: 74
■	Albanian: 74
■	Bahamian: 70
■	Arab: 65
■	Estonian: 64
■	Scotch-Irish: 62
■	Belgian: 62
■	Slovak: 60
■	European: 57
■	Basque: 55
■	Swedish: 54
■	Belizean: 54
■	French Canadian: 51
■	Austrian: 45
■	Czech: 44
■	Eastern European: 42
■	Hungarian: 42
■	Celtic: 41
■	Lithuanian: 40
■	Canadian: 39
■	Pennsylvania German: 36
■	Scandinavian: 34
■	Dutch West Indian: 34
■	Israeli: 34
■	Cape Verdean: 33
■	Maltese: 30
■	Egyptian: 30
■	Czechoslovakian: 28
■	Slavic: 26

APPENDIX G

ADVENTIST NEWS NETWORK REPORTED

Adapted from <http://news.adventist.org/en/archive/articles/2009/05/18/adventist-presidents-visit-to-china-first-by-a-top-church-leader-in-decades>



Adventist president's visit to China first by a top church leader in decades

May. 18, 2009 Shenyang, China

Bill Knott/ANN Staff



Adventist world church President Jan Paulsen speaks to a congregation of 1,000 that meets at the Beishi Protestant Church. Paulsen's visit to China was his first since he became world church president 10 years ago. [photos: Rajmund Dabrowski/ANN]



Hao Ya Jie, 46, pastor of the Beiguan Seventh-day Adventist Church in Shenyang, China. More than half of Adventist pastors in China are women.

Two Seventh-day Adventist congregations in the Northeast Chinese city of Shenyang illustrate the dynamics of the church in China, where local churches often serve as both ministry and administrative hubs for smaller congregations.

The Beiguan Church, with nearly 3,000 members, worships in a building situated in a modern neighborhood and is often visited by government-sponsored tour groups. Four miles away, the Beishi congregation shares an aging, overcrowded structure with another Protestant church amid a densely-packed tangle of shops and homes. Church leadership at both locations is responsible for dozens of area church plants.

On the fourth day of a [weeklong trip](#) to the People's Republic of China, world church president Jan Paulsen and a team from the church's world headquarters and Northern Asia-Pacific region worshipped with both congregations in the city of 7 million.

Overflow crowds of 2,500 at the Beiguan Church and 1,200 at the Beishi congregation greeted Paulsen as he made his first visit to China since becoming world church president 10 years ago and the first by any Adventist world church president to mainland China in more than 60 years.

During an afternoon service on May 16, 500 church members crowded the sanctuary at Beishi as Paulsen spoke on the final counsel Jesus gave his disciples on the night they celebrated Passover together in the Upper Room.

In a literal upper room two stories above, another 500 Adventists jammed an overflow chapel, watching the service below on a single 26-inch TV screen. Two hundred more worshippers lined every hallway and stairway, listening to the music and words that drifted down the corridors from bullhorn-style speakers.

"Half of us are here, half are two stories up and 10 percent are sitting in the stairs," Paulsen told the audience. "And maybe there are some out there who say, 'I wish I were there, but there's no room today.' ... I want to honor you for your faithfulness, for your trust in God and for your devotion."

Both the Beiguan and the Beishi congregations are historic churches in China, responsible for planting and nurturing dozens of smaller Adventist congregations across this industrial city about 100 miles from the North Korean border. More than 100 congregations serving a total of 7,000 Adventists are coordinated by the Beiguan church, which acts much like a local conference does in typical church administrative structure. Likewise, the Beishi church oversees the ministry for 70 smaller churches and "meeting points."

Church planter Zu Xiu Hua, who started 380 congregations in the northeastern province of Jilin, spoke with Paulsen through an interpreter during his visit. Her congregations, now attended by more than 20,000 members in the province's mostly rural region, are served by dozens of volunteer women whom she trains to conduct Bible studies, preach, and offer spiritual care.

More than half of Adventist pastors in China are women, and a majority of the members are also female.

Other local church leaders, some from as far as a three-hour train ride away, gathered at the two main churches to meet their world church president. At the Beiguan Church, Pastor Hao Ya Jie described for the church leaders the ministries and outreach services she and her fellow leaders coordinate, including literacy classes, ministerial training, lay preacher training and wedding services. Up to five Shenyang couples are married in the church per week, which is often their first exposure to Adventism.

"You have managed to make this church what we hope Seventh-day Adventist churches everywhere would be," said Paulsen after he learned of the church's community-based ministries. "It is a center for worship, a center for ministerial training, a center open to the community."

Pastor Shi Wei of the Beishi Church doesn't have the opportunity to run such a full-fledged ministry program because the congregation doesn't own the building it meets in for Sabbath services. Training events and prayer meetings are usually scattered among dozens of smaller congregations and meeting points that have sprung up around the ministry of the Beishi Church when Christian churches began to reopen in China in the 1980s. During the Cultural Revolution, a dozen turbulent years that marked the greatest difficulties for religion in modern China, all Christian churches were closed, pastors forced to take up other work, and Bibles burned.

While some Chinese pastors have earned formal degrees through seminaries sponsored by the China Christian Council, the umbrella organization that coordinates the affairs of the nation's estimated 20 million Christians, an increasing number are emerging from training centers established by local congregations.

In meetings with both the national and regional branches of the Christian Council, Paulsen expressed the Adventist Church's interest in assisting both established seminaries

and training centers in preparing larger numbers of pastors equipped to serve the distinctive needs of Adventists in the country.

Nearly 400,000 Adventists are believed to worship at thousands of locations across the nation.

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In 2001, he married Chilene Leconte. They have three young children: Nehemiah, Gabriel, and Priscilla.