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### A Pilot Project To Increase Member Participation And Revitalization Of The Coffeyville And Independence, Kansas, Seventh-Day Adventist Churches In The Central States Conference

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ABSTRACT

A PILOT PROJECT TO INCREASE MEMBER PARTICIPATION  
AND REVITALIZATION OF THE COFFEYVILLE AND  
INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS, SEVENTH-DAY  
ADVENTIST CHURCHES IN THE  
CENTRAL STATES  
CONFERENCE

by

Andre M. Trofort Jr.

Adviser: James Wibberding

## ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE RESEARCH

Project Document

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: A PILOT PROJECT TO INCREASE MEMBER PARTICIPATION AND REVITALIZATION OF THE COFFEYVILLE AND INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS, SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCHES IN THE CENTRAL STATES CONFERENCE

Name of Researcher: Andre M. Trofort Jr.

Name and degree of faculty adviser: James Wibberding, DMin

Date completed: April 2013

### Problem

The Mt. Moriah and South 18th Street Seventh-day Adventist Churches, located in Coffeyville and Independence, Kansas, had not experienced membership growth in the ten years of 1987-1997. These two churches were part of a three-church district, which also included a church 145 miles away in Springfield, MO. That church was active in developing outreach and evangelistic strategies whereas the Kansas churches were not. The two Kansas churches were headed toward closing due to stagnation. Unless revitalization and consistent leadership training took place, a turnaround would never happen for these two small churches.

## Method

This project explored the Coffeyville and Independence churches' lack of evangelistic strategies, conducted a survey of the two communities' felt needs, and applied 31 contemporary evangelistic methods as the antidote for the problems of these churches. This study also took into account the churches' demographics and their cultural, religious, and economic conditions. In order to develop these methods, this project used the examples set forth by the New Testament model of disciple making, the examples set forth by the Rabbi-discipleship experience, and the mandate of the Great Commission. This mandate taught that once a believer was baptized he/she must be instructed in all that Christ taught. His teachings included the manner in which disciples should do disciple making. The "pastor and teacher" of the biblical model was to help church members develop and use their talents and spiritual gifts to be new-disciple-makers. This was the method followed.

## Results

Upon implementation of the 31 evangelistic methods and strategies, the churches' membership increased over six years (1997-2003) from 4 to 95 persons. Based on this large increase, the project was successful. The two Seventh-day Adventist churches also had a remarkable impact on their communities.

## Solutions

The outcome of the methods used to revitalize the two Kansas churches demonstrated the power of Christ's methods and the New Testament principles of church building and maintenance. The members of the project churches perceived a tendency of

the Conference to focus on larger churches while ignoring the challenges of their small churches. There is reason to believe that the “small church decline syndrome” of many Adventist churches in North America is a result of not implementing strategies for continually helping small churches develop and grow. Critical to this challenge in all churches of every size, is the need for a greater emphasis on Christ’s expectation that each disciple/member will become a disciple maker. Challenges often represent opportunities. A great opportunity in the Adventist church is to focus on how each member can be active in disciple making. The development of systematic approaches for pastors to help members use their talents for disciple making may be the single most important solution to empowering churches of every size. Learning to better follow Christ’s approaches is the solution to many problems.

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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CONFERENCE

A Project Document

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

Andre M. Trofort Jr.

April 2013

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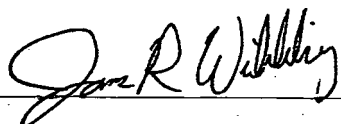
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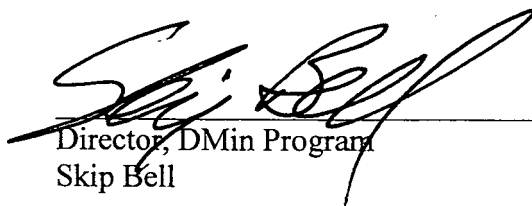
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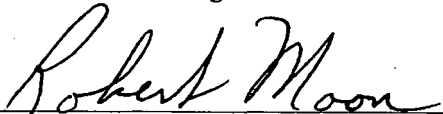
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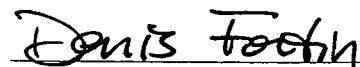
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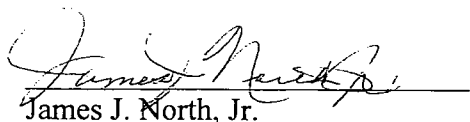
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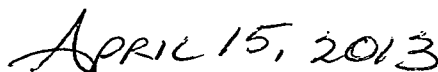
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## Dedication

This project is dedicated to my wonderful wife, Michelle, our daughter (Mimi) Delecia, my father Pastor Andre Jean Trofort Sr., and to Doug Kilcher, DMin, whose unconditional love, prayers, and support enabled me to fulfill this dream to be an agent in building the Kingdom of God. Thanks for believing in me.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In 1997 the Afro-American Central States Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Headquarters, located in Kansas City, Kansas, had 51 churches including nine companies and five missions. Fifteen of the churches had a membership of less than 50 members with no significant growth in 10 years, 1987-1997. Church growth throughout the Conference was slow (*Central States Conference of SDA Records*, Kansas City, KS 1997).

#### **Statement of the Problem**

The Mount Moriah Seventh-day Adventist Church in Coffeyville and the South 18th Street Seventh-day Adventist Church in Independence, Kansas, were two of the small churches needing revitalization. The two churches were 16 miles apart and were located in a rural part of Southeast Kansas. They were part of a three-church district. The third church was the Providence SDA Church in Springfield, Missouri (about 145 miles distant). While the Central States Conference records for the Mount Moriah and 18th Street churches showed 186 members, there were only four elderly members attending between the two churches when I arrived as pastor in January 1997. Coffeyville and Independence, Kansas, church clerk records showed that one elderly church member attended the South 18th Street SDA Church in Independence, and the other three attended

the Mt. Moriah SDA Church in Coffeyville. The problem addressed by this project was the stagnation and impending closure of these two small churches.

### **Statement of the Task**

The task of this Doctor of Ministry project was to develop and implement a pilot project to revitalize, increase, and maintain member participation in the Coffeyville Mount Moriah and Independence South 18th Street SDA churches in Southeast Kansas. This included identifying Scripture and research-supported processes for strengthening and revitalizing churches, implementing selected processes in the project churches, assessing the results, and generalizing the outcomes in ways that might help other small churches with similar challenges. The chosen approach focused on involving members in 31 out-reach and follow-up activities. The effectiveness of these activities was measured by (a) membership participation in the 31 activities, (b) membership participation in enhanced worship services, and (c) membership increase.

### **Justification for the Project**

The Central States Conference records indicated that during a 10-year period from 1987-1997, approximately 15 of the less-than-50-member smaller churches had shown no significant increase in their memberships or in attendance. Seven of these small churches had closed or were almost totally inactive. Small churches seemed neglected when compared to the larger churches throughout the Mid-America Conference territory. There was a perception that many of the laity in smaller churches had an inadequate concept of the biblical roles of disciples and pastors. It seemed that many members considered the pastor to be responsible to do *all* of the soul-winning work and to do most of the church

related activities. These expectations on the part of many laity seemed to impede the implementation of 1 Peter 2:9 (KJV) concerning the priesthood of all believers; “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

### **Definition of Terms**

This project uses some acronyms that may be unfamiliar to readers who have little or no prior knowledge about the Seventh-day Adventist Church and how it operates. The following definitions may be helpful for such readers.

SDA—Seventh-day Adventist Denomination

GC—General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

NAD—North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists

CSC—Central States Conference (a regional conference of SDA Afro-Americans)

MAUC—Mid-America Union Conference (includes SDA churches in the states of: CO, NE, KS, MO, MN, IA)

AA—Alcoholics Anonymous

### **Overview**

This project report unfolds as follows:

Chapter 1 presents the general introduction and a road map of this Doctor of Ministry project. It explains the problem, purpose, justification, significance, basic assumptions, limitations and de-limitations.



Chapter 2 presents the biblical/theological framework for this Doctor of Ministry project based on Christ's examples and instructions including the Great Commission.

Chapter 3 presents the approaches and concepts of contemporary practitioners and scholars about how Christ's and the New Testament's principles might be applied in today's settings.

Chapter 4 presents the demographics and history of the project churches, which were used to help determine activities that might facilitate their revitalization.

Chapter 5 presents 31 activities, with results, used in the Mt. Moriah and South 18th Street, KS, churches to facilitate their revitalization by involving members in community outreach and soul winning.

Chapter 6 presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations based on the outcomes of this Doctor of Ministry project.

### **Limitations and De-Limitations**

The project was limited to two churches. The other small churches throughout the Central States Conference were not included due to time constraints.

### **Expectations From This Project**

It is hoped that the outcome of this project will help other small churches avoid becoming dysfunctional or, if they are already having problems, help them find and implement methods for remedying their situations.

## CHAPTER 2

### A SCRIPTURAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHURCH BUILDING, MAINTENANCE, AND REVITALIZATION

#### **Introduction**

This chapter reviews scriptures concerning: Christ's Approach to Ministry; Disciples as Fruit-bearers; The Great Commission; The Dual Role of the Pastor as Leader and Teacher; New Testament Approaches for Building and Maintaining Healthy Churches, and selected concepts of Ellen G. White on Church Building, Maintenance, and Revitalization.

#### **Christ's Approach to Ministry**

Christ's approach to ministry included how He called and instructed disciples. The disciples witnessed and participated with Jesus as He met people where they were, healed their physical bodies, satisfied their spiritual needs, and called them to follow Him. He mingled with people and had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd (Matt 9:36 KJV).

Tverberg and Okkema (2006) indicated that Jesus' method of discipling was similar to how other Jewish Rabbis of that time disciplined. This method was understood by the culture. Rabbis were famous during that era, and to be one of their disciples was sought by many. Rabbis had a vast knowledge of what is now called the Old Testament.

Rabbis taught how one should live by the Torah (Holy Writ) and attempted to demonstrate how to live it by their lives. A disciple's goal was to gain much of this knowledge and to become like the rabbi in his life and character. The disciple might then take the rabbi's teaching to the community and raise more disciples. A disciple was to leave job and family so he could join the rabbi's simple lifestyle. The disciple would live with the rabbi and observe him 24 hours a day, walking from town to town, studying the scriptures, teaching, working, and eating. He would be the rabbi's servant and meet his teacher's needs. The word rabbi means "my master" and was a term of great respect. The rabbi/disciple relationship was close. A rabbi was like a father to his disciple. Peter, for example, was so loyal to Christ that he said that he was willing to die with Him (Matt 26:35 KJV).

### **Christ – More Than an Ordinary Rabbi**

Christ did many miracles. He turned water into wine (John 2:10). He healed the sick. Christ forgave sins and the Jewish leaders considered this act blasphemous because only God could forgive sins (Matt 9:2-7). When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the leaders then plotted to kill Him (John 11:14-53). When the disciples tried to prevent Christ from spending time with the women and children, he rebuked them. He told the disciples that unless they became like children, they would never enter the kingdom of heaven (Luke 18:16-18). Christ also ate with sinners—tax collectors, prostitutes, and common people. The rabbis of His time were exclusive and very careful with whom they associated. Christ spent time with a Samaritan woman and shared the good news of the kingdom with her, and with other Samaritans who came to Him because of her witness

(John4:6-42). It is doubtful if any other Jewish Rabbi would even consider being alone with a Samaritan woman. *Christ* was no ordinary Rabbi.

### **Characteristics of Christ's True Followers/Disciples**

If Christians are true followers of Jesus the Messiah, what will they be like? Will they spend time with individuals of questionable character? Will they pay attention to women and children? If they are the disciples who emulate the master, what will they do?

It has been about 2,000 years since Jesus walked on this earth; however, the principles of His approaches to ministry are timeless. The challenge Christ's contemporary disciples face is to apply His principles of ministry in ways that meet the needs of today's cultures.

Christ used techniques commonly used by the rabbis of His time. He used parables when he taught the multitudes (Matt 13:34), and He often answered His disciples' questions with questions. Even His lifestyle and actions helped them understand His teachings. When John the Baptist told his disciples to ask Jesus if He was the Messiah, Jesus told them to observe all that He did and tell John.

<sup>4</sup>Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: <sup>5</sup>The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. <sup>6</sup>And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me. <sup>7</sup>And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? (Matt 11:4-7 KJV)

Jesus expressed that there was no greater prophet than John the Baptist (see v. 11).

Jesus wanted His disciples to do more than just believe His words and accompany Him. He called Peter and Andrew to come, and declared, "I will make you fishers of men." This was a call to activity—a call to make disciples of others. The brothers

immediately left their nets and followed Christ (Matt 4:19-20 KJV). Discipleship meant bearing fruit—winning new workers for the Kingdom.

Christ's method of discipleship was grounded in the Hebraic culture and serves as an example of a Christian's calling today. Rather than only emphasizing the knowledge of the Scriptures, people need to *live* like Christ lived. The kingdom of God is built through relationships and growing together. Christ wants both people's minds and hearts—Jesus wants them in every way. The disciples' passion and actions for Christ become a loud witness that will help inspire others to do the same.

### **Disciples as Fruit Bearers**

Many of Christ's parables emphasized the fruit-bearing theme. Just hours before His death, Christ said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:5-6 NKJV). The fig tree which failed to bear fruit was cursed and withered (Matt 21:19 NKJV).

Christ frequently told stories about discipling, which constitutes one way to bear fruit. In the parables of the sheep and the goats, Christ said the sheep visited those who were sick or in prison and helped those who needed food or clothing. They were His disciples who would be with Him forever. The goats, however, had failed to help others; their claim to discipleship was rejected (Matt 25:32-46 NKJV).

In the story of the Good Samaritan, the merciful stranger was the active disciple who helped the suffering victim while the Priest and the Levite failed to do the work of God (Luke 10:30-37 NKJV). In the story of the talents a man gave one servant five

talents, another two, and another one. When he returned, the servant with five talents had earned five more. Likewise the servant with two talents had earned two more, but the servant with one talent had hidden his in the ground and returned it to the master unused. Both servants who increased their talents were honored by their master; however, the servant who failed to use his one talent was rebuked by his master, his talent was taken from him, and it was given to the servant who had ten talents. The wicked servant was cast into outer darkness. Christ was teaching that failure to bear fruit would result in eternal punishment of the lazy servant (Matt 25:14-30 NKJV).

Discipling is emphasized during Christ's encounter with certain individuals. Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews who, after his talk with Christ, became a secret disciple. He hoped to aid Christ's mission by defending him before the Sanhedrin (John 3 NKJV). After Christ's death, Nicodemus became an active disciple in sustaining the early church and making other disciples. The Woman at the Well became a disciple-maker after Christ asked her for a drink of water and told her all the things she had ever done. Upon recognizing Him as the Messiah, she called the men of the city, and many of them believed and urged Christ to stay with them (John 4:5-42 NKJV).

After healing a demon-possessed man, Jesus instructed him to go home and tell his friends what great things the Lord had done for him. Although the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave because their swine had been drowned, they welcomed Him when he returned because of the man's disciple-making witness (Luke 8:35-40).

### **The Great Commission**

The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch (Acts 11:26 NIV). The name Christian signifies an adherent of Jesus, and was first applied to them by the Gentiles

(Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet 4:16 NIV). It is God's desire that every Christian be active in fulfilling the Gospel Commission to His church. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit . . . and teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19-20 NKJV). God also expects the leadership of the church to help train the members on the keys to witnessing and functioning. Immediately following His mandate, Christ called His twelve disciples and gave them power to heal all diseases and cast out demons. Then He bid them to "preach, saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 10:1, 7 KJV).

The Great Commission, found in Matthew 28:18-20, has distinct dimensions that when followed will bring power and stability to the church. It is given with all the authority "in heaven and in earth." The first dimension is *go* into all the world. The second dimension is *baptize* the new disciples in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The third dimension is *teach all things* that Jesus taught His disciples. This last phase is the key to turning new disciples into disciple-makers. It involves strengthening their understanding of redemptive doctrines, teaching them how to witness by word, deed, and soul-winning activities. The Great Commission concludes with Jesus' promise that He will always be with His disciples "even unto the end of the world."

Jesus worked alongside His disciples. He made them fishers of men. In churches where this model is applied, people are less likely to leave the church because they are actively involved in sharing the Gospel of love. "As the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead" (Jas 2:26 NASB).

## **The Dual Role of the Pastor as Leader and Teacher**

Paul states that Christ “gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph 4:11-12 NKJV). The *Interpreter’s Bible* (1953), notes that the “pastors and teachers” are set apart from the apostles, prophets, and evangelists. This phrase might be understood to mean that there are two roles for one person, “pastor and teacher”—he/she has a two-fold assignment. Since Christ served both as a shepherd and teacher, the pastor is also commissioned to lead and teach His flock. Christ was the supreme model for ministry. Modern-day pastors are to reproduce the servant/leader role as delineated by the life of Christ. All ministers must be intentional in their desire to witness for Jesus openly. They must also lead and teach their members to invite people to make a commitment to Christ because it is imperative that the laity understands their personal responsibility to extend the work of Christ.

## **New Testament Approaches for Building and Maintaining Healthy Churches**

When Peter stood up to preach to the Jews in Acts 2, even though there were scattered Jews from the surrounding nations, they all had a common familiarity with the Scriptures. The Spirit gave them power to witness and to make new disciples who could help fulfill the work of the Gospel. After the day of Pentecost there were about 3,000 souls who believed, gladly received the word, and were baptized. They continued fellowshiping daily in the temple and from house to house—breaking bread, praising God, and having favor with all people. The Lord added daily to the church such as should be saved (Acts 2:41, 46-47 KJV).



Paul the Apostle, after his conversion experience, increased in strength and began preaching in the synagogues that Christ is the Son of God (Acts 9:19 KJV). He spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and the churches had rest, were edified, and multiplied throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria (Acts 10:31 KJV). Peter also preached that God was no respecter of persons, but was the Lord of all people. During his sermon the Holy Ghost fell on the Gentiles who were with him (Acts 10:45 KJV).

When Peter returned to Jerusalem, he was confronted by the Jews because they heard that he had been among the uncircumcised. Peter then rehearsed to them his vision about not calling any man common or unclean, but when he had preached to the Gentiles the Holy Ghost fell on them. When the Jews heard this, they held their peace and glorified God (Acts 11:2, 4, 15, 18 KJV).

Due to the persecution which had taken place after the stoning of Stephen, many disciples travelled as far as Cyprus, Antioch, and Greece preaching the word. Because the Lord's hand was on them, a great number believed and turned to the Lord (Acts 11:19-21 KJV). Paul reminded the Jews that God had set him apart to be a light to the Gentiles for their Salvation. When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, glorified God, and many believers were appointed to eternal life. The word of the Lord was published all throughout the region (Acts 13:46-49 NKJV).

Christians are supposed to be the lighthouse of the earth; they are to show the lost sheep the right direction. "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house" (Matt 5:14-15). Paul set up churches in numerous locations of the world during his time. He went from place to place and planted

churches. During his journeys he encountered many challenges and conflicts even among the believers. He gave advice and counsel in several of his letters. One illustration of this is where he compared the church to a human body. He emphasized the importance of the members of the church working together for the glory of God and for the common good of everyone. He stressed that if one member is suffering, then the whole body is hurting, and if one member is honored; then they all should rejoice together (1 Cor 12:12-26 NIV).

Paul actively mentored young Timothy in evangelizing the Gentiles. He urged the young worker to be a faithful servant of God in delivering the message. "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who will judge the living and the dead, at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Tim 4:1, 2 NKJV). In evangelizing the people, Timothy spoke the word to bring people to God. Paul urged him to preach the Word, not the sayings and customs of men. He was to be ready to witness for God whenever the opportunity presented itself. Paul exhorted him to be faithful in reproving sin, and to rebuke with sharpness those who were guilty of gross evils. Paul went further when he said, "For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 4:4-6 NKJV).

Paul said that

because of the grace given to me by God that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, in mighty signs and wonders, by the power

of the Spirit of God. I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ. And so I have made it my aim to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named. (Rom 15:15-20 NKJV)

The Apostle Peter on other hand was an apostle to the Jews. The Bible says that apostles were “daily in the temple, and every house; they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ” (Acts 5:42 NKJV).

A woman named Tabitha, also called by her Greek name Dorcas, lived in Joppa and was called a disciple—she is the only woman disciple who is identified by name. She spent her time doing good works and acts of charity, making garments for the widows and orphans. She became ill and died, so the church called Peter from Lydda, a nearby town, asking him to come at once. All the widows stood by weeping and showing the clothes she had made. Peter arrived and sent everyone from the room. After he had prayed, he asked Dorcas to arise; then she opened her eyes and sat up. Peter then presented her alive to the weeping widows. Many believed on the Lord after Dorcas’ resurrection. Both the ministry and resurrection of Dorcas were instrumental in bringing new believers into the kingdom of God (Acts 9:36-42 NKJV).

Paul did not leave a place and forget about it. Whenever it was possible, he followed up with letters, returned to see how things were going and coached the members. When Paul went to Ephesus, he called the church elders and reminded them of his public teaching and house-to-house visitation with them throughout Asia. He then admonished them to feed the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers. He warned that after his departure grievous wolves would come to them, not sparing the flock. He counseled them to watch and remember what he had told them (Acts 20:17-31 KJV).

## **Selected Concepts of Ellen G. White on Church Building, Maintenance, and Revitalization**

Ellen G. White helped the early Seventh-day Adventist church understand what it meant to be a disciple of Christ, including how members were to use their talents in helping others. As members helped others in various ways, including the needy, they would build relationships that would help these friends come to Jesus. The story of Dorcas is a prime example of someone who used her talents to meet the needs of those in her community and who was consequently revered by those she helped. It appears that Dorcas' assistance to others enabled her also to lead them to Jesus.

In order to reach others White urged Christians to use Christ's strategy for soul-winning. 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, won their confidence, then He bade them, 'Follow Me'" (White, 1909, p. 143).

White felt church members must unite their efforts in soul-winning; thus she stressed teamwork. She indicated that "the work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers" (1948, vol. 9, p. 117).

She also emphasized that failure to be involved in the Gospel Commission would result in the believer's spiritual decline. "And in the spiritual as in the natural world, this always results in degeneration and decay. A man who would refuse to exercise his limbs would soon lose all power to use them. Thus the Christian who will not exercise his God-given powers not only fails to grow up into Christ, but he loses the strength that he already had" (White, 1892, p. 80).

Disciple-making is the work of every church member. She said:

The church of Christ is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. Its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. And the obligation rests upon all Christians. Everyone, to the extent of his talent and opportunity, is to fulfill the Savior's commission. The love of Christ, revealed to us, makes us debtors to all who know Him not. God has given us light, not for ourselves alone, but to shed upon them. (1892, p. 80)

She declared that working to make disciples is required rather than merely watching others' efforts.

The only way to grow in grace is to be disinterestedly doing the very work which Christ has enjoined upon us – to engage, to the extent of our ability, in helping and blessing those who need the help we can give them. Strength comes by exercise; activity is the very condition of life. Those who endeavor to maintain Christian life by passively accepting the blessings that come through the means of grace, and doing nothing for Christ, are simply trying to live by eating without working. (1892, p. 80)

Similarly, she added:

Those who preach the gospel without putting the whole being, heart, mind, soul and strength, into the work are consumers and not producers. God calls for men who realize they must put forth earnest effort, men who bring thought, zeal, prudence, capability, and attributes of Christ's character into their work. The saving of souls is a vast work, which calls for the employment of every talent and every gift of grace. Those who engage in this work should constantly increase in efficiency. They should be filled with an earnest desire to have their power for service strengthened, realizing they will be weak without a constantly increasing supply of grace. They should seek to attain larger and still larger results in their work. When this is the experience of our workers, fruit will be seen. Many souls will be brought into the truth. (1911, pp. 14-15)

She felt that everyone needed to hear Christ's message before the end of time.

Men and women in the highways and the byways are to be reached. Just as Christ's labored in the cities and villages, preaching, teaching, and healing, God's people are to carry the gospel of the third angel's message to all classes of people. The gospel should be focused on one particular locality, but it should also go to out-of-the-way districts and new places. Thus people can be reached and converted who never knew a thing about the precious and testing truths for this time. (1946, p. 46)

## Summary

Christ mingled with the people, ministered to their needs, and then bid them actively to follow Him. This eventually included disciples becoming disciple-makers. The role of the pastor is a dual assignment of leader and teacher to train the members as disciple-makers. Leaders in the New Testament, including Peter and Paul, went throughout much of the Roman Empire preaching the Gospel to Jews and Gentiles. They encouraged and coached young people as exemplified by Paul's involvement with Timothy.

The story of Dorcas provides an example of a disciple who used her talents to help the needy of her community in a way that appears to have influenced many to accept Christ. When she died, Peter through the power of the Holy Spirit, raised her back to life and thus restored her garment-making abilities to the widows and orphans of Joppa. Many Jewish and Gentile converts rejoiced to follow the examples of those who brought them to Christ and became mighty disciple-makers in their own right.

Ellen White urged all of Christ's followers to become actively involved in soul-winning by using His methods/principles.

The next chapter will show how modern-day scholars are applying principles of Christ's methods in contemporary settings.

## CHAPTER 3

### A LITERATURE REVIEW OF CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARS' VIEWS ON HOW NEW TESTAMENT DISCIPLING METHODS MAY BE USED IN PRESENT-DAY SETTINGS AT SMALL CHURCHES

#### **Introduction**

This chapter gives an overview of how contemporary authors propose that New Testament soul-winning principles can be applied in present-day settings and cultures. A primary focus of this literature review will be about scholars' findings concerning small churches, their characteristics, and their evangelistic methods. It will also review practices of the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Latter-day Saints whose members participate systematically in "door-to-door" visitation even though there are no paid local church leaders.

#### **Small Churches**

There is considerable agreement among scholars about many ideas concerning the best ways for small churches to function. Most of the authors felt that small churches had similar unique problems. The one point of disagreement was about their growth. Webster (1992) felt that small churches are wrongly being pressured to grow, but Ray (1982) argued that small is the right size for being an effective channel of the Word of God. A few authors felt that the Great Commission mandated the growth of every Christian church. Other authors insisted that small churches were exactly the right size and could

not handle an influx of new members. With the exception of this disagreement the literature was consistent in its agreement about small church characteristics, for unlike the larger churches, the small churches have opportunities to be more intimate, family oriented, and community conscious.

Maharjan (2002) declared that witnessing for Christ was the most important factor in membership increase. Since Christ gave His Great Commission to preach the Gospel everywhere, witnessing has been the basis for rapid growth. It is the church's first responsibility to make each believer a witness for Christ. Towns and Porter (2003) added that the most effective witnesses were those who applied their theology in their everyday lives. They shared with others ways that they experienced a personal relationship with God. The blessed fact is that every Christian can develop a true, believable witness, but first that person must experience the love of God. Gladden (2004, p. 6) said that churches, no matter the size, stop growing when the price is too high.

Small Christian churches have existed since the days of the Apostles. Donkor (2008) observed that the early churches met in houses, and had vibrant, successful, Christian congregations, which carried forward the Gospel. The church was an authentic Christian unit. Each congregation had activities, which qualified it to be called a church. The house churches appeared to have been a success because architecturally, sociologically, and missiologically, they had come to their own maturity. Ever since Jesus ascended to heaven, small Christian churches have housed His disciples on this earth.

Several authors noted that small churches are like families. Bierly (1995) and Sullivan (1988) said that a small church is like an extended, joyous family. Burt (1988)



agreed that their shared experiences bound members closely together; while McIntosh (2003) added that relationships described the small church. Dinners and other social events of the members constantly strengthened small churches.

According to Dudley (2003) small churches demonstrated how life and leadership work; although Dudley and Walrath (1988) found that these churches have their own set of acceptable actions and guidelines.

La Valley (1986) added that family members sometimes get angry, but a family does not usually divorce over one argument; the church remains together. Hazelton (1993) found that small churches have unique advantages. Unfortunately, large churches have not recognized their importance.

Walrath (1994) agreed that small churches have hidden potential. Speidel (2007) offered hope that a small church did not have to be or feel inferior due to its size. It could have beautiful decorations, excellent programs, and dynamic worship services. It might even be managed better than a large membership church; however, it must have a leader and members with vision who are dedicated to Jesus Christ. Ray (2000) gives twelve principles that help to plan small-church worships.

Walrath (1983) warned that small churches must be viewed with a critical eye in order to discover their unique gifts. Some new possibilities for the small church involve the role of women, the ethnic minorities, the relationship to the judicatory, the facilitation of positive change, the maximizing of potential, the worship, and the role of the pastor. Carroll (1977) insisted that the small church and its theme are beautiful. It is all the new possibilities that the small church brings to the table. Their smallness is positive and develops a potential to care for their communities of faith. The core functions of ministry

and mission are the same for all churches, regardless of their size; however, the ways in which their programs and goals are expressed vary due to the size of the church.

Many small churches have perceived themselves to be mediocre and unable to meet their denominational goals and requirements. This fact should be acknowledged in all sincerity. Out of a sense of denominational accountability, some may need to be closed down. Carroll argued that if bigger does not always mean better, then neither is smaller always beautiful.

Surrey (1981) recognized the culture of the small town church life and how that concept shaped life, goals, expectations, and standards in rural America. It was a distinctive organization. Small parishes in small towns do not change much, and neither are they expected to change. Small town church residents, for some reason, frequently oppose growth. However, they emphasize roots, ancestry, good bloodlines, and continuity. McIntosh (2003) realized the problem of change in small churches. They described all churches as either old or young. Neither the length of time a church had existed, nor the age of its members, determined its age. Churches classified as “old churches” resisted change and were inflexible while those classified as “young churches” accepted change easily and moved ahead. Stetzer and Dodson (2007) said commitment and the desire to be renewed and revitalized helped over 300 churches to turnaround and be resurrected.

Ray (1992) felt that big is not necessarily better. Mega-church goers and pastors focused on huge sanctuaries and big parking lots. God has a special love for the small church—He made so many of them. Over 60% of churches in America have less than 75 people attending. God has a divine purpose for however big or small a church needs to

be. Special churches need special care—from theology to maintenance, from mission to morale, from worship to conflict. The small church thrives on its own pulse with its own struggles and challenges. The small church has hope, purpose, and a shining vision of all that it can be—whether large or small, the vision can be realized by “thinking small” (a way of thinking that facilitates people working together).

Ray (2003) added that small congregations are the right size to be all that God created them to be and to do. Because of the power and consequences of numbers, smaller are fundamentally different from other sized churches. In small churches, more people know more people, and know more about more people than in most large congregations. Compared to other groups, the small church is much larger than it ought to be. When church is measured by human relationships, the small church is the largest expression of the Christian faith. In summary, Ray (1982) offered five basic areas which can be effective in both a large or a small church in order to strengthen it holistically: (a) worship, (b) education, (c) mission, (d) caring, and (e) maintenance.

Stevens (1992) claimed that because God had already provided, small churches should not be concerned with their size or numbers in order to measure their success. Faithfulness on the part of small church’s ministries will bring success. With over half of all churches possessing less than 100 members, their continued existence evidenced their potential. The important role of church growth principles accompanied its development. Demographic factors and potential church diseases also hindered growth. The valuable strengths of the small church in the rural areas, and church growth strategies increased projections for Christian ministry.

Macleod (2003) disagreed for he felt that growth should be in other ways than just numbers. Members should grow in knowledge of the scriptures, in applying the Bible and church doctrines to their daily lives, and in witnessing their faith to others. Such growth will lead to Christlikeness, which will attract nonbelievers. Friendliness to newcomers is different from hospitality according to Ott (2002). Being friendly is speaking a kind word, but hospitality invites the new person into the member's life and activities. Unless the new one becomes a part of the members' tightly knit circle, he/she will leave the church.

Malphurs (2004) found that the Bible speaks of three types of church growth: the first is growth in the knowledge of the Word; the second is growth in the areas or countries to be evangelized; and the third is growth in the number of new converts added to the church.

### **Training**

Garlow (1981) said the people of God exist first for service for which they need training; and second, those who train them are their servants, not their masters. When addressing lay ministry training, Garlow is talking about lay persons who want to be trained as "equippers or disciple-makers." Fenhagen (1981) claimed, "The issue of lay education is of critical importance to the vitality of the local church and integrity of its mission to the world. The local congregation has a primary responsibility to enable persons to discover and exercise the gifts/ministries they have been given" (p. 113).

Gibbs and Morton (1965) said that the "laity... are the frontline troops of God's armies; these are the men and women who have to keep the faith and to survive in the gray world... Their nurture and their support should be the first concern of the church,"

(p. 139). The theme of their book, *God's Frozen People*, is in harmony with the ideas of Ephesians 4 and in particular verse 11, which speaks of the pastor/teacher whose role, is to empower the members of the church. The book paints a picture which resembles a coach seeking to improve the best talents of each team member for the purpose of sharing the Gospel and/or ministering to members of the community of believers. Throughout the book they show concern about seminaries focusing too much on theology while not giving enough instruction on how future pastors can train members to use their talents in ways that help others in their community. Mouw (1973) also said that training is essential for all the gifts. Furthermore, the fact that a person works at a secular job in addition to his work in the church should not make him unworthy.

The focus of the literature review, which follows, is how members can be active in facilitating the various ministries of their local church. The ideal is for every member to be active in at least one ministry.

### **Children's Ministry in the Small Church**

Children should be the church's number one priority according to Barna (2003) because most people who come to know the Lord do so before the age of 15. There were many parents who did not have an early spiritual foundation, so they could not pass it on to their children. The church has also been guilty of waiting too long to focus on young people. They failed to realize that a child's moral development is set by the age of nine. The churches must begin now to come along side their children, at the earliest age possible, with biblical principles, which will protect the youngsters against worldly influences. Parents need to be equipped to help their children prepare for the church of tomorrow, and to become spiritual champions. White (1954) counseled that too much

importance cannot be placed on the early training of children. The lessons that a child learns in the first seven years of life have more to do with forming his/her character than all it learns in the future years. Parents have not given much careful consideration to the amount of knowledge both temporal and eternal for the children's rearing and nurturing. Not only should children in the first years of life be obtaining book knowledge, they should learn the arts essential for practical life during their first 12 or 15 years.

### **Rural Ministry in the Small Church**

Jung et al (1998) worked with nine denominational officials representing Lutheran, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Southern Baptist, and the United Methodist to study churches in the rural areas. The issues were not simply social, but they addressed questions of the mission and ministry of rural churches. Some other concerns were: the aging of the rural population and the closing of schools, hospitals, and factories. Three questions were explored: Why change? What are the options? How can the church move from where it is to where it should be? Finally, they studied the stories of rural clergy opportunities and obstacles and offered solutions for the health and thriving of the rural church. Stevens (1992) offered one solution that small churches in rural areas must build on their strengths.

White (1946, pp. 45-54) recognized rural areas as special mission fields. She urged that those in the rural areas—highways and byways—should not be neglected. The least likely areas deserve careful attention. Jesus' ministry took place in the out-of-the-way areas. Young people filled with the Holy Spirit need to give the message in the highways and hedges. In the California mountains many souls need the Three Angels'

Messages. People would have better health if they went two-by-two into the country areas to proclaim the message. She (1946) said,

Brethren who change their location, who have the glory of God in view, and feel the individual responsibility that rests upon them to others good, to benefit and save souls for whom Christ withheld not his precious life, should move into towns and villages where there is little or no light and where they can be of real service and bless others with their labor and experience. (p. 52)

### **Urban Ministry in the Small Church**

Peters (2007) presented a *tour de force* to fill the void in the work of urban ministry. He showed the challenges and opportunities for ministry in the urban settings as a pedagogical passion for the city and declared that urban ministry is Christian ministry. Nearly half the people on the face of the earth live in urban communities. Just as families, the cities also bear the stamp of their human connections in cultural differences. Thurber (August 2011) found that a national survey on the study of youth and religion reported 36% of black Protestant youth claim to attend church services weekly. The study further reported that the absence of religion in the lives of urban young people often led to gang violence, teenage pregnancy, and drug abuse.

The issue of how to help black urban youth is long-standing and continues to be addressed. For example, the Elijah3 Ministries' (2013) website states, "We create evangelism resources so leaders can mobilize a generation of urban youth that will be transformed through God's word and move in the spirit and power of Elijah to be transformers by God's word." A Google search in March 2013 using the words "God urban youth movement" resulted in many websites with ministries, methods and/or materials designed to reach urban youth with the Gospel. Lincoln and Mamiya (2001) conducted a ten-year study on the Black church in America's experience in religion. It

was the largest non-governmental survey of the urban and rural churches since the 1930s. The study related to societal challenges: politics, economics, women, youth, and music. These trends will influence the Black church well into the next century.

Another research project by Bennett (1983) compiled information on how the Gospel can most effectively be given to large urban areas. The author presented ministry on numerous levels: (a) establishing congregational identity, (b) engaging in ministry, (c) planning for church growth, (d) celebrating through worship, and (e) dreaming new dreams. Cone and Wilmore (1993) made Black theology come of age in this work. It served as a source book for the emergence of Black theology in America. The churches have tried for more than a quarter of a century to relate the Gospel to the African-American community. This volume serves as a tool to help pastors and lay persons, students and teachers to catch the spirit of the Black theology movement, and if God sees fit, then it should be taken into the 21st century with courage and hope.

Rogers (August 2011), along with the Benton Harbor youth, volunteered to work on a four week Kids Zone/Sidewalk Sabbath School (SSS) ministry effort. These youth are the future of the church. So far 245 new kids heard the message of Jesus Christ. The results were miraculous. Harbor of Hope's goals were to reach families by reaching children and teens. He offered three ways to partner: (a) join them, (b) become a financial partner, and (c) fellowship with them.

### **Evangelism**

Gladden (2004, p. 6) claimed that it is very important to understand the culture of every church in order to determine its needs. He addressed four points which coincide



with a church's culture for evangelism: Outreach, Commitment, Fun, and Prayer. Those four points the pastor and his leaders are to practice if the church is going to grow.

1. *Outreach* is the culture of programs that will help reach the lost. The leaders' responsibilities are to focus on every resource, energy, and spiritual gift to continue the ministry of Jesus.

2. *Commitment* is the second element of *the* yeast of our culture. Highly-committed churches are the ones that are growing. He quoted Rainer as saying that the unchurched would return if they knew what the church expects from its members. Low commitment churches, on the other hand, struggle to pay the bills and to maintain the status quo. It is up to the pastors and the leaders to create and preserve the culture of commitment.

3. *Fun*. If the members are to invite their neighbors and friends, there needs to be a strong culture of fun, not a guilt trip. He quoted a passage from C. S. Lewis that said joy is the serious business of heaven. Church leaders must create a cheerful temperature of joy and even fun in their church.

4. *Prayer*. It is imperative that every church has a culture of prayer. The pastor and the leaders must emphasize it. God has promised His blessings on those who ask (Matt 7:7 KJV). A dreamer prays that things will be different. However, a visionary prays for God to use him/her to make a difference according to His will. Prayer is the breath of the church against the forces of evil. There is an old saying that a family that prays together, stays together. This principle also applies to the church—the church family which prays together stays together. Every pastor and his leaders are responsible for the lost and for bringing people to Christ and His kingdom.

Burrill (1997) said that traditionally the mission of the church laity was for the sole purpose of winning souls for the kingdom; however, today the members have become observers and have left the soul-winning and care-giving to the pastors. McDonald (2004) agreed that every member needed to serve as a participant—not a church on-looker—in the life of the church. The members who worship God should care for hurting people and be missionaries to those around them. To fulfill this task, they must be born again as Jesus said.

Speaking in a similar manner, Linn (1998) said that evangelism is passionate spirituality unbridled. Evangelism has been the mainline focus in many churches. There are some who have been faithful to the Gospel, yet they neglected the ministry of evangelism which lay in the heart of faithfulness. The practice of evangelism must be taken seriously if the church is going to fulfill her obligation. Explaining what evangelism is not, the author's burden is to encourage ministers and their churches not to worry about numerical growth and controversial theological issues, but rather to focus on faithfulness to the true source of life.

McIntosh (2003) added that making disciples meant finding lost souls, bringing them into the church and helping them grow in the faith so that they can make other disciples themselves. Malphurs (1996) described seven traits of a disciple: (a) studied the Bible and practiced it, (b) had daily worship, (c) committed himself/herself to Christ each day, (d) attended regularly, (e) had a ministry, (f) shared his/her faith with others, and (g) gave cheerfully.

Ogden (2003) noted that the church growth movement has emphasized the priesthood of the laity. Its purpose is to make every believer a witness for Christ. With

everyone a witness, Trebilcock (2003) observed that the small church can have the Spirit. People come for that Spirit even though they may not yet know Christ. It is the Spirit that will change their lives.

Evangelist Finley (June 2008) urged that those who have districts should plan strategically, motivate their members, get them involved, and have them invite their friends and families to the meetings. Achieving the Mission of the Church involved self-denial, self-sacrifice, and total commitment. Without the commitment of its leaders, the church could not achieve much. The leaders must humble themselves and be examples of self-denial.

Towns and Porter (2003) added that the most effective witnesses were those who applied their theology in their everyday lives. They shared with others ways that they experienced a personal relationship with God. The blessed fact is that Christians can develop a true, believable witness, but first they must experience the love of God.

Pappas (2002) explained that the non-churched will not come to Christ because they have (a) a duty to attend, (b) a sense of guilt for staying home, (c) a knowledge that the church building is open, (d) a family tradition to attend, (e) a fear of Hell, (f) a pressure from others, and (g) a continuation of formal rituals. They may be attracted to a church because of its dynamic life and energy, its emphasis on salvation, its study of the Bible, its blessings that the church members receive, and its purpose and direction in their lives.

### **Problems in Small Churches**

Bierly (1998) found that small churches were comatose. They were not interested in developing new programs and outreach. Some of their issues were inadequate

facilities, power struggles, financial obligations, generation gaps, and an unwillingness to participate in church activities. Madsen (1975) worried that the constant concern for bigness and development, made it appear as if something was wrong with the small church. There was, however, deep conviction that the small church was necessary. The option for creative ministry was wide open. Due to its strong fellowship, ease of adaptability, fast communication, and mobilization, the small church was widely responsive to emerging needs. Many small churches were not small in spirit. Due to its emotional warmth, the small church had a place in the mission which could be filled by no other group. Thus the small church was valid, vital, and victorious.

Agreeing, Willimon and Wilson (1980) declared that a church should not feel inadequate if its only reason for being is worship each week; while Clark (1993-94) insisted that spiritual and emotional growth are needed before a small church can grow in numbers.

When it comes to churches, warned Barna (1993), one size does not fit all. Some people thrive in small churches and others in large ones. Pappas and Walrath (1989) cautioned that businesses may be judged by their increase, but families are not. Since a small church is a family, it cannot be judged by business standards of increase. Schaller (1982) found that some denominational leaders did not expect small churches to grow. Hazelton (1993) added that as a result of being ignored, small churches have developed negativism and hopelessness. He felt that revitalization will solve the problem. Burt and Roper (1992) agreed that small churches, trying to live up to big standards, suffer from feeling inferior. Then Bush and O'Reilly (2006) recognized that small churches face such financial, social, and internal stresses that they long for a miracle from God.

Schaller (2003) listed several assumptions concerning the small church in America: Those responsible for the future of small churches tend to plan on the basis of limited resources while decision makers of the larger growing churches assume there will be an abundance of resources—both groups create self-fulfilling prophecies. The average size of worshippers in the rural communities of America is between 18 and 40. Most small churches in America are not organized to welcome a flood of newcomers because growth would change their principles and culture. When members do not share any hope for the future, it may be wise for them to dissolve. Media technology poses a threat to small churches because they are operating in a far more competitive culture than in 1925 or 1975. Approximately 30% of the Protestant churches in America account for 70% of the worshippers on the typical weekend. One size will not fit all because each church should design its own customized ministry. For growth to occur the pastor needs to remain in a small church a number of years.

### **Failure an Unpopular Subject**

Barna (1993) realized that failure is an unpopular subject. He understood the problems and offered some suggestions about ways God has helped declining churches to turn around. He noted that the world has had negative influences on the church instead of the church positively impacting the world. The church, he urged, must fulfill its God-given mission and learn from its past failures to plan for its future. Success must be planned—it will not just happen. One needs to measure his own individual success in the church for his personal ministry to be successful. Farnsworth and Farnsworth (2005) cautioned that a growing church might not be a healthy one. Increased membership, nice facilities, or excellent programs do not measure health. Rather a healthy church's

members see God working in their midst, and choose to join Him in His work. Weber (2008) observed that when the rate of change inside an institution became slower than the rate of change outside, the end was in sight. The only question was, When? This observation did not apply only to the business world, but also to religious institutions. One ray of hope came from Stetzer and Dodson (2007) who found that commitment and desire to be renewed and revitalized helped 300 churches to turnaround and be resurrected.

Barna (1998) fears the future of the church is hanging in the balances. They continue to use archaic methods from two generations ago. Most members do not wish to learn anything new. The pastor is overburdened with non-evangelistic tasks. The author suggests that the people grow up to be spiritually mature. Later Barna (2005) observed that the average church-going Christian will not lead a single soul to Christ. Church members are not praying for any souls, and since they are not evangelists, they have no need to help others come to Jesus. Roberts (2008) declared that living organisms multiply, but dead ones do not. Pastors expect their congregations to witness, serve others, and tithe. A church needs to multiply in order to fulfill its God-given mission.

McConnell (2007) believed that a church does not stand still—it is either growing or dying. First the church members must recognize that the church has a problem before it can be helped. To be healthy, a church has to have healthy members who are not hurting, who have peace rather than discord, and who are filled with the Holy Spirit. Pappas (1988) warned that some groups see outsiders as enemies. Agreeing, Wagner (1984) found that many church members want to keep their church small, just as it is, with no strangers allowed. Schaller (2003) says the reason for this is because most small

churches are not ready to receive a lot of new members. They would need to reorganize to handle such an influx. Those telling them to grow have not looked at the problems growth would involve. In contrast, Callahan (2000) found that strong churches both large and small were eager to welcome newcomers and include them readily into the life of the congregation; however, large or small churches who were closed, cliquish, and kept new members as outsiders for years, lacked the vibrant strength they needed. Crandall (1995) observed that the mission of the turnaround church is to realize that it is Christ's church designed to lead others to salvation. Pappas (1988) cautioned that when there are lots of changes in the small church, the members feel that things are happening incorrectly. The way things are normally done is from habit. Sometimes small churches ignore problems rather than deal with them, and in some cases that may be a good solution. Barna (1998) suggested that the church needs to know when to make important changes which will not alter its basic doctrines or beliefs.

Bierly (1995) issued six challenges in order for the small church to positively impact society. They must get beyond the current barriers which threaten small churches: (a) traditionalism which threatens the future, (b) "niceness," (c) the "club" mentality, (d) paralysis in the face of conflict, (e) the negative "scripts," and (f) the financial strains.

Crandall and Sells (1983) asked if small churches can grow. This question is usually expressed in disbelief because society equates size or growth with strength. America is a nation of smaller churches. The United Methodist church had an attendance of less than 50 each—an average of 41%. Of the population in America, 70% claim to have no involvement in the local church. The authors, therefore, believed that growth was not a numbers game; yet, they believed it was possible for the small churches that were

scattered through the United States to grow. Schaller (1982) recognized this, for he said growth in small churches is possible; however, it requires great effort.

Small churches and their leaders, warned Bergfalk (1988), must appreciate the principles of church growth. In the past very little was written about it. Most publications addressed large and super churches. The resulting poor self-image immobilized the small church. Members were unhappy about their condition, and the pastor wished to be somewhere else. Bergfalk noted that the culture measured success with bigness. The larger the church the more successful it appeared to be. Small churches were not failures. If the pastor and the small church caught the highlight of the glory that is rightfully theirs, every church could be healthy and happy.

### **The Role of the Pastor in the Small Church**

Urging pastors to love their small churches as God does, Bierly (1998) thought leaders must work smarter by knowing, appreciating, and dealing effectively with people. He (1995) realized that in the small church any and everyone has access to the pastor. Wagner (1984) found that a pastor needed three to six years to prove to the church that he/she was a dedicated servant. Optimistically Oswald (1989) felt it would take only six to nine months for the pastor to be accepted. In any case, Bierly (1995) emphasized that the pastor must be accepted by the congregation as a coach or team player. His advice would only be welcome when they asked for it.

Killen (2005) learned that members in the small churches like to know their pastor personally through frequent contacts, but the entire congregation should be a caring group who minister to one another. It is the pastor's job to lead these members into such a ministry. Farris (2000) observed that too often pastors, who are assigned to small



churches, find that they are unprepared for this work by their seminaries. Oswald (1989) compared leaving a large church for a small one with going overseas as a missionary. In the same vein, Schaller (1982) suggested that a pastor must develop a new method of service when he/she moved to a small church. Many times pastors went to small congregations from the seminary until they could transfer to a larger church. The small church was merely a stepping-stone.

Pappas, Planting, and Walrath (1993) said small churches are in a class by themselves, and to overlook their uniqueness is to misunderstand them. They are proving grounds for new pastors. Beginning pastors are expected to make their mistakes in small churches. Those who demonstrate leadership in ministry will likely be effective in larger churches. They are not qualitatively but quantitatively different. Some pastors are small church pastors who do not always do well in larger churches. Goals set by denominational leaders, such as outreach, soul-winning, and stewardship, may not always meet the needs of small churches. Church members who are nurtured make effective lay leaders in small churches, yet they do not always find similar nurture when their small church becomes larger. Small churches need to be worked with, in their own context. Those who lead small churches must be able to bring out their greatest potential. Doing is important, however, being is crucial.

Ministry efforts need to recognize the context of the small church, according to Andrews (1988). Ministry approaches which fail to note this context will do more harm than good. Ministry should be conducted in conscious, yet critical fashions. Research from Notre Dame showed that 46% of the unincorporated and rural areas had not been well examined. The reports on these parishes were: (a) inappropriate music was not

common in the small town churches; (b) the least satisfied churches were the one-pastor rural or small town parishes; (c) the pastors in rural areas often did not perceive their parishioners views; (d) the availability of adult education programs was the lowest in the small churches; and (e) the sermons in the small churches presented the least application to the current life situations.

In view of such facts, Borden (2006) offered five practical explanations on how (a) to develop a vision and communicate a strategy for implementation; (b) to motivate a congregation to embrace the vision; (c) to develop resources, ideas, and personnel to prepare for change; (d) to embrace and implement change; and (e) to implant a new DNA into the life of the congregation. Barna (1993) believed that a pastor should be able to measure his/her own individual success, as well as that of the church members, in order for his/her personal ministry to be successful. Burt and Roper (1992) added that leaders need to do more to encourage the success of their small churches. Warning that churches whose members do not fellowship together will have problems getting those members to reach out to newcomers, McIntosh (1997) urged pastors to encourage their flock to share meals together and have fellowship time before the church services begin. When the members are friends with each other, they will automatically share friendliness with their visitors. Walrath (1994) offered the encouragement that a realistic and relational minister can do much with very little if he/she understands, accepts, and honors the unique character of small churches. Attitude and approach in administrative skills can help the congregation to function smoothly and efficiently. Burt and Roper (1992) added that leaders need to do more to encourage the success of their smaller churches.

Thinking positively, Pappas, Planting, and Walrath (1993) believed small churches could be both strong and vital in their outreach mission. There must be a focus on the local ministry to make a difference in the lives of the people in its community. It is important to have a clear understanding of the definition of purpose, mission, and resources. In order to map out a strategy for the mission of the small church, the authors mentioned: presence, people, pattern, and program.

Recognizing that small churches have problems, Maner (1982) felt the reason was the size of the church and the pressures exerted on the pastor which developed an inferiority complex. Some thought a successful small church would have 200 members; however, this may not be appropriate for all denominations. It is a one-pastor operation. He/she is the main character for the success or failure of a small church. Most books on church growth are written by pastors or administrators of large churches. Maner believed that tenure is one of the solutions for the small church. Many years of trial-and-error can produce effective ideas for its success. Nebel (2002) found that church growth usually occurred when new members bonded first with the church, and finally with Jesus Christ. Peterson (1989) warned that conflict will happen so the pastor must learn how to handle it. One solution to this problem came from Maxwell (1992). He presented a new idea to the key leader in a small church and let that man sell it to the others—the new idea passed without any trouble. Addressing the tough questions concerning God and war, Brown (2006) examined the God-commanded conflicts in the Old Testament. The battles fought and won by God made it clear why the Lord allowed such massacres to happen. The author concluded that the sovereign God is still a loving God. He addressed four events:

ones, need loving pastors. She tells about baptizing a young lady in her church as follows: “As I waded into the baptistery ... the thunderous words of John the Baptist ringing in my ears--I was ready. The teenager and I both surrendered that day as the water flowed between our fingers and toes. We agreed that it felt sort of like a bear hug from God ...” There were a lot of hungry spirits in the church that day, and one needed to model sharing authentic faith.

### **Jehovah’s Witnesses and Latter-day Saints as Disciple-Makers**

Christ’s commission of every member as a disciple-maker is being practiced by the every-member-door-to-door ministry of the Jehovah’s Witnesses and Latter-day Saints (Mormons).

Each congregation of the Jehovah’s Witnesses has a body of appointed unpaid male elders and ministerial servants. Elders maintain general responsibility for governing the congregation, setting meeting times, selecting speakers, conducting meetings, directing the public preaching, and creating “judicial committees” to investigate and enforce disciplinary action for cases that are seen as breaching their doctrines. Baptized members, called publishers, are considered to be ordained ministers. To be a “regular” publisher, the member must report at least one hour of witnessing per month. Failure to report the hours of witnessing for one month means the member is termed as “irregular.” Failure to report for six consecutive months means the member is classified as “inactive.” Those habitually “irregular” or “inactive” are usually not allowed to serve in any special capacities. Special capacities such as Auxiliary, Regular, and Special Pioneers and Missionaries make commitments to serve from 50 to 130 hours in witnessing per month (Jehovah’s Witnesses, *Wikipedia*).

At the local level, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' leadership is drawn from the laity and works on a part-time volunteer basis without stipend. Families support their young people who serve as door-to-door missionaries. Worthy males are considered for the Aaronic Priesthood as early as age 12 and for the Melchizedek Priesthood at age 18 and up (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Wikipedia*).

### **Summary**

In summary, this chapter has looked at how modern-day authors utilized New Testament methods in contemporary settings. The scholars found that small churches are like families. They often resist growth and change. As the church addresses this issue it is responsible to provide aggressive lay-training programs for its members and events to help them become more accepting of newcomers. Special attention needs to be given to rural and urban communities as well as ministries to children and women. Evangelism and disciple-making are the privilege and responsibility of every member. The work of the pastor is to be a leader and trainer of committed workers for the kingdom. The chapter also looked at the practice of the Jehovah's Witnesses and Latter-day Saints who use door-to-door ministry and do not pay church leaders.

The emphasis on every member/disciple being active in community support and outreach activities is not new to the SDA Church. Ellen White in a chapter titled "The Work and Life" in the book *Steps to Christ* emphasizes the importance and benefit of a disciple being involved in disciple-making activities; this is God's expectation and plan. Failure to be involved in witnessing activities results in the spiritual decline of a believer; while involvement in soul winning activities strengthens a person spiritually.

William Scales, Director of Adult Ministries for the NAD from 1979-1999, emphasized the importance of *every* member being a Christian witness in his/her community. He fostered this by regularly giving people a list of many things that they can do to help others and make friends. One list of 75 activities that Pastor Scales and his wife developed is found in Appendix A.

Robert Moon, Director of the Adventist Information Ministry (AIM) for its first 25 years, 1982-2007, told me there were many ways that AIM attempted to involve every member. One way was the concept of developing an Abundant Life Resource Center where collaboration of churches in the same locality facilitated community outreach and follow-up of all interests (see Appendix B). This concept had a partial implementation under a different name when Discover Bible schools were established in conjunction with local churches.

Also simple witnessing cards were developed so a person could respond via the 800 number where the last part of the number spelled HIS WORD—447-9673. He told me about one man to whom he had given the number outside a motel in Arizona. That man called after 10 years and eventually joined the church.

The next chapter provides important demographic information related to the two African-American Kansas project churches.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE HISTORY AND DEMOGRAPHICS OF TWO SOUTHEAST KANSAS AFRICAN-AMERICAN SDA CHURCHES IN THE CENTRAL STATES CONFERENCE

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the demographics and history of the Southeastern Kansas district. Its focus is on two small churches with less than 50 attending members—the Mount Moriah Seventh-day Adventist Church in Coffeyville, KS, and the South 18th Street SDA Church in Independence, KS, which are a part of a multi-church district that spans 140 miles. Although a third church in Springfield, MO, was also a part of this district, it was not included in this project assessment because of time constraints.

First, this chapter looks at the history and development of African-American Evangelism in the Central States Conference. Since the two small Kansas churches did not increase in membership in a ten-year period (1987-97), a review of the successful evangelistic methods of the St. Louis, MO, New Life SDA church plant congregation was conducted. Based on the church plant's successful methods, patterns, and strategies, I, as the pastor, hoped they could be used to solidify and increase the membership in the Mt. Moriah and South 18th Street churches.

#### **Demographics of Coffeyville and Independence, KS**

According to the data from the US Census (2000, June) the demographics of Coffeyville and Independence, KS are as follows: Coffeyville, a small Midwestern town

in Montgomery County, located precisely in the middle of the United States, spans a mere 8.4 square miles at its greatest distance. It borders Oklahoma on the south and Missouri on the east. The town was founded in 1869 by Colonel James A. Coffey as a cattle-shipping point and a trading post for lumber, building materials, and trade with the Osage Indians. Although it was incorporated in 1872, the corporation was later found to be illegal and was again incorporated in March 1873.

Today it is an industrial center located in an agricultural area that is also rich in petroleum and natural gas. Manufacturing includes chemicals, machinery, foodstuffs, and fiberglass items. It is also known as one of the most important grain and flour milling points in the Central West. Coffeyville still remembers its pioneer history during Defender Days when it re-enacts the famous Dalton Gang bank robbery shoot-out that killed three of the gang members and three townsmen.

A rural community township, Coffeyville has a population of approximately 9,000 with a yearly attrition rate of 1.9%. At one time Coffeyville had a population of 30,000, but with its loss of industry and jobs, it continued to decline. The racial mix is 87% Caucasian, 7% Afro-American, 1% Hispanic migrants, and 5% other nationalities. Age statistics are: 65 and over (77%), 35-64 (8%), 13-34 (12%), and 0-12 (3%).

Coffeyville has K-12 public education and a tax-supported junior college. The Catholic Church also has a school. Unfortunately, 67% of the population have not finished high school. (Older farmers did not attend high school, and younger students have a high dropout rate.) Less than 1% of the residents have college diplomas. The schools have numerous programs to help pupils succeed, but very few take advantage of the educational system and its resources for higher learning. Most of the students



attending the junior college are from outside Coffeyville, and attend on a sports scholarship.

The businesses and industries in Coffeyville are predominantly agricultural and blue collar. The problem workers face is that all the industries require a high school diploma for employment. Since a high number of individuals lack their high school diploma, the only jobs for them are: the factories, fast food restaurants, or odd jobs; thus 70-80% of the population lives below the poverty line.

There is one small hospital and three nursing facilities—all of which require some type of training. Taxes in Montgomery County are extremely high due to supporting the junior colleges. Another problem negatively affecting the economy in Coffeyville is the lack of a public transportation system. There is, however, a family-owned cab service that is frequently “down” or expensive. Independence, KS, has approximately the same population and issues that Coffeyville faces. It also has agricultural work. Some of its businesses such as Golden Books Publishers and Emerson Electronics have either shutdown or moved overseas. It, too, has a community college, high school, and an elementary school.

Between Coffeyville and Independence, there are approximately 30 churches. The largest denominations represented are various: Baptist, Pentecostal/Holiness, Church of God in Christ, Nazarene, Presbyterian, Methodist, Latter Day Saints, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Full Gospel, and two very large Catholic Churches. There is a total of four Seventh-day Adventist churches throughout the Southeast Kansas District—the two regional churches belong to the Central States Conference and the other two small SDA

churches belong to the Kansas-Nebraska Conference. Attendance at most of these churches is minimal (20 or less), with the exception of the Catholic churches.

### **Beginnings of African-American Adventist Work in the Central States Conference**

Central States Conference (2002, pp. 9-11) provides a history of the SDA work among African-Americans in the Central States. Kansas was the cradle of the work for the Negro race in the area. About 1880, in a movement known as the “exodus,” thousands of Negroes migrated from the Southern States into Kansas to seek greater economic freedom. They scattered over the state wherever they could find homes.

The Independence, KS, church begun by Mrs. Gertrude Johnson, a Bible instructor, was admitted to the Kansas Conference on August 22, 1924. From 1912 to 1927 there had been a steady growth in churches. So much so, that S. E. Wight, Central Union Conference President, reported in the 1927 *Central Outlook* that the Black work had made great strides in the previous three years. The Central States Conference (an SDA African-American Regional Conference) was organized on November 9, 1952.

### **Historical Background of Coffeyville and Independence, KS, Churches**

When I arrived as pastor of the Mt. Moriah and South 18th Street churches in the winter of 1997, present and former members provided me with the history of my two new Kansas churches. The Mt. Moriah SDA Church building is located in Coffeyville, and the South 18th Street SDA Church is located in Independence. These cities are approximately 16 miles apart (from city limit to city limit). Although the clerks’ records showed over 100 members in each church only four members attended between the two

churches when the pastor arrived in the district. One member served as treasurer and Sabbath school teacher at the South 18th Street Church, and three more members over age 70 attended the Mt. Moriah SDA Church in Coffeyville. That church began as the result of an evangelistic meeting that took place in the 1960s. Two African-American ladies who were fellowshipping with the sister (Anglo) Coffeyville church belonging to the Kansas-Nebraska Conference heard about the upcoming crusade, and they attended. After the meetings conducted by an evangelist from the Central States Regional Conference in Kansas City, they were baptized along with 59 new members. This new group of believers was organized into a church body shortly thereafter; however, there was no church building for them to attend; therefore, they rented a school gymnasium to hold worship services.

The South 18th Street Seventh-day Adventist Church in Independence, KS, began as a result of a donation. The church building was originally an Army/Air Corps barracks meant to be destroyed because it was no longer needed by the armed forces. The building was in excellent condition; therefore, it was offered to the Central States Conference in the late 1950s by the military, so that it would not have to be torn down. African-American members who were attending the Kansas-Nebraska Conference church in Independence were pleased to utilize this donated building, and soon dedicated it into a Regional Conference church. The pastor at that time lived in Kansas City, KS, and commuted on the weekends to the church. After the dedication, he moved to Independence to sustain the district and baptized three families there. They organized with a church clerk, a treasurer, and a choir director.

In the summer of 1969, another evangelistic crusade was conducted, and 29 precious souls were baptized into the South 18th Street SDA Church. Over the past 40 years, several pastors, lay pastors, Regional Conference interns, and local elders commuted and ministered to the Coffeyville/Independence and Springfield, MO, district as a whole. The average length of “pastoral presence” at the churches was six to nine months and sometimes a little longer. The pastors did not always reside in the district, but commuted from their homes once or twice a month. The churches had gone for several years without consistent pastoral presence.

These two churches were in decline because some members had moved away, and others had died. Due to the economy, there was a lack of resources to maintain an oversized, deteriorated building in Coffeyville. A small congregation of mostly retirees could not meet the operating expenses, and the lack of a pastoral presence caused some members to stay away. Without emergency pastoral intervention, the two churches would soon die.

### **Ebony Evangelism**

Traditional evangelism strategies over the last 20 years have focused on baptisms—souls and goals; however, more recently the church has applied a number of modern-day approaches involving the media and seminars. From 1990 to 2000 the nine Regional Conferences in the North American Division (NAD) did their best to maintain and increase the membership throughout their churches. In 1993, the NAD voted to provide funds for evangelism and church growth for the nine. Thus, Ebony Evangelism was introduced first in the small Central States Conference (CSC) during that summer. It

aimed to increase the CSC's membership from 8,000 to 10,000 members. As of 2012, the membership is 13,000.

The North American Division allowed the Regional Conferences to choose their top preacher-evangelists to go to the CSC on this operation. At the end of the meetings, the pastor-evangelists baptized over 600 precious souls for the kingdom throughout the CSC. As a follow-up to the meetings, they continued hosting revivals, youth weeks of prayer, Prophecy/Health/Revelation/Amazing Facts seminars, personal Bible studies, and 20 to 40 days of prayer and fasting at their churches.

Ebony Evangelism returned for the second time in 1998 to the Central States Conference for continuing evangelism and church growth; however, this time the meetings were conducted by the local church pastors throughout the CSC. Approximately 225 souls were won into God's kingdom at the end of that summer.

### **Two Kansas Churches in Crisis**

As soon as I became pastor of the Mt. Moriah and South 18th Street churches, I wanted to know what evangelism plans they were practicing. At the first business meeting with the churches, I discovered that there were no programs in place, no pianist, no weekly prayer meeting, no door-to-door visitation, no Bible studies, no outreach. Nothing was going on!

Part of the reason the Mt. Moriah and South 18th Street churches were dying was the poor condition of the buildings. My two churches were dilapidated, wooden buildings. Gladden (2004) in his book *The Seven Habits of Highly In-Effective Churches* mentioned that "poor facilities are one of the signs of an ineffective church" (p. 15). The churches' poor buildings caused high heating bills during the winter months. There was a

lack of finances, a lack of transportation, and a lack of motivation on the part of the members. The two churches met as one congregation and took turns worshipping in Coffeyville one Sabbath and in Independence the next. The congregation was happy to come to church and fellowship afterwards at the potlucks. Contrary to the SDA health message, the church clerk brought real pork with the beans to one of the church outings although Lev 11:7 forbids eating pork. Her actions indicated the need for continuing Biblical instruction about lifestyle and its relation to witnessing. This situation is one illustration of the need for continuing membership training.

Having just graduated from the Seminary, I was eager to try everything I had learned about ministry. I searched the Conference for a model of a growing church and settled on the St. Louis' New Life SDA Church plant under the leadership of Pastor Eric Collins. I observed and took notes on some of New Life's successful methods which had Matthew 28:18-20 as their scriptural foundation. Its members participated in going out into the community, accepting all people, and befriending them in a Christ-like Spirit. Since the church plant offered a positive model, it was advantageous to this project to emulate and adapt its strategies to the two small Kansas churches.

#### **Information From Pastor Eric Collins' Interview About the St. Louis SDA New Life Church Plant**

The St. Louis New Life SDA Church was a church plant project. The majority of the people who joined this church were from non-Adventists backgrounds. The church in its core group had approximately two Adventist families. In the spring of 2000, Pastor Eric Collins received a call to plant a church in St. Louis. New Life maintained a 20% increase in baptisms each year. The church had consistent outreach and very intentional

in-reach/discipling programs. Pastor Collins believes that formality stifled creativity and also killed the freedom for joy in worship. The church had its own identity, and was not another “cloned” Adventist church. The weekly attendance ranged from 80 to 100 people. There were about 130 members on record. Pastor Collins worked with his church members on a personal basis. He did not expect them to know all of the doctrines overnight. Evangelism was kept in the forefront of their mission. Their primary focus was to teach the people to be like Christ—how to love, live, and forgive.

New Life was open and accepting to all people groups. The church allowed people to come as they were—external facade and appearance were never an issue. The racial breakdown was predominantly African-American, West Indian, and Haitian. Evangelism was presented in various approaches, including Revelation, Daniel, and Prophecy Seminars. The focus was on whosoever will—let him/her come to worship.

In October of 2000, the New Life Company was organized. Then on October 21, 2001, it became the New Life Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Lord continued to bless, and through Pastor Collins’ ministerial efforts, 62 new members were baptized into the church.

The challenges of fatherlessness, illicit sex, drug addiction, alcoholism, illiteracy, and a myriad of other social and spiritual problems were rampant in the outside community. The inner city needed mentors for spiritual and emotional support to the youth and adults caught and bound in these vices. Despite the problems, God was still in the saving business. He was raising up a people who were a tremendous force for good in St. Louis, MO.

New Life SDA Church focused on ministry, worship, and fellowship. That

ministry included feeding the homeless, helping the widows and single parents, mentoring the children in the public schools, visiting those in prison, crying with the hurting, rejoicing with the over-comers and becoming intercessors to reach lost souls for Christ. This is what Pastor Collins wanted people to know and say about the New Life SDA Church in St. Louis. Everything was not always great. Pastor Collins admitted that there were times when he became discouraged and felt like giving up; however, he focused on the Problem Solver and not on the problems. He claimed the Scripture promise in 2 Corinthians 4:8-10 KJV: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed, we are perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed, always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."

Pastor Collins shared his insights concerning the principles of church growth. He believed that the church is clergy-led. God has divinely appointed leadership in every area of ministry. The church applied democratic principles and policies; however, the primary function of the church, and the way that things are done, should be heaven-led and theocratic. Pastor Collins' objectives and mission statement were to have his church members know Christ and to make Him known by proclaiming through vibrant worship services that Jesus Christ was, and still is, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. New Life is a warm, friendly, and inviting church for all people. The members are encouraged to uplift and demonstrate the purpose of the church.

New Life's worship services entailed lively singing, good preaching, and fellowship. People came from far and near to hear the Word. Although some people might miss Sabbath school, they would not miss church. The sermons were biblically



based and addressed real life issues: for example, David and Bathsheba, the Woman at the Well, family, relationships, finances, work situations, and the church's doctrines. The sermons were very redemptive because Christ was the center.

The pastor spiritually prepared the members to assist with evangelism. They passed out fliers and manned a call-center phone service where people could pre-register for the meetings—two thirds of the callers who registered usually came out. Prayer and fasting were a must with different people fasting on different days. Some of the church members rotated participation in twenty-four-hour-prayer-vigils because they recognized that evangelism was the lifeblood of the church. On the opening night approximately 100 people came out to the meetings. Usually the church provided a portion of the budget for the meetings, and the Conference supplied the remainder of the funds.

The church had a variety of outreach ministries: cancer screening, blood pressure checks, breast and prostate cancer awareness workshops, stop smoking plans, visitation teams to the sick and shut-ins, and a puppet ministry set up for the children every Saturday night. The church also had a policy that if a member did not come for more than two consecutive weeks, the elders' team would go and visit him/her. The community greatly benefited from these ministries, which gave vital information and allowed Christ to be seen. An increase in church membership was the result. In lieu of the regular Sabbath School lessons, the church taught a family life class because the regular Sabbath school quarterly did not seem to meet the church's needs. The pastor served as the change agent. By the virtue of his extemporaneous preaching, he fulfilled his mission to promote change for the congregation. He had an open door policy and was willing to try different styles in the worship service. He rejected the traditional routine mindset of

institutionalization. Collins said that a church without a pastor cannot function correctly. He felt that God is not so much interested in getting the job done as He is in getting the human beings done. Character development of the saints was his primary focus. Additional information, not in Collins' interview about the St. Louis church plant is described in the *Mid-America Outlook* (Teller, 2002).

### **Summary**

This chapter looked at the community demographics and history of the Seventh-day Adventist African-American work in the Mt. Moriah and South 18th Street churches in Southeast Kansas. It explored the cause for the decline of the two small Kansas churches and noted the positive results achieved by the St. Louis, MO, New Life church plant with Pastor Eric Collins.

In the next chapter, the 31 activities/methodologies that were implemented by the Mt. Moriah and South 18th Street Kansas churches will be described.

## CHAPTER 5

### A SURVEY AND THIRTY-ONE METHODOLOGIES USED TO INVOLVE LOCAL CHURCH MEMBERS IN COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND WITNESSING WITH A SUMMARY OF RESULTS

#### **Introduction**

In the previous chapter, it was necessary for me to look at the African-American Adventist history in the Central States Conference of SDAs as it related to church growth in order for me to choose appropriate evangelistic methods for the Mt. Moriah and South 18th Street churches in this pilot project. To follow Christ's method of involving every member in outreach ministry and special programs, I met with both churches. They agreed to use a Community Survey to assess the various needs of both towns (see Figure 1). Once developed, it was tested in the Coffeyville/Independence district to determine if it could provide information that helped set priorities for outreach activities and related membership training. The information gathered helped motivate membership to participate in training and related outreach community activities. This contributed to vibrant worship services and solid consistent membership increase. The simple survey continued to help gather ongoing data and provide a tool for members to use as they went door-to-door in their communities. The use of the survey was an ongoing interactive process that provided continuing input for member training, community involvement and support activities.

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## COMMUNITY SURVEY

1. How long have you lived in this community? \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Do you currently attend a church? \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Do you have children living at home?      Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
  4. If offered would you be interested in:
    - a) Healthy Cooking Course              Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
    - b) Stop Smoking Course                Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
    - c) Money Management                    Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
    - d) Weight Management                  Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
    - e) Stress Management                    Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
    - g) Parenting Skills Seminar              Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
    - h) Obtaining information about  
    health problems such as: High  
    Blood Pressure, Diabetes, Heart Disease      Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
  5. Is there something you would like for us to pray about? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
6. When the results of this survey are tabulated would you be interested in the results?  
    Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_
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*Figure 1.* Survey used in the project at the two church communities.

It was impossible to collect some of the hard data for this project. For several years the church clerks had failed to update their membership lists. When I arrived, the books showed there were 186 members between the two churches, but only four members, three over age 70, attended—some members had moved, others had died, and many were missing, until only four remained. Thus, the church records did not accurately report the membership and supplied only limited data that led us to inactive members.

At the end of the project, two of the original four members had died, so only two members were available for the membership satisfaction survey promised in the proposal. Since a sample of two was so small that it was statistically insignificant, the membership

satisfaction survey could not be made. The number of participants, attendees, and qualitative results were the only data available for assessing the outcomes of this project.

### **A Selection of 31 Activities Based on the Community Survey and Membership Needs Assessment**

In January 1998, an initial community survey was conducted in both towns, and the results showed several requests: healthy cooking classes, a 5-Day Stop Smoking Plan, weight management, stress management, parenting skills, blood pressure and diabetes testing, and Bible study. Initially, I planned to use the evangelistic methods of: *To Everyone's Door/Ebony Evangelism, Bible studies, Elders' Preaching Class, Spiritual Guardians, Adventist Community Services and Food Distribution* to involve the four members in soul-winning and community outreach. However, as new members and attendees came to the two churches, I realized that other evangelistic methods were required to retain them.

A large portion of the new-comers were children in foster care. They needed to be nurtured, educated, and reconnected with their biological parents. As a result, witnessing methods of providing community services such as: breakfast in church, sewing classes, Mother/Daughters' Tea, Man in Demand, Mentoring Big Brother/Big Sister, an Easter Egg Hunt, a Fall Festival, DIVAS, a Children and Youth Choir, Children's Church, Homeschool, the Hair Haven, Fill My Cup, and Adventurers/Pathfinders were developed. Training for the biological and foster parents to help them reconnect these children with their natural families was also provided. Other methods such as Alcoholics' Anonymous support groups, parenting classes, and holistic classes were added. As the adults observed the children learning, they also participated in the children's activities and enjoyed the

stories as well. Since such activities were important to them, new witnessing plans geared towards the adults were organized: A Thanksgiving holiday dinner, a trip to an oratorio, a candlelight communion service, and an annual officers' training program were developed. Because of the church's community outreach, the pastor received invitations to participate in a television ministry, the Ministers' Alliance, and the Prison Ministry/Chaplain Services. This process, in combination with further analysis of the demographic information and interactions with the community, eventually resulted in 31 distinct methods where church members participated in outreach and community services. There were 31 relational, outreach activities that supported evangelistic and/or discipling events:

To Everyone's Door/Ebony	Breakfast in Church
Evangelism Youth	Holistic Classes
Explosion/Children's Ministries	Sewing Classes
Bible Studies	Mother/ Daughters' Tea
Elders' Preaching Class	Man in Demand
Spiritual Guardians	Mentoring-Big Brother/Big Sister
Candlelight Communion	Easter Egg Hunt
Annual Officers Training,	Fall Festival
TV Ministry	Thanksgiving Holiday
Ministers' Alliance	Oratorio
Prison Ministry/ Chaplain Serves	DIVAS
Alcoholics' Anonymous Support	Children and Youth Choir
Group	Children's Church
Food Distribution	Homeschool
Adventist Community Service	The Hair Haven
Fill My Cup	Adventurers/Pathfinders
Parenting Classes	

A description of each of these 31 methods and their results follows.

### **To Everyone's Door/Ebony Evangelism**

In the summer of 1998, Ebony Evangelism provided funds from the Central States Conference for a four-week series of meetings. Four ministerial students from Oakwood College and the church members went to every residence in both towns where they knocked on each door. The members and student Bible workers went out repeatedly into the community, establishing relationships, passing out fliers, and giving Bible studies in preparation for the upcoming Coffeyville Crusade. They conducted a religious community survey at that time to assess the occupants' church preferences and their perceived needs (see Figure 1). The survey results indicated that many people in the communities were interested in receiving information on: cooking healthy food, stopping smoking, managing money, controlling weight, managing stress, studying the Bible, learning parenting skills, and improving health. The church provided classes on healthy cooking, stress management, and parenting skills. The college students started 20 Bible studies with the interested families, and the church members passed out tracts on how to stop smoking, money management, weight control, and health improvement. Testing for high blood pressure and diabetes were also made available in both towns.

The communities responded positively to all of this attention. Once the evangelistic series started, it met six nights a week with an average attendance of approximately 40 people. At the end of the meetings, there were 17 baptisms. The Conference, as a result of the success of the meetings in Coffeyville, adopted the "To Everyone's Door" theme and made it their mission statement. They found it a method worth repeating.

## **Youth Explosion/Children's Ministries**

Some of the fastest growing needs in Coffeyville were programs for children.

Linn (1998) has said that the task of raising our children is a daunting one. The quality of this ministry remains a challenge, yet it is essential for spiritual health and the future of all churches. It is a responsibility any church can fulfill if it is committed. My wife and I noticed that there really was not any children's ministry at the church, but there were more children attending than adults. Because of this need, we gave special attention to the children. In the summer of 1999, we organized a special program called Youth Explosion (a type of Vacation Bible School) that ran for 21 nights from 6-8 p.m. The Oakwood College students assisted in the preparations for transporting, chaperoning, and working with the youth of the community. Every evening the youth were invited to a large outdoor tent. Many parents also attended. The staff made Youth Explosion '99 T-shirts for every child. The platform colors were red, blue, and yellow. Some of the older young people learned how to prepare a sermon. There were youth rap sessions, arts and crafts, and a puppet stage house. Student Bible workers taught lessons on the 28 Fundamental Beliefs (2005) to the youth and their parents. Thursday nights were children performance nights, and the parents were invited. Object lessons, such as Jesus turning water into wine, were presented on the puppet stage.

Sabbath morning services had a much larger attendance (approximately 60), and the children dressed up for church. Those who brought a friend or visitor received a gift. The gifts were: children's Bibles, storybooks for teens, Your Story Hour (2002) cassette tapes, and cassette tape players. There were no baptisms at the end of the Youth Explosion events; however, the children and their parents learned more about Jesus and



the Seventh-day Sabbath as they came on both Saturday and Sunday. They continued attending the church because a children's church program was in place for them, and a Pathfinders' and Adventurers' Club was started for them by the Youth Explosion team. At the end of the summer, the pastor of the Full Gospel Ministries church requested renting our Coffeyville church for Sunday services. Since most of the young people attended his church, his request was granted. He agreed to pay \$100 per month rent for the building. Thus, the children were now beginning to feel at home in the Adventist church structure. In evaluation, this method deserved to be continued in the future.

### **Bible Studies**

Bible studies such as "The Real Truth Bible Lessons" by W. C. Scales (1980), "Amazing Facts" by Doug Bachelor (2006), and "Discover Bible guide" by John Bradshaw (2001), were the most popular lessons provided for the new church members and non-believers who continued to study with the Bible students. Once the students left and returned to college, I took three church members with me to train them to give Bible studies on a weekly basis. A total of eight persons received the lessons, and five were baptized. This method worked well and should be utilized again.

### **Elder's Preaching Class**

I taught preaching classes for the elders, utilizing Evans' *How to Prepare Sermons* (1947), and Davis' *Design for Preaching* (1985). The basic steps were: opening prayer, the subject, the text, the introduction, and the aim. The basic steps for the sermon outline were: What, Why, How, What then, Recapitulation, Appeal, and Benediction. Building the body of the sermon included comparisons and contrasts, how to apply the

principles, and the results. The final step to conclude the sermon was the recapitulation of all the steps, followed by the appeal and the closing prayer. Aside from the regular church bulletin, I posted an outline of the order of service on the pulpit for the elders and those leaders who were in charge of the weekly services when I was not present. On the Sabbaths when I was at my other church, the elders practiced the steps they had learned about preaching sermons. They depended on the guidelines for the order of service that were posted on the pulpit. This gave them a sense of responsibility and power and should be continued.

### **Spiritual Guardians**

I assigned a devout church member as a spiritual guardian to every newly baptized member. At the end of the evangelistic meetings, each of the 17 newly baptized members had a spiritual guardian who contacted him/her at least once a week. They became mutual friends and shared quality spiritual time together. Two of these new members became spiritual guardians themselves. This was valuable training for both the guardian and the new member. It would seem appropriate to make this a regular practice.

### **Candlelight Communion**

There was a special Friday evening Communion service. After the ordinance of foot washing and partaking of the bread and the grape juice, the lights in the church were turned off and the members lit their candles and stood in a circle to show that they wanted to let their lights shine out to the world.

As a means of honoring the Sabbath, 25 people participated in the special Friday evening Candlelight Communion Service. An Agape Feast followed. Having the

ordinance on Friday evening should be practiced as an occasional variation of the Communion Service.

### **Annual Officers' Training**

Once a year the Central States Conference hosted an annual officer's training for all newly elected church officers. Workshops were prepared for every department in the local church: the Adventist Youth and Pathfinder Leaders, the Church Clerk, the Personal Ministries Leader, Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses, Sabbath School Teachers, Family Life Leaders, Treasurers, and Ushers. The purpose of the officers' training was to help the newly elected members to become confident and to demonstrate Christ in every area of their leadership ministry for the church. I took ten members from my two churches to this annual Conference meeting—a practice which should continue.

### **TV Ministry**

The Independence, KS, local television station aired church services three times a week. The local pastors conducted a service every weekend. I preached once per month and sometimes twice per month on Sunday mornings. Since my sermons were rebroadcast three times per week, the entire community of 10,000 people could hear them at their convenience. The station manager reported that he was receiving requests for me to continue preaching more often. I always accepted every opportunity to speak on television.

### **Ministers' Alliance**

The Ministers' Alliance of many faith groups came together in both Coffeyville and Independence, KS. Each town hosted its own separate meetings and met once a

month. They held discussions on the upcoming events and made plans for the year, especially around the holidays—Christmas, Easter, and District Days. District days were annual revivals held by first day churches. The Coffeyville, KS, Rodeo committee often asked the Alliance for volunteers to offer the opening prayer before the shows began. In Coffeyville there was a Tuesday morning prayer breakfast for all the men who wanted to attend at 7 a.m. One very special event in Independence was The Seven Last words of Christ held every Easter and the re-enactment of the Passion of Christ. This was a very dramatic play which always took place in the spring. Different pastors were given seven minutes to preach on one word of the seven last words of Christ. I felt impressed to support the Alliances as a method of presenting Adventism to the non-Adventist clergy.

Through my membership in the Ministers' Alliances, I served as president of Independence's Alliance one year. I participated in both groups' activities and preached during one of the Easter Services. I also received invitations six different times to preach to the Presbyterian and Methodist congregations in Coffeyville when they did not have a pastor. Un-churched people invited me to perform funeral services when they needed a minister. This served as an entering wedge of presenting Adventism to non-Adventists—both clergy and laity. Because of this positive influence, every Adventist minister should belong to the local Ministers' Alliance.

### **Prison Ministry/Chaplain Services**

I offered chaplain services to hospitals and prisons. The services for the nursing homes were at noon on Tuesdays. There was also visitation for the sick in the hospitals. Although church members were visited and prayed for by their own ministers, I visited anyone who requested to see a pastor for prayer and healing. Visitations at the prison

were on the weekends and certain set times during the week if a specific church member needed a ride to go and see an incarcerated family member. Often I had to travel up to six hours to escort church members who were visiting their relatives serving prison time outside the district. Whenever it was possible, I also stayed in contact with the inmates who were connected to church members through letters, telephone, and personal visits. The chaplain services contained a broad spectrum of services for a variety of ministries. According to North (1988), there are five types of salaried/professional chaplain services: Military, Prison, Health Care, University Campuses, and Industrial. Chaplains are ministers, and they provide support, morale, and religious services when necessary. Chaplains advise supervisors and commanding officers concerning issues with their troops in the military setting. Chaplains also conduct a great number of counseling sessions in the hospitals. Although neither pastors nor chaplains are licensed counselors, they support communication among patients, doctors, and the staff. They have privileged communication and confidentiality.

Thirty-five people were visited and revisited during their time of need. This was a valuable service for me as well as for those church members and prisoners involved.

### **Alcoholics Anonymous Support Group**

In order to gain a better understanding of what addictions are, I attended Alcoholics Anonymous meetings with long-time church members who were struggling with alcohol issues and substance abuse. There were also some newly-baptized attendees who struggled with alcohol and drugs. Out of the 20 people in the AA group, approximately 7 were from the church.

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (2001) introduced alcoholics to a need for God and prayer. As a result of the AA meetings, I was able to give seven Bible studies and witness to 20 other attendees who were present. Because of my work with AA, the Coffeyville courthouse judge requested I provide community service hours to two offenders receiving judicial punishment. They helped paint the Coffeyville church and did maintenance work around it to meet their required service hours. Since this was a means of gaining baptismal candidates, it was definitely worthwhile and should be continued.

### **Food Distribution**

The Central States Conference Community Services Department supplied funds for the purchase of food from the Kansas Food Pantry located in Independence, KS. The South 18th Street Church had a food storage area in the back of the building and was open on Wednesdays to the public. Food and clothes were distributed from noon until prayer meeting time. Any family could come to the church and receive food. They were also invited to attend the evening services.

On an average Wednesday, 6 to 12 families were helped. In a year's time this amounted to anywhere from 300 to 600 families. At least 20 families attended church services after being helped with food and clothing. One couple was married and six persons were baptized as a result of food and clothing distribution. This outreach program needs to be continued.

### **Adventist Community Services (ACS)**

The states of Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma are known for having tornadoes and have been nicknamed *tornado alley*. In the early spring of 2001 a tornado struck and

ravaged certain parts of the southeast Kansas district. The town of Parsons was the hardest hit. Thousands of families were out of electricity and water, while many were homeless. Immediately following the storm, four of the Adventist pastors in the district got together and requested support and training for disaster preparedness from the Kansas-Nebraska Conference. Trainers from the Conference office began sessions two days later at the Independence, KS, sister church. There were three days of training with four attendees from my two churches.

All who attended the training received ACS certificates. The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) responded to the disaster by delivering supplies of bottled water and non-perishable foods and clothing to an empty ammunition plant in Parsons. I drove three members from my churches to Parsons every day for a week as disaster relief volunteers. They assisted families in need from the surrounding communities. All the needy were invited to come and receive help. Several thousand people were introduced to the humanitarian services of the Adventist church. Since this training worked well in Kansas, members in every Adventist church should have the opportunity to attend the sessions.

### **Fill My Cup**

The Fill My Cup ministry was started after a particularly difficult time for the farmers in the church. The goal of this ministry was two-fold: first, it encouraged the farmers and lightened their work load, and second, it created a “grounding” place for the children living in foster care. Quite a few of the farmers in the church not only raised cash crops, but raised livestock. During the lambing season, the farmers were barely making it to church due to the chores related to the care of the new lambs that were on a

three-hour feeding schedule. I encouraged each farmer to bring the lambs to church with him. After my wife served breakfast on Sabbath morning, she used a large turkey frying pan to boil the sheep's milk for the lambs. All the children in the church received "their" lamb with instructions on the care of their "baby." The church, being an old former Army barracks, had a central heater in the floor that covered a large portion of the middle aisle. This was used to warm the lambs. Each lamb had a colored or numbered tab on it and a baby bottle that corresponded to that lamb. After the milk was "purified," it was bottled and given to every child. All the baby lambs wore diapers while they were in the sanctuary, to prevent accidents. The lambs slept during most of the service after being fed and warmed. During potluck, following the three-hour feeding schedule, each "baby" was fed once more before returning to its home. This practice was carried out through the goats' kidding season as well.

Following this example, the project was carried over by the adult members. Chapman (1992) in his book, *The Five Love Languages*, stated that everyone has an *emotional love tank*. Each individual is the judge of his/her love tank as to whether it is empty, half full, or running over. Chapman presented the Five Love Languages as: *Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Acts of Service, Receiving of Gifts, and Physical Touch*. My wife collected a mug for every member and several for visitors to the church. The members/visitors were allowed to select the mug they liked most. The mugs were kept in the front of the sanctuary, face down on a table next to the communion table. When people were having a particularly difficult time, they would turn their cups right side up to be filled with "love." They would carry the mug with them throughout the Sabbath



day, and every person who passed them would know they needed “filling up.” No one was required to share the circumstances of the “empty mug;” they were just filled.

The method of feeding the baby animals and holding an empty cup led to a hard-backed notebook that recorded all of the “fillings” throughout the year, and how God had nursed their souls. The Five Love Languages along with its emphasis on *emotional love tanks* made a major impact on the mothers and children. There was also a section dedicated to the children with the name of their lamb/goat baby and their care inscribed therein. The children cared for 20 animals and made it possible for four farmer families to attend church. While this method may not be possible in all Adventist churches, it was necessary to be done in this setting.

### **Parenting Classes**

Parenting classes were offered every other week in connection with the prayer meeting. While prayer meeting was offered in the sanctuary, the parenting classes were offered in the fellowship hall. Prayer meeting focused on “empowering the laity” through sermon preparation classes, Sabbath School lessons review, and a study of all the 28 Adventist fundamental beliefs. The parenting classes focused on the character and qualities of being a good parent. A multiplicity of literature was used to facilitate this class. Workers from the Department of Children’s Services came as guest lecturers for certain topics: the definition of abuse, neglect, an unfit parent, and supervised visits. Parents learned what would cause children to be removed from a home and what steps would be required for them to return. They also attended classes on anger management, positive parenting, and positive discipline. Because of the large number of children in the church in foster care, parents were able to meet most of their requirements for their

children to return home within the “loving arms” of the church (*Child Protective Services*, 2000). Parents had to attend every week, even though classes were taught bimonthly. A small supper was served, especially during the winter months when travel was slower. Following prayer meeting or parenting classes, produce provided by local farmers was given away to encourage a more plant-based diet in the community.

As a result of the parenting classes, two couples completed the course and five children in foster care were returned to their biological parents. In this particular situation, this method was required for the children involved.

### **Breakfast in Church**

Prior to Sabbath School on Sabbath morning, my wife made breakfast for the entire congregation, especially for the children. A crew of cooks provided various entrees for the breakfast. One of the area farmers put five and a half dozen eggs in the refrigerator on the Friday evening before. Walmart provided the vegetarian and clean meat turkey bacon. McDonald’s provided orange juice by the Igloo full, and my family provided the cereals. The children ate at their own table using color coded dishes to enable the smaller children to help set the table. Walmart provided these dishes. Goat milk for the cereal was donated every week by one farmer’s wife who owned her own private goat herd. Those goats were being raised for their milk to be used in Hispanic countries and for premature infants in America.

Twenty-five people enjoyed this breakfast each week. This method was a necessary practice to encourage church attendance.

## **Holistic Classes**

My wife taught vegetarian classes in the church along with bread making, cheese making, yogurt production, and soap making--using lessons from the book by Kloss (1981). The members were encouraged to live off the land and embrace a "self-sufficient" lifestyle. They also were asked to care for mother earth by collecting rainwater for the church's organic garden and by recycling paper, metal, glass, and plastic items.

As a result of the Holistic Classes, the entire congregation was introduced to a vegetarian diet and homemade cooking. Including about 25 individuals, this was valuable training for the congregation and deserved to be perpetuated in these churches. There are many churches where circumstances may make this a valuable discipling activity.

## **Sewing Classes**

My wife taught sewing classes. Since Coffeyville, KS, was a very depressed area, it was cheaper to sew clothes than to buy them. Most families could not afford clothing even as inexpensive as Walmart. The classes were structured around hand sewing and machine sewing. To promote comfort and familiarity with the church, the classes were held in a graduated fashion for anyone wanting to learn the art of sewing. Men, women, and children were invited from the community. Classes began with prayer and always had a snack to accompany the program. All pupils were started on hand sewing projects with basic stitches which would be needed to complete more involved projects once the class got to that level. Beginning stitches were: straight, running, basting, blanket, and hem. All the stitches revolved around a 19th century book by Rodgers, entitled *The Sewing Bird* (1963). This bird was an old-fashioned pincushion that sat clamped on the edge of the table and told the story. Each stitch was treated as a person. My wife read the

story to the children and adults so the learners' reading ability did not hinder their progress. Each week she introduced a new chapter and stitch. Since she also provided all the materials needed, the pupils just had to show up. The simple projects included: a wallet, a bag, a doll skirt, and buttons sewed on as decorations. The participants made books with the stitches they had learned, which were attached to samples of fabric and glued to the pages. After weeks of learning simple stitching lessons, the pupils earned graduation certificates made on the computer from *Trofort's Tutelege Sewing School*.

These graduates could then sign up for the mid-level class which included a devotional reading from a Homeschool curriculum on household arts. My wife received a donation to provide sewing machines from the homeschool community. The students learned the parts of the sewing machine, how to sew seams, gather, read and cut out a pattern, perform simple adaptations to a pattern, work with interfacing, iron material, and construct simple garments like hats, aprons, bags, pillows, skirts, tops, and slacks. At the conclusion of this mid-level class, the students had another graduation and were encouraged to sign up for the advanced class.

The advanced class continued with the same format, but also included sewing projects for charity like making quilts for premature babies or death attire for premature infants who did not survive. These students learned advanced modification, the three types of zipper installations, sleeve and collar placement in garments, shirt construction, and the use of all types of laces and decoration. The students were allowed to pick their projects; however, my wife provided the materials. The classes progressed from one hour to sometimes three hours and included a meal instead of a snack. Meals were vegetarian and revolved around simple soups with bread or sandwiches or pasta dishes. McDonalds

provided drinks. This advanced class ended with a graduation that also included a fashion show to exhibit the completed projects.

All 10 of the participants were members of the congregation who did sewing projects for charity. The biggest project that the most advanced class undertook was making all of the outfits for three couples who renewed their wedding vows. The students requested to continue the classes and began an old fashioned sewing circle. Because this method kept the youth occupied, it needed to be continued.

### **Mother/Daughters' Tea**

This "tea" was to introduce girls to their mothers' lives and provide a safe place for mothers and daughters to meet. Both towns had a large majority of children placed in foster care because of abuse and neglect related to drug use. The African-American population was "peppered" with crack cocaine use and the Anglo population was drowning in methamphetamines. The statistics were staggering. In the year my family and I moved to Coffeyville, there were two methamphetamine drug labs that were found and destroyed. By the time we left, the number had ballooned to 758 (*Kansas Bureau Investigation-Coffeyville, Kansas, 2002*). Money for crack cocaine took many food stamps and welfare checks each month. The children often went without proper food and clothes to accommodate a parent's drug habit. During the time this study was done, *all* of the children in the Mt. Moriah church were in foster care.

My wife and I met with most of the foster care workers before this project began, took parenting classes from the Department of Child Services (CPS), and had our house certified as a "safe meeting place" for parents with children in foster care. Most often we would have at least one or two care workers come along with the children to the

meetings. The tea was structured to introduce each girl to her mother in a way that created pride in their family. Each session began with prayer and a devotional that centered on each young lady being special and unique to the Lord. The teas also centered on etiquette training and gaining knowledge of social institutions. Every week a new assortment of English or Herbal teas for the mothers and an assortment of fruit teas for the girls were offered. A new scone and tea sandwich was introduced each week to give the mother/daughter a little variety.

My wife set her table with fine linens and her English tea service. At first the girls were “terrified” about using the china, but soon became adept at handling the delicate dishes. After the small luncheon, the mothers told their stories. The idea was taken from a book about a girl knowing her mother. Each week my wife used a story from the book. Then each mother told her own story related to the week’s topic. The topics centered around her birth, her childhood, her school years, and down to the present time. After each discussion the girls and their mothers created scrapbook pages with materials that my wife provided. At the end of the sessions the mothers and daughters had an entire album of their mother/daughter stories. The second gift each mother/daughter received at the end of the party was a china teacup for her use alone. They were told these tea cups should only be used by the daughter and her mother and that they were very special. These tea sets were obtained from Goodwill and other thrift stores in the area and surrounding towns. After one session, one of the glass blowers in the area created a tea cup for each mother and daughter with their names on it.

This tea group helped mothers regain their self-esteem and ensured that their daughters’ looked upon them as heroes. A total of 11 people as well as Child Protective

Service workers attended these tea sessions. In this particular situation where families were separated, this method was a necessary tool to bring them together, and it deserved to be repeated.

### **Man in Demand**

The “Man in Demand” father and son group was started for the same reason as the Mother/Daughter’s Tea group. The “club” was held in the church fellowship hall at the same time that the Mother/Daughter’s Tea group was held. It was based on materials developed by Taylor (2000), and published by Rod and Staff, a Mennonite homeschooling company. The boys focused on the qualities needed to become a true man. The boys younger than age 13 completed a program called *Contenders for the Faith* by Zakula (1997). The program included participating in a devotional, eating a large snack (usually club sandwiches with clean meats and cheeses, chili, or baked potato bars), studying the material, and enjoying a fun activity. I was the facilitator and coach.

At the end of the class, a total of 10 Adventist and community males received completion certificates. A small graduation for them was held during the Sabbath morning worship hour. Since there was a lack of male role models for the young boys, finding a Christian man to look up to was imperative. This method should be replicated everywhere.

### **Mentoring Big Brother/Big Sister**

In 2001 Coffeyville, KS, has a Big Brother/Big Sister mentoring program. Obama (2007, July 12) said, “We have more work to do when more young black men languish in prison than in colleges and universities.” I was asked by a local social worker if I would

be a Big Brother to a twelve-year-old boy in the community whose mother was a single parent. I agreed, and we shared sporting events—basketball, biking, and baseball. We also did homework, studied at the library, and sometimes attended church together.

Although neither the boy nor his mother became church members, he benefitted by having a Christian male role model whom he knew attended church regularly. Like the previous method, this, too, should be replicated everywhere.

### **Easter Egg Hunt**

The community children of Independence, KS, participated in an Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday afternoon at the South 18th Street Church. The adult church members hid real eggs and plastic ones containing candy. After the hunt, the children enjoyed snacks and more goodies to take home.

Fifteen children, most of whom were not Adventist, took part in this event, which built good will for the local church. Its positive effect on the community indicated it was a worthwhile endeavor.

### **Fall Festival**

The Fall Festival was held the day before Halloween or on October 31. It consisted of a religious theme, and a whole adventure planned around an idea. In 1999 the theme was a *Journey to Jerusalem*. The children entered the fellowship area dressed as Bible characters to begin their journey of nine stations. The stations consisted of: making a bag to carry on the trip, constructing shoes for the journey (actually sandals made by each child with adult supervision), receiving dried fruit and nuts for energy, being assigned transportation (a large camel made of wood and tall enough for each child



to sit upon and have his/her picture taken), watching a “Veggie Tale” movie by Big Idea Entertainment (1993), playing a fishing game (consisting of a “sea” in a child’s size swimming pool where pieces of fake money were taped to the fishes mouths and the children “fished” for them with homemade fishing poles), visiting a large market place with numerous things to buy, carrying a small lamp for the journey, and enjoying a huge feast when they reached Jerusalem. All of the foods were from Bible days. There were date pies and cookies, hummus, bread with vegetarian *Tuno*, grape juice, and beans.

A total of 15 children from the church and community participated in this festival. At the close of the adventure, the children selected a stack of *Little Friends and Primary Treasures* to fold and tie with a ribbon. These were given with candy to trick-or-treaters. Offering an alternative to Halloween proved a valuable experience for the children and should be carried on in the future.

### **Thanksgiving Holiday**

Thanksgiving is a holiday that reminds everyone to thank God for seen and unseen blessings. Since a large part of the congregation had very limited means to use for a “big” dinner, most of the church decided the Thanksgiving holiday would be used to feed His sheep. The church members chose the menu, and the ladies in the congregation split it up accordingly, with each woman contributing her specialty. The foodstuff came from the food bank, donations from Walmart, and a local store in town. Two days prior to Thanksgiving, the frenzy of cooking began. In place of napkins, we used scriptures printed on fabric. Every decoration and foodstuff related to the promised Savior. Free literature by Advent Source (2001) was put on each table. This literature included: *Little*

*Friends, Primary Treasure, Grace Link, and Cornerstone.* The children put on a program about the first Thanksgiving and another one about being thankful. The church's sewing club made all of the costumes. Most of the children (50) came from the community and were accompanied by their families. The members used their cars to transport people to the fellowship hall. The church members packed food bank bags ahead of time and gave them to needy families as they left. The dinner consisted of a 30-pound turkey and tofu turkey for vegetarians. Each person was served and treated as if in a fine restaurant; everyone was made to feel at home. I gave a very simple service. Then I stayed on hand to pray with people, counsel with them, and answer any questions.

This activity filled a very important community need. It involved the entire community and identified the Adventist church as a safe harbor. The dinner targeted the homeless, those in poverty, and drug-addicted individuals who had nowhere else to go. One dozen police officers came and brought individuals who needed a ride. Over 60 people were fed. The leftover food was given to the community women's shelter. This service opened the door for the church to be a "big sister" to that shelter. The members donated clothes and numerous items for daily living. The dinner resulted in me regularly performing worship services at the shelter on Sundays. The positive community reaction to this event showed that it should take place annually. Many other communities and Adventist churches could benefit from a similar activity.

### **The Oratorio**

Because of the lack of fine art culture in the small towns, the whole congregation went 80 miles south to the Performing Arts Hall in Tulsa, OK, to attend a production of

Handel's *Messiah*. The members dressed in eveningwear or Sabbath attire. After the production, the members went together to a fancy restaurant. This helped members unaccustomed to dressy affairs to be less intimidated. The Messiah was chosen because of the power and message of the music.

The evening became a worthy learning experience for 20 people. If possible, other such experiences should be offered in the future.

### **Determined Innovative Vivacious Adventist Sisters (DIVAS)**

The parents complained that their daughters had nothing to do on Friday evenings. To meet their need, my wife developed a club, Determined Innovative Vivacious Adventist Sisters (DIVAS), as a spiritual avenue to target the 8–18 year old girls and young ladies. This theme encouraged a mentorship/discipleship program based on women in the Bible. It met on Friday evenings at our home where my wife was the facilitator and hostess. The Bible characters were studied in alphabetical order. For the younger girls, many of the chapters had games and activities to accompany the main theme. The topics were obeying, forgiving, practicing selflessness, and being a worker for Jesus. Following the lesson, there were thought questions that each young girl and her Mother discussed. My wife assisted each couple; therefore, extensive Bible knowledge was not needed prior to the session.

The curriculum for the teenage young ladies was based on books from a homeschool company and story tapes, which were used as attention getters. These materials focused on the character needed to become a girl committed to Jesus. Other materials focused on Bible memorization, Bible reading, and “household arts,” such as cleaning, baking, sewing, and laundering. After completing a set number of requirements

in an area, the young lady received a patch symbolizing the content. There were 15-minute spotlights on Adventist Bible doctrines with worksheets for the girls to complete. Finished projects included: a Ruby, a Proverbs 31 doll, a dress for Dorcas, Family Circle Charts, obedience charts, and a small village built of cereal boxes. The older teens created similar projects on a grandeur scale. Completed projects included: modestly made dresses, articles on modesty from sources selected by the girls and the choosing of an editorial crew to start a small magazine based on the concepts studied by the group. The crowning project was a play depicting the lives of Esther and Ruth. It was written by one of the older girls and was performed for the whole club. Following the completion of the books, the older teens were taught selected concepts on courtship versus dating, modest beauty secrets, etiquette, and being a good role model. The mothers/grandmothers also studied selected Bible characters and life skills.

Eleven daughters and their four mothers participated. This church program positively influenced the members and visitors; therefore it should continue. It is a valuable example to other churches in similar circumstances.

### **Children and Youth Choir**

A choir was started for ages 5–12 and a teen choir for ages 13–20. After the choirs could perform well, a liturgical dance group began. The choirs helped to increase the knowledge of the Adventist church in the community. There were many opportunities to praise God in the town and the surrounding areas. On the heels of the liturgical group, a drama group was started. Various church members, supported by our family, oversaw both of these projects.

There were 12 participants. This permitted the young people to showcase their talents and positively impact the community.

### **Children's Church**

Children's church began because of the inability of most of the small children to remain alert throughout the Sabbath service hour. My wife served on the committee for Children's Ministries for NAD. She was an invaluable addition to the Sabbath Service. After breakfast, adults conducted Sabbath school using the NAD Children's Sabbath School materials. The children entered the church for the beginning of the 11 o'clock hour. In the sanctuary, my wife designed and built children's pews in front of the adult pews. Special children's hymnals were bound and placed for the children's use. Twice a month the church service used their hymnals for the 11 o'clock hour. Two children each week were selected as *pulpit monitors* and provided water for me. During the sermon time, the children's church was held. The major stories of the Bible were taught through puppets and a DVD player. One of the rigging companies in the community built a puppet stage as a gift. Those children too young to listen to a story were given a small DVD player (donated by the physicians in the community) with an appropriately-aged biblical story to watch. Lots of old clothes were donated for reenacting Bible dramas. One of the NAD children's ministry meetings taught basic puppeteering. Children learned portions of Scripture and repeated them to family members during the week. They wrote small letters to incarcerated persons.

Other community projects were planned for people in elderly facilities. Often in the afternoon after potluck, the children reenacted their Bible stories for those in the town's nursing homes. The country of the children's mission stories was studied each

quarter, and its special foods were enjoyed. Every two months on Sabbath, the children would remain in the sanctuary for the sermon, and I would reduce the level of the sermon to the level of a sixth grader. Tithe envelopes for children were ordered, and the rigging company built a small children's sanctuary (about 2 feet tall) for offerings to be collected. On communion Sabbaths, the meaning of the Communion service was explained and enacted on a child's level. Following the morning service, the children also received communion. Two adults aided them in participating in the Lord's Supper. They sat in their children's pews and washed feet like the adults, only using smaller plastic tubs. After the foot washing was finished all were provided with hand sanitizing towels.

A total of 14 children from the church and community attended regularly. The children enjoyed a learning experience without becoming restless. This could be a valid activity for other SDA churches.

### **Homeschool**

The Trofort Adventist Academy (TAA) began when we arrived in Coffeyville. Most of the children in the church were woefully behind their counterparts and did not meet minimal grade-level expectations. Four of the children had actually failed their current grades. We home-schooled the children of the community and of the church members who enrolled them in TAA. I "blessed and anointed" every student for the school year. Classes met in our home with my wife as the main instructor, but I taught Bible and biblical history classes. There was a table, but no desks in the classroom. The core subjects were taught through a combination of Abeka (1999) and selected Adventist curriculum materials. Books for reading were the fundamental SDA readers and books from the following home school support companies: Sonlight, Rod and Staff, Prairie

View Press, Alpha/Omega, and Math U See—at the time of this project all of these companies could be found by a simple internet search. The children ate breakfast, lunch, and numerous small snacks throughout the day. Many classes used “hands on” instruction, patterned after the works of Beechick and Moore (2001). Children’s Bible study classes were taught using children’s lessons put out by the Adventist church.

The children took numerous field trips, most of which involved service. Once a week the children read to seniors at the nursing facilities and helped pack care packages. They assisted every week on a huge hog farm. Each of the students was required to learn to milk cows, goats, and sheep. They then assisted in grinding grain for bread, collecting eggs, feeding all the farm animals, baking cookies for the farmers’ markets, assisting in preparing produce for canning, taking care of a bee hive under the direction of the farmer’s wife, learning archery, and helping to load pigs for the market. Physical Education included farm activities, horseback riding, canoeing, and small building projects. The school built a new mobile chicken coup for the farm. The children were exposed to bird watching, maintaining a wildlife refuge, hiking, participating in 4-H (1902-2011), apple picking for seniors, processing honey, and harvesting garden produce.

They were taught botany and herbal remedies. They performed plays for the community centered around specific times in history, such as: the Victorian Era (1837-1901), the Age of Exploration (1490s), the Depression (1893); and the Medieval Era (500-1500)—complete with a court jester. They also took water aerobics. Fridays were reserved for service projects and the preparation of the sanctuary for the Sabbath Services. Each student’s birthday was celebrated along with all the major holidays. There

was a Christmas Advent program, a Kwanza celebration (1999), and a year-end graduation.

Eleven Adventist and non-Adventist children were students in this school. Based on the children's needs, this outreach to the community was desperately needed and joyfully received.

### **Hair Haven**

“Hair Haven” began as a way to encourage church attendance. Since most of the girls (children and teens) in the church were in foster care, their hair was left unkempt. This was either related to the foster children's inability to comb and style their own hair, or the foster parents' inability to care for the children's/teens' hair—for example, an Afro-American child in the care of Anglo foster parents and vice versa. The children and teens would be so embarrassed they would not attend services. This ministry started at eight o'clock every Sunday morning until completed. All the children/teens that came to our home would have their hair done for the entire week. This included washing, conditioning, and styling—whether curls for the teens or braids for the children. Since it was difficult to complete so many heads, this ministry expanded to Saturday nights after Sabbath as well. Later, as parents observed the services to their children, the mothers were also added to this ministry. My wife and the Salvation Army provided hair shampoo and accessories. My wife also taught the volunteers how to make hair ribbons and bows. The completed hair accessories were collected in a specified bag in the fellowship hall of the church. When a child chose a hair accessory, it became hers. They kept their small tokens in little cloth bags my wife made. This ministry also became a hair assembly line, with one adult washing, another blow drying, a third pressing, and so on.



Five children regularly got their hair done and attended church. In this situation, Hair Haven made church attendance for the young people possible. While other churches might not need such a method, it was necessary in this situation.

### **Adventurers/Pathfinders**

The Mt. Moriah church began the Tiny Tots/Busy Bears/Adventurers/Pathfinder Club led by my wife who is a long-time Master Guide. The club included children of members and non-members. Since it was an evangelistic endeavor, the club met on either Sabbath afternoon or Sunday sometime during the day. There were numerous young children, too young for Eager Beavers, before the invention of the “Little Lambs” program. The youngest participants were then called “Busy Bears.” My family and I provided the materials needed and used the church fellowship hall or our home for the meetings.

The week-to-week T-shirts were purchased from Advent Source. The Class A uniforms were purchased partly from Advent Source, but my wife also made the girls ties and skirts. The weekly meetings were two hours in length, but often ran over because of the activities chosen to compliment the didactic information of the day. Church members provided transportation for all the children to and from their homes. After the club meetings, lunch was served. A weekly letter went home with the children to inform their parents of the lesson of the day and included a summary of what the children had done. Often the letter also mentioned upcoming trips, new projects, items to be completed at home, and ways in which the parents could repeat the values of the lesson.

The “honor” studies taught life skills as well as spiritual lessons. Campouts always included parents and provided learning that had to be accomplished as a

child/parent team. Service projects included cleaning houses for the elderly, serving at the homeless shelter, playing with the children at the women's shelter, doing yard work, cleaning up the city parks, collecting and separating recyclable items, working as harvesters in farmers' gardens, cleaning up the church, washing cars, passing out surveys and religious literature, cycling for charities, and completing the Bible marking honor.

The first Pathfinders' Sabbath was observed, and the club participated in the upcoming Camporee. The children learned to march military style and to "post the colors" of the flag. They went to the Conference Youth Federations and learned liturgical Pathfinder activities, such as: marching in the community as a part of the church's health awareness program and how to collect the morning tithes and offerings. The Busy Bears program was similar to the current Little Lambs activities and was for ages 0-4. The uniforms were red with a bear over the heart, and their honor patches were designed on an embroidery machine. Their honors consisted of Bible memory work, picking up their toys or clothes, eating good food, exercising, and doing small service projects.

The club included 15 children of members and non-members. The children attended baptismal classes with their parents' approval, and 12 were baptized. The director re-evaluated the club annually and added new activities. Once the Little Lambs curriculum became available, it replaced the Busy Bears. Although the church sponsored the club, several of the local businesses also supported it because of its positive effect on the community. It helped the name Adventist to become well known. The club received invitations to participate in many of the community affairs, such as: the yearly State Fair and Rodeo Show. Since this method positively impacted the non-Adventist community as

well as teaching the youth, it deserved to be continued in Kansas and other SDA churches.

### **Summary**

The overall strategy for this project was to follow Christ's methods of evangelism. The guiding principle in teaching children and adults was an effort to aid them to make new converts and help those new disciples to become involved in personal evangelism and disciple-making. The 31 activities involved members at every age level to interact with the community at large while building their own discipling skills. These kinds of activities were vital to remedying the lethargy that existed in the Mt. Moriah and South 18th Street churches.

People--former and new members--who were not attending church became involved in one or more of the 31 methods. As they became involved in these methods they began attending church. The two Kansas churches grew to a total of 95 members worshipping together—one week in Coffeyville, the next in Independence over a six-year period. My aim was to grow the two congregations. My strategy was to utilize the 31 evangelistic methods to train and maintain new members. I began with four members, and after six years, ended with 95—two of the original four members were gone, so there was a gain of 93 members, as measured by baptisms and membership transfers. Since these members attended church each week, the project was determined to be successful. As the pastor, I was not able to measure the influence exerted during my tenure on the two communities—both the clergy and laity—who were positively impacted by my Adventist witness.

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

#### **Summary**

In 1997 I was asked to work with a district that had one church of about 30 members that was reasonably active and two churches that had declined into a state of inactivity. The active church with 30 members was located in Springfield, MO. The two inactive/dysfunctional churches—the Mt. Moriah church in Coffeyville, KS, and the South 18th Street church in Independence, KS—were located about 145 miles away from Springfield.

When I arrived, I made an assessment of the members, the conditions that existed in the churches, and the demographics of the local communities. The church in Missouri was located in a college town and continued to grow because of work done by a strong laity with pastoral and Conference assistance. This made it possible for me to focus on the need for revitalizing the two Kansas churches.

The activities of this Doctor of Ministry project were: (a) to assess the status of the two small declining churches, (b) to determine the approaches to revitalizing the churches based on the information gathered through the assessment, (c) to implement the chosen revitalization procedures, (d) to evaluate the success of the procedures for revitalizing the churches, and (e) to make recommendations related to any findings which

might have implications for these two churches and other struggling small churches in North America.

### **Recommendations**

What are the ultimate outcomes that Christ would desire for those who become His disciples today? Certainly accepting His grace and growing in a way that enables them to have eternal life, would be at the top of the list. However, such growth will compel these disciples to use their talents to help others experience the good news and become an eternal part of God's kingdom. Each in his/her individual way will contribute to disciple making. This includes ministry to the needs of individuals and communities and makes the disciple's message about God's grace more authentic. It is about the sheep and the goats, the story of the talents, the ministry of Dorcas—Christ's disciples minister to the special needs of children, women, and men.

The recommendations are the result of the synthesis of the following considerations: first, how Christ ministered and mentored disciples to become disciple makers; second, how the apostles and other disciples used what they had learned from Christ as they established and supported new churches; third, how the principles used by Christ and the New Testament churches for disciple making are applied to current conditions by the most successful churches; and fourth, how the results of helping revitalize the two project churches used the principles of Christ and the New Testament churches in a contemporary setting.

This study dealt with two small churches, which had become dysfunctional. It did not directly address two very important questions--*first*, how do you keep a small church

from becoming dysfunctional and *second*, if a small church that was dysfunctional has been made active, what needs to be done to help it maintain a healthy status?

There are two categories of recommendations. The first category includes Recommendations 1-2, which are particularly appropriate to the many small churches that face challenges similar to the two churches studied. These two recommendations have implications for preventing churches from becoming dysfunctional and/or helping churches, which have been made active to retain their revitalization. The second category of Recommendations 3-10 relates to all churches and the challenges faced in helping *every member/disciple* use his/her talents to assist in making new disciples. These recommendations also have implications for maintaining healthy functionality in any size community of believers.

*Recommendation 1:* It is recommended that the training programs have a goal of helping every church develop local leadership that empowers it to function even if pastors are not available. Lay leadership strategies used by the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses need to be examined as this recommendation is considered.

*Recommendation 2:* It is recommended that in some areas where there are multiple small churches, consideration be given to forming a district structure like that used in the Michigan Conference which includes multiple pastors with many churches—a district can bring resources, which a single small church could not obtain. Also, with planning, a district would always have at least one pastor available for consultation, even if others were away or in transit to a new assignment. Such districts could also be the geographic area for an Abundant Life Resource Center—ALRC. (See Appendix B.)

*Recommendation 3:* It is recommended that a periodic process be developed to examine the demographics and needs of the community(s), which might be met through the discipling efforts of the church collectively and/or by individual members.

*Recommendation 4:* It is recommended that programs be developed for use at the Conference and local level to help every member discover, improve, and use his/her talents and spiritual gifts so that he/she may better assist in disciple making.

*Recommendation 5:* It is recommended that a match be made between the important needs of the community identified in Recommendation 3 with the talents of church members identified via Recommendation 4 to determine the most needed programs for which members have the necessary talents to make a difference.

*Recommendation 6:* It is recommended that budgets be developed for programs identified in Recommendation 5 and that those programs with highly potential benefit and low cost be financed and implemented as soon as possible.

*Recommendation 7:* It is recommended that a training/materials/follow-up resource center be established in geographic localities where there are multiple Adventist churches of various ethnic representations. Selected members representing each of these churches would collaborate in planning, outreach, and follow-up training for all Adventist believers in that geographic area. They would also formulate the best quick response possible for any interest that is forwarded to the center. Interests might come from media programs, literature evangelists, or local sources. When Conferences have territories that overlap—such as when Regional Conferences and State(s) Conferences both have churches in the same town—both would benefit from participating in a resource center called Abundant Life Resource Center.

*Recommendation 8:* It is recommended that where a community center exists, the Community Survey found in Figure 1 should be given to all who visit the center for help as a means of learning how best to relate to their expressed needs.

*Recommendation 9:* It is recommended that where an Adventist Community Service Center exists, an ALRC be implemented as part of the Center. If a Bible school already exists, it also would be part of the ALRC.

*Recommendation 10:* It is recommended that the North American Division initiate a process for studying and developing procedures to maintain the functions of churches--particularly small churches--during transition periods between pastors. This should include well-defined communication channels where officers can get guidance during times when there is no defined pastor.

### **Conclusions**

My two small churches had their own unique personality. The members were not involved in witnessing. After the members received pastoral coaching/instruction about methods for witnessing, they became soul-winners for the kingdom. The methods used included the 31 activities described in detail with the results, in Chapter 5.

The membership of the two churches increased from 4 to 95 members. Two of the original members died; thus there was an increase of 93 new members. These disciples/members were involved with their communities in many significant ways so that the name Seventh-day Adventist became well known in both towns. One form of involvement included me, as the pastor, becoming active in the Ministerial Association. This facilitated members becoming involved in a variety of community service activities.



I was invited to be on television. The TV station manager said his viewers were requesting more of my sermons, and I was asked to participate in the Easter services, to offer the invocation at the Coffeyville rodeo, and to speak in the non-SDA churches when they were without a pastor.

After I took a new assignment, I was not immediately replaced in the project district. The level of church community outreach activities declined. Perhaps the major challenge in working with small churches is to provide continuity of support, even when there is not a current active pastor. This is the same challenge that faced the itinerant ministries of the early New Testament church. In response, the apostles wrote letters of encouragement and instruction. Today, ways need to be found to replicate the apostles' approach to church maintenance—but in the context of contemporary settings. The ultimate goal should be to train members in a manner that they will continue to function in fulfilling the Gospel Commission, even if there are no formal pastors.

## APPENDIX A

### SEVENTY-FIVE WAYS OF BEING KIND

By

Pastor and Mrs. William Scales

1. Smile and speak kindly to everyone.
2. Give fruit.
3. Give a bag of groceries.
4. Bake a loaf of bread and give it to a neighbor.
5. Carry a meal to a sick person or an elderly person.
6. Visit a sick or shut-in person.
7. Send greeting cards to sick and shut-ins.
8. Do laundry for the sick.
9. Clean house for the sick and shut-ins.
10. Offer to pay bills for the sick.
11. Speak an encouraging word in person or on the telephone.
12. Write an encouraging letter.
13. Go on an errand for a neighbor.
14. Help someone fix a flat tire.
15. Cut grass for elderly people.
16. Give someone a ride even if it means going out of your way.
17. Take a sick person to the doctor or to a hospital.
18. Visit a person in prison.
19. Offer to baby-sit for a neighbor.
20. Send a neighbor a card when you are on vacation.
21. Call your neighbors and inquire how they are doing.
22. Make friendly visits and get acquainted with all of your neighbors.
23. Be sympathetic and helpful to your neighbors in time of bereavement.
24. Take time to listen to others' problems.
25. Visit non-Christian relatives more often.
26. Welcome newcomers into the neighborhood.
27. Invite neighbors to a family outing.
28. Offer them the use of your telephone.
29. Compliment your neighbors on their yard, flowers, etc.
30. Develop the habit of praising the good qualities of your neighbors.
31. Lend to neighbors according to their need using discretion and tact.
32. Assist a blind person.
33. Assist a handicapped individual.
34. Share clothing with the needy.
35. Offer emergency lodging to those in need.
36. Be sensitive to the needs of relatives and friends.
37. Invite neighbors and relatives to your home for a social gathering.

38. Invite neighbors and relatives in for dinner.
39. Assist neighbors in various projects.
40. Look for ways to help in little things.
41. Be especially kind to the lonely.
42. Be especially kind to the aged.
43. Show appreciation for others' kindnesses.
44. Share vegetables from your garden with your neighbors.
45. Help your neighbor to wash his car.
46. Give flowers to a sick individual.
47. Sew a garment or repair one for a neighbor.
48. Share information that may be beneficial.
49. Offer to watch your neighbor's house when he is away.
50. Offer to check on your neighbor's mail during his absence.
51. Offer to watch the neighbor's children while she is shopping.
52. Help neighbor with a stalled car.
53. Shovel snow for elderly persons.
54. Attend neighborhood club meetings.
55. Aid in neighborhood projects.
56. Offer to stay with handicapped or sick persons while the neighbors care for business.
57. Always give preference to neighbors.
58. Offer to help neighbors when they relocate by babysitting for them.
59. Give neighbors refreshments on the day they are moving.
60. Fix your neighbors first meal on the day of their move.
61. Maintain friendly relations by keeping up your property and yard.
62. Offer to take in packages from the postman for your neighbors.
63. Offer to take your neighbor to and from the bus station, train station and airport.
64. Bring a souvenir from a trip to your neighbor.
65. Visit neighbors and relatives in the hospital.
66. Prepare a dish of food for a bereaved family.
67. Offer to write letters or read for elderly or disabled persons.
68. Help a neighbor prepare and plant a garden.
69. Help persons carry groceries.
70. Give up your seat on a bus to an elderly or handicapped person.
71. Offer, make or receive phone calls for bereaved persons.
72. Offer to keep children or keep a house during a funeral.
73. Remember birthdays and anniversaries of neighbors and relatives.
74. Help neighbors rake leaves.
75. Send a note to someone you missed seeing at church.

Pastor William Scales was the Adult Ministries Director for the NAD from 1979-1999. He often gave a list of ways that church members could be involved acts of kindness. Robert Moon received the above list when he was the Director of the Adventist Information Ministry (AIM) and a participant in a NAD Adult Ministries planning event.

## APPENDIX B

### ABUNDANT LIFE RESOURCE CENTER (ALRC)

*...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

John 10:10 last half (KJV)

**DESCRIPTION:** An ALRC is a center with books, AV media, computer-based and other multimedia learning materials, which will serve all age groups of church members and others from the community. Materials can be used at the center and some may be checked out. An ALRC, like many libraries, will have some of the following: exhibits, story hours, special viewings, loaned materials, church "small-group" meetings, special-interest group meetings, seminars, workshops, sponsored tours, field trips for various age groups, study guides, academic coaching, etc.

**GOALS:** (1) Provide a community Christian education service which will bring nonmembers into an SDA church, school or community center, (2) provide church members ways to develop on-going relationships with people seeking God's type of abundant life, (3) provide Christian learning materials with witness-training for church members, and (4) provide a base of operation for local Bible correspondence and/or Follow-up Team programs.

**SUBJECT MATTER:** The materials in the ALRC will be in harmony with the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Major focuses will include abundant life subjects such as: Bible doctrinal topics, Bible stories, moral stories, biographies of Christian heroes, Christian lifestyles, family life, health, and community service methods ... (topics appropriate for the church members' families and others from the community). In addition, there will be Christian-witness training materials targeted toward church members.

**STAFFING:** SDA Church members, and as appropriate, other Christian volunteers will staff the ALRC. This approach will allow friendships to develop between church members and other volunteers as they work together on programs of benefit to the local community. A large ALRC might have limited paid staff.

**LOCATION:** An ALRC will normally be housed in an SDA church, school or community-service-center.

**COMMUNICATION:** With an ALRC, church members can give attractive brochures or cards door-to-door to local citizens. Periodically a one-page schedule of special upcoming events or new features of the ALRC can be distributed. This will give an opportunity for church members to make regular visits to local homes. When possible, the same person(s) should cover the same homes so relationships can be developed.

by Robert Moon

Approved at Special NAD Ministries Planning Meeting - 1996

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