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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the final issue of the *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* for 2023, which presents six resource articles sharing methods, case studies, and practical tips on the use of house churches in Adventist missions. The theme articles begin with an article by Boubakar Sanou on the contextual, theological, and missiological perspectives of house churches in the New Testament, followed by an excellent article by John Holbrook listing principles that have created one of the most successful church planting movements in Adventism that has now grown to the fourth generation. Holbrook reinforces the widely known but little practiced principles of the need for missionaries to quickly step aside and let local people lead and the equally important principle of not cutting the nerve of local stewardship by providing outside resources for reproducing churches in surrounding areas.

Milton Adam's article shares lessons learned over the past 15 years of Simple Church with several links to various Simple Church resources listed throughout the article. Another expert on house churches and the important features needed for a rapidly growing movement is Curtis Sergeant's article on planting rapidly reproducing churches, again with links to various resources.

Peter Roennfeldt shares the importance of using Discovery Bible Reading in house churches and other small group gathering and also shares links to various resources. Monte Sahlin challenges Seventh-day Adventist leaders to rethink various objections some may have to encouraging the growth of house churches as important means for sharing the Good News.

Finally, an appeal for you, the readers of the *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies*, to encourage people who are writing on important issues in mission to send their articles for publication. We need more voices from Asia, Africa, Europe, and Central and South America to be heard. Too often long-time cross-cultural workers who have learned important mission principles have not written anything, thus denying future generations the benefits from their insights and wisdom.

Bruce L. Bauer, editor

BOUBAKAR SANOU

House Churches in the New Testament: Contextual,Theological, and Missiological Perspectives

Introduction

For most of the first century, private dwellings shaped the Christians' community life. Evidence to this phenomenon is found in the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of Paul. According to Acts 2:41, the Early Church numbered more than three thousand members after Pentecost. When the synagogues became off limits to them, meeting in private homes became a practical necessity for worship, fellowship, service, and mission (Acts 2:46; 5:42). In four of Paul's epistles, he explicitly references private homes as the gathering places for early Christians (1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16:3-5; Col 4:15; Phil 2). The epistles are better understood from the perspective that they were addressed to Christians in a network of house churches. This article examines the contextual, theological, and missional dimensions of first-century house churches to draw implications for contemporary church life and mission.

Historical and Sociocultural Context

Understanding the rise of house churches requires an overview of the historical and cultural context in which they existed. The cultural background of the Early Church was a combination of Hellenistic civilization, Roman rule, and Jewish faith and culture. The Greek conquest, which was missionary in nature, left a permanent mark on Jewish life. In expanding the Greek empire, Alexander the Great sought more than a mere military conquest. Because he considered the Greek way of life best for all, he

aspired to create a Hellenized world through a multifaceted approach: (1) he brought with him poets, philosophers, and historians to teach the Greek way of life, (2) he encouraged his soldiers to intermarry with native women throughout occupied territories as a way of spreading Greek culture, (3) he made Greek the universal language of the territories he conquered in his aim for cultural integration and homogenization, and (4) he actively encouraged religious syncretism whereby local deities were identified and then merged with the gods of the Greek pantheon (Johnson 1999:24; Bruce, Cohick, and Green 2009:26). This Hellenistic influence had a lasting influence on traditional Jewish culture.

Rome was very preoccupied with political power, which it achieved either by coercion or by extending the right of citizenship to members of military colonies, former soldiers, and local personages (Johnson 1999:26). It had a very hierarchical social structure from the family to the state level. In the family, the father had absolute authority over the material, financial, and religious affairs of the entire household, and also determined whom his children married. Children were expected to obey and honor their parents as one would honor the gods, and as such they continued to be obligated to them even after they moved out of the family home. Harmony, not equality, was perceived as the highest goal in family life and society. To achieve harmony, individuals were expected to stay in their respective place in society (Bruce et al. 2009:90, 91, 345). In this context, personhood was connected to group values. Honor and dishonor were the foundational social values. Their focus on shame and honor meant that "they were particularly oriented toward the approval and disapproval of others. This orientation meant that individuals were likely to strive to embody the qualities and to perform the behaviors that the group held to be honorable and to avoid those acts that brought reproach and caused a person's estimation in the eyes of others to drop" (DeSilva 2000:35).

The multicultural environment of the first century was quite challenging in that each group defined what was honorable or dishonorable according to its own distinctive set of values and beliefs. While these values sometimes overlapped, they also frequently clashed. The same behavior that one group held up and rewarded as honorable could be censured and viewed as an insult or disgraceful by another group, and vice versa. This combination of different cultural mindsets under one political rule shaped the matrix in which the Christian church was formed. Judaism provided the roots of Christianity although it regarded the Christian faith as a pernicious heresy. Hellenism provided the intellectual soil in which Christianity grew although it considered Christian beliefs as philosophical nonsense. Roman imperialism provided the protection that opened the possibility for the growth of Christianity although it regarded it as an impractical weakness (Tenney 2000:67-68).

Because of its Old Testament roots, the Early Church continued to emphasize kinship as a core value. But there was a radical newness to Christianity in that kinship was no more defined in terms of blood lines and ethnicity but rather in terms of shared faith and fellowship with God. The church matured to become an environment of inclusion, acceptance, and open unity without discrimination on the basis of race, gender, or social status (Gal 3:28). Membership was open to all on the basis of professing faith in Christ as Savior and the public demonstration of complete allegiance to Christ through water baptism (Acts 2:37, 38). The Early Church expressed its values of corporate solidarity and kinship through the use of the body of Christ and family motifs to describe the interdependence between its members, and to convey the close bond that enabled them to treat each other as family members (Rom 12; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4; Gal 6:10; Eph 2:19; 1 Tim 3:15; 1 Pet 4:17). Their concern was not power but the development of a lasting sense of interdependence and corporate solidarity among believers. This interdependence suggested that each member of the body had a unique role to play, and yet was dependent upon all other members.

Theological Foundation of House Churches

The practice of house churches in the New Testament was not merely a matter of convenience; it had deep theological implications. Household churches provided early Christians a unique environment for the expression of their personal identity as the temple of God and collectively as the people of God. This is best conveyed through the New Testament concept of church and the image of the church as a family.

The New Testament Concept of Church

In order to understand the concept of a first century house church, it is essential to first understand the essence of what constitutes a church. The English word "church" stems from the Greek *ekklesia* and *kuriakon. Ekklesia* is a compound word from *ek* meaning "out" and *kaleo* meaning "to call." Hence, the church can be defined as "the called out people." *Kuriakon* literally means "that which belongs to the Lord" (Bucke 1962:1:607). Thus, the called out people are also called in, called to belong. From this perspective, *ekklesia* and *kuriakon* primarily designate a body of believers in a particular religious and communal reality rather than to a physical building where believers gather for public worship.

The book of Acts portrays the activities of the Early Church in communal terms: "When the day of Pentecost came, they were *all together* in one

place" (Acts 2:1, emphasis mine, NIV used unless otherwise noted); "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the *fellowship*, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42, emphasis mine); "All the believers were *one in heart and mind . . .* , they *shared* everything they had . . . , and it was distributed to anyone as he had need" (Acts 4:32-35, emphasis mine). In this way, *ekklesia* and *kuriakon* emphasize the church's corporate identity. Although salvation is personal, Christianity is not a loner experience. It involves an indispensable communal life (1 Cor 12:12-21; Eph 2:21, 22; 4:16). On the other hand, believers are metaphorically referred to as a spiritual building: "God's building" (1 Cor 3:9), a building undergoing construction "to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" (Eph 2:22), "the pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15), and "living stones" being built into a spiritual house (1 Pet 2:5). Hence, the church is not built with literal stones but with believers. It exists in any setting where God's people gather for worship and mutual edification (see Matt 18:20).

The Familial Concept of the Church

An understanding of the church as a spiritual family requires a theological understanding of the family in Israelite context. In the Old Testament, the covenant between Yahweh and Israel is illustrated in familial terminology. To express the fundamental nature of his covenant with Israel, God revealed himself as a father (Deut 32:6; Hos 11:1; Jer 31:9) and husband (Isa 54:5) and spoke about Israel as his son (Exod 4:22-23; Deut 14:1). Further, God used family structures as an effective medium to express his covenant relationship with Israel. The compelling narrative of prophet Hosea's marriage to Gomer serves as a vivid representation of how Israel lived out its part of the covenant with Yahweh. In this way, the family became an image of God's covenant with his people. The same idea is also expressed in the New Testament where Christ is portrayed as a bridegroom and the church as his bride (Matt 25:1-13). The familial bond is intended to mirror the covenant bond between Christ and the church (Eph 5:28-32). Because God's covenant with his people depended on the continued existence of Abraham's family line in which the promises would be fulfilled, the family functions theologically as the image and carrier of the covenant (Atkinson 2014:133, 134).

With such an understanding of family, the importance of kinship is widely expressed in biblical literature. "X the son of Y" lies as a thread throughout the Old Testament. The use of surnames to identify individuals' links to families is foreign to the Old Testament. The Old Testament way of identifying individuals allowed their family connections to be

established in a more comprehensive fashion (e.g., "… Mordecai the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite" Esth 2:5). People looked at themselves as part of a family, a clan, a tribe, and a nation. It was of great importance to know who one's relatives were. In the absence of a centrally-organized system to enforce law and order and to punish wrongdoers, "a person's safety was a function of the group to which he or she belonged, and in terms of war it was the duty of those who were related to each other to stand together" (Rogerson and Davies 1989:46). People lived with a deep sense of solidarity between individuals and their social group, in which the group had obligations to protect individual members from harm, injustice, and poverty (e.g., Gen 35; Lev 25:14-31, 35-43, 47-55).

Because priests were thought to be defiled by contact with death (Lev 10:6; 21:1, 10-12; Ezek 44:25), funerary matters were not part of their duties. Thus, care for the dead was the duty of the family and clan. Israelites therefore turned to their kinship networks, not temples or priests, as their source of comfort, security, and hope after life (Cook 2009:111). This kinship-consciousness transcended even death as "internment in a family tomb on family-owned land was of the utmost urgency (see 2 Kgs 9:10; Jer 8:2; 16:4 22:19; 25:33). Kin should lie buried together, traditional Israelites believed, especially closely related kin (see, e.g., 2 Sam 17:23; 19:37; 21:14; 1 Kgs 13:22). This insured that after death family members would not be alienated from the insulating ties of communion with their kin" (Cook 2009:112). Thus, even in death a kin-group longed to remain interconnected according to the same family and lineage ties that bound them in life. Such was probably why Jacob, while in Egypt, desired to be buried with his fathers in the cave in the field of Machpelah where Abraham and Isaac were buried (Gen 49:29-33; 50:1-10), or for Joseph making the sons of Israel swear an oath that they would carry his bones out of Egypt to the promised land when God delivered them, which they did (Gen 50:24, 25; Exod 13:19).

It is therefore not surprising that the concept of church as a family was adopted by early christians. Long before official buildings were dedicated to public worship, the family (Greek *oikos/oikia*, house or household) was the setting for many activities of the Early Church. The references to church in the New Testament should not conjure up images of large buildings with stained-glass windows, altars, and pews but rather a network of house gathering of believers. In most cases, these gatherings were composed of a host family joined by other individuals and families. This household setting was referred to as "the household of God" (1 Tim 3:15; Eph 2:19), "house of God" (Heb 3:6; 1 Pet 4:17), or "the household of faith" (Gal 6:10). As a result, family terminology such as brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers is used in the New Testament to describe believers'

interpersonal relationships. For example, Paul advises Timothy to relate to all the members of the church as if they were part of an extended family: "Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort *him* as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity" (1 Tim 5:1-2).

The household image of the church is an acknowledgement that all believers, irrespective of their ethnicities, gender, social backgrounds, are one family by creation and redemption. They also believed that in Christ the covenant with Abraham had reached its teleological conclusion. The recognition that all believers are equal members of God's family might have played a role in the breaking down of ethnic barriers and fostered table fellowships among early Christians (cf. Gal 2:11-14). It was through such fellowship that Jews and Gentiles were able to be the church Jesus prayed for in John 17:6-19.

House Churches and Mission

Through the transforming and enabling power of the Holy Spirit, house churches became very instrumental in the growth of the Early Church through their mission-oriented discipleship. The gospel permeated communities through interconnected networks of homes, family ties, and various social bonds, leading to instances where entire households embraced the gospel collectively (Acts 16:15, 34). From that perspective, it is important to interpret the following two case studies of mission in the New Testament as conducted within house churches and by members of such congregations.

A Case for Mission in the Book of Acts

Although the book of Acts contains important historical narratives, solid theology, and brilliant apologetics, mission is the driving force behind all of that. To be specific, the theology found in Acts was done in the context of the *missio Dei* as humans reflected on divine revelations and the missional questions those revelations often raised. From this perspective, it is *à propos* to say for example that as a whole, the book of Acts is the narrative of a church, which because of its missionary encounters outside the Jewish context, reshaped its theology and approach to witnessing in order to reach different contexts. The Early Church's theology and apologetics were to a greater degree fertilized, driven, and necessitated by mission (Chung 2012:260; Sanou 2018:301-316).

The first indication that mission is the central theme in the book of Acts is found in chapter one verse eight. "You shall receive power when

the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" distinctly indicates that witnessing about Jesus to all nations was the dominant agenda of early Christians. The evidence that Christ's disciples took seriously the idea of being his witnesses is notably featured in their preaching throughout Acts (2:32, 3:15, 5:32, 10:39, 41, 43, 13:31, 15:8, 22:15, 20, 23:11, 26:16). Reading the book of Acts as an apologetic or theological treaty cannot effectively be done apart from reading it as an expression of mission in light of Jesus' recommissioning of his disciples in Acts 1:8.

To highlight the centrality of mission in Acts, Craig Keener succinctly notes that "although we may view mission and apologetic as distinct purposes, for Luke they were closely intertwined. Luke's apologetic was a concrete expression of mission in his own context, and it was often mission that generated the need for the apologetic" (2012:1:438). Also, while the theological character of Luke's historiography should be recognized, Ward Gasque observes that "the theology of Acts is a mission centered theology: the church exists not for itself but for the world, to bear bold testimony to what God has done and is doing in Jesus" (1988:127). Undoubtedly, the prophetic mission of Jesus and its continuation through the ministry of his followers in house churches constitutes the leading agenda in the book of Acts. Acts was written with a clear missional intent in the context of the Early Church's missionary endeavors. In various ways throughout its narrative, Luke portrays the continuation of God's universal salvific will. After discussing other possible purposes of Acts, William Barclay concludes that "these are merely secondary aims. Luke's chief purpose is set out in the words of the Risen Christ in Acts 1:8, 'You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth'" (2003:5). Concurring with Barclay, Nicolas Wright and Michael Bird succinctly add that Acts 1:8 "functions as a 'virtual table of contents' for Luke's second volume" (2019:628). As a model for Christian mission, Acts is both an account of the missionary expansion of the Early Church and an account of why and how that missionary expansion was undertaken. As such, the book provides a paradigm of how the gospel of the kingdom of God can be spread to all nations in anticipation of Jesus' second coming. Without the missionary zeal and vibrancy of the network of early Christian house churches and their members, the narrative in the book of Acts would be different.

A Case for Mission in 1 Peter

The first epistle of Peter was written during a critical time in the Early Church's history. The majority of Petrine scholars are of the view that much internal evidence supports the suggestion that the addressees of 1 Peter,

though racially mixed, were from a predominantly Gentile background (e.g., Flemming 2015:91; Schnabel 2004:1521; Papaioannou 2022:1875-1876). As the church experienced rapid growth, the opposition faced by believers expanded beyond zealous Jews who perceived the nascent faith as a threat. The growing number of Gentiles converting to Christianity also raised concerns throughout the Roman empire for several reasons. First, upon embracing their newfound faith, Gentile converts refrained from participating in pagan temple rituals and gatherings (1 Pet 4:3-4). In a context where "those who abstained from worshipping local gods were suspected of wishing trouble upon their city or regions" (Wright and Bird 2019:762), this shift in behavior of Gentile converts greatly worried their contemporaries. The fear was that the abandonment of ancestral practices by converts to Christianity would anger the gods and lead to retributive consequences for their communities. As a result, Christians were treated with reproach and contempt (3:9; 4:4, 14-15). Second, the practice of social equality among Christians, regardless of differences in ethnicity, social status, and gender, posed a direct challenge to the established social order of the Roman empire. Their choice to live out an alternative to Roman norms set them apart and led to exclusion and contempt (Carson 2007:1032-1033; Papaioannou 2022:1875-1876; Flemming 2015:97).

Peter exhorts his socially marginalized audience scattered across Asia Minor to live steadfast and faithful lives to God in spite of the social scorn, calumny, humiliation, and persecution that such a lifestyle could lead to (5:12). To help his readers stay the course and fulfill their calling in the face of adversity and social hostility, Peter seeks to firmly establish them in the awareness that they are God's special people, the recipients of remarkable grace (1:2; 5:12). Or as Scot McKnight puts it, "Peter intends his readers to understand who they are before God so that they can be who they are in society" (1996:36). He assures them that their true identity is determined by God's verdict rather than that of their social location or life circumstances. Even though they are disparaged by their communities because of their faith, in God's eyes they are a precious, royal, and holy people (2:5, 9-10), called to live missionally with anticipation for the realization of their promised hope—salvation with an imperishable, undefiled, and unfading inheritance (1:4-5, 7-12, 18-19, 22-23).

Peter begins his epistle with a distinct emphasis on identity to cast his vision of the church and its mission. He addresses his readers both as exiles and sojourners (1:1; 2:11) and as a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and God's own people and special possession (2:9-10) in his desire for his readers to conceive of themselves as the Israel of God. He conveys the privilege Gentile converts have to belong to God's people by using the language of election to ascribe to them key Old Testament

allusions to Israel as a nation. That Peter uses these honorifics to incorporate Gentile converts into the narrative of Israel is noteworthy. As the primary human custodians of God's mission in their contexts, Peter is eager for his readers to understand that more significant than what they do, their mission is first and foremost centered on their identity. Because their mission is anchored in who they are, understanding and fully embracing their new status in Christ constitutes a key component of their pursuit of God and witness for him.

The believers' new identity as exiles and a holy priesthood carried significant implications for how they were to live and witness in the world. Each of the honorifics Peter uses to illustrate the new identity of converts is a metaphor of the church in mission, a picture of it living out its witness in the world (Van Engen 2000:193). Although they are alienated in their own social world, they are called to actively engage it with the gospel. By identifying the church as a "holy, royal priesthood," "holy nation," and "a people belonging to God" (2:5, 9), Peter invites his audience to a faithful participation in the mission of God both by means of verbal proclamation, but mostly through an ethical lifestyle given their current circumstances (1:13-16; 2:11-12). The believers' ethical lives are of utmost importance to Peter. For him, it is an eloquent way of witnessing to the transformative power of the gospel. Six of the thirteen New Testament references to ἀναστροφή (*anastrophē*)—conduct, behavior, way of life—are found in 1 Peter alone (1:15, 18; 2:12; 3:1, 2, 16). Peter wants their conduct to be honorable (2:12), chaste (3:2), and good (3:16). He connects correct ethical behavior to "doing good" (2:15, 20; 3:6, 13, 17; 4:19). He grounds his call for ethical living (holiness) on the fact that God who called them is holy (1:13-16) and on its potential missional effect on the onlooking Gentiles (e.g. 2:12-15; 3:2, 16; 4:4). Mission and ethics are so powerfully linked in 1 Peter 2:9-10 that it becomes impossible to detach one from the other. As such, rather than withdrawing from the world into a state of secluded piety that holds little relevance to outsiders or undermining the social structure, Peter calls the church to be radically different from the world but fully missionally engaged in it. For him,

> The church is not against the world in that it does not express holiness by reciprocating the world's animosity toward it, and neither does the church demonstrate holiness by condemning the ways of the world with self-righteous living and rhetoric. Instead the church is to be different because it is in relationship with a God who is different, and it is simply trying to stay in step with his ways in the world. (Beach 2015:130)

In 1 Peter, ethical living includes believers being self-controlled (1:13), staying away from all forms of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander (2:1), abstaining "from the passions of the flesh" and keeping their "conduct among the Gentiles honorable" (2:11-12). Correct ethical behavior is also demonstrated in the way believers submit to civil leaders (2:13-17), in the way servants submit to their masters (2:18), in the way believing wives submit even to husbands who are hostile to their faith (3:1-6), in the way believers extend sincere love and hospitality to each other in the Christian community (1:22; 3:8; 4:9), and in the way Christians "honor all people" (2:17). Two readings of Peter's repeated calls to submission are possible. First, it is imaginable that Peter's counsel aims to refute the accusations of outsiders by demonstrating that Christians lead disciplined lives, adhering to what is deemed as virtuous and acceptable conduct in Roman society (Edwards 2017:106; McKnight 1996:166). Second, considering his exhortation to emulate Jesus' submissiveness in his endurance of unjust suffering (2:21-23), Peter's reiterated calls for submission are best understood as a "Christological basis for missional living"—a call for believers to engage their world with a Christ-like distinction (Flemming 2015:102).

Clearly, Peter's view of holiness and the ethical lifestyle that is linked to it is not the type of holiness that would lead believers to withdrawal from society but one that is an integral part of the end imagined by God for them. He is of the view that Christian witness is strengthened by the ethical conduct exhibited by the Christian community. Living ethically and honorably in the midst of hardship has the potential of leading others to inquire about the hope that Christians have (2:12; 3:15).

Embracing the Missionary Zeal of House Churches Today

The books of Acts and 1 Peter have a universal appeal. Because of the themes they address (e.g., suffering, hope, promise, ethical living, perseverance, and divine care), their messages remains highly relevant to the circumstances of numerous contemporary Christians who encounter adverse reaction to their faith, live in constant danger of social alienation, or simply live in peril because of their faith.

Reflecting on the contemporary approach to Christian ministry, church health scholar Greg Ogden compares it to "a football game with twenty-two people on the field in desperate need of rest, and fifty thousand people in the stands in desperate need of exercise" (2016:25). This is a tragic departure from the strong emphasis of the New Testament on ministry as the function of the total church membership. The priestly ministry of every church member advocated in Acts and 1 Peter has important implications for its missionary enterprise (Acts 1:8; 2:17-18; 8:4; 1 Pet 2:5, 9). Offering

sacrifices acceptable to God as a priest involves serving both God and others by faithfully and responsibly fulfilling one's vocation in society in accordance with the gifts of the Spirit (1 Pet 4:10). As such, whatever work to which God has called a believer—even the simplest, everyday tasks—should be seen as an opportunity to live out his or her priestly calling in the world (Allison 2000:786-787). From that perspective, Christ's commission to make disciples in Matthew 28:19-20 could be paraphrased, "As you go about your daily lives, make disciples of the people you interact with." Therefore, the church's holy priestly calling is an invitation to let one's faith in Christ permeate all dealings—family, school, business, and so on. By virtue of this commission and the enabling gifts of the Spirit bestowed on each believer (Acts 2: 17-18; 1 Pet 4:10), all Christians are called and commissioned, whatever their walk of life, to share their faith. God has intentionally placed each believer in their neighborhood, job, school, or other locations for the strategic purpose of being outposts for his kingdom. They are the only missionaries some may ever meet or meaningfully interact with. Therefore, Christians should regard their work as a calling rather than just an occupation. When believers view their jobs as part of God's calling on their lives, they add new meaning to Christian witness. Thus, it is important for each believer to strive to connect their deeply held professional dreams with their faith in Christ and their missionary mandate.

In 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, Paul uses four distinct terms for the conferral of the Spirit: gifts (*charisma*—verse 4), services (*diakonia*—verse 5), workings (*energema*—verse 6), and manifestation (*phanerōsis*—verse 7). *Charisma* is an inclusive designation of all the gifts of the Spirit. The emphasis is, rather than being based on the receiver's worthiness, spiritual gifts are the outworking of the Spirit's grace. *Diakonia* emphasizes the purpose of spiritual gifts: a Christlike attitude of servanthood for the common good of the community of God's people. It excludes any preoccupation for special status in the body of Christ on the part of the one who serves. *Energema* directs the attention to God's energy as the source of all gifts. *Phanerōsis* stresses that every believer has at least one spiritual gift for the common good. In view of such an understanding of spiritual gifts, Christians are to consider spiritual gifts as given to them to be stewarded in the work of the gospel ministry. Whole-church ministry calls for a complete exercise of the full range of available spiritual gifts. Thus, the architect, landscaper, computer software engineer, banker, garbage collector, shopkeeper, plumber, builder, or nurse—all have been given special gifts by God to be used for him. By embracing their profession as a vocation, every believer becomes a full-time minister in whatever walk of life God has intentionally placed them for the strategic purpose of being an outpost of his kingdom.

Further, in house churches, where a formal distinction between clergy and laity is absent, all members have the opportunity for equal participation and mutual edification.

Conclusion

The contextual, theological, and missiological dimensions of house churches in the New Testament provide valuable insights into the dynamics of early Christian communities. The sense of community, fellowship, worship, and mission zeal cultivated within these house churches holds lasting significance for present-day church life. Since the social challenges faced by early Christians resonate with the experiences of many contemporary believers, drawing inspiration from their steadfast dedication, missional fervor, and strategic approaches in the face of societal and existential challenges is not just advisable but imperative for believers in the present era. Similar to the Early Church (cf. Act 6:1-7), contemporary Christians should be open to exploring ways to improve the organizational structure of their congregations in order to discern effective methods for enriching their fellowship, worship, and discipleship.

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JOHN HOLBROOK

Missionary Methods: Christ's or Ours? A Seventh-day Adventist Church Planting Movement Case Study

Rapid methods of evangelism have become very popular in the Adventist Church. They are perceived to produce large results in a short amount of time. However, when observed over a longer period of time, and when taking into account low retention rates, are these methods actually the best? What was Jesus' long-term strategy to reach the world and what results could we see today if we imitated him?

Our Mission Project

In 2002, after 12 years of full-time mission work, three churches had been planted and the Adventist Frontier Missions (AFM) project among the Alangan of Occidental Mindoro in the Philippines was deemed complete. My family, who had been the lead missionaries for most of those years, moved to a new role while continuing to visit regularly and mentor the churches that had been planted.

In 2011, after graduating from college, I returned to Occidental Mindoro to start a new project among the Tawbuid, whose territory borders on the Alangan tribal lands. This was to be a joint project, the Alangan church leaders partnering with AFM to start new work in an unentered tribe. Nine years later, in 2020, another church had been established among the Tawbuid, and this project was also transitioned to phase-out, meaning the missionary moved away but continued to visit back regularly. By the time these two projects were considered complete, four churches had been planted by the missionaries and approximately 200 members had been baptized.

At first glance one might question the amount of time and resources invested for what appears to be such small results. However, if we fast forward to 2023 it is quite exciting to see what continues to take place among the Tawbuid people. Today, on Occidental Mindoro, there are 45 churches across four different tribes. More than 2,700 believers have been baptized with a retention rate of over 90%. All the churches are led by indigenous lay leaders who receive no compensation either in cash or in kind. Every year more churches are planted by these lay leaders, in some places at a rate of one church per month. Four distinct generations of churches have been established, with the foreign missionary only being involved in planting and training the first generation. Each generation remains doctrinally sound and grounded in the Bible.

How could such rapid growth happen with minimal involvement from missionaries and pastors? In this article I will look at the biblical foundation, the mission philosophy, and the missional practices that helped to facilitate the budding church planting movement that God has begun among the indigenous tribes of Occidental Mindoro.

The Problem

In recent years rapid methods of evangelism have become popular in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Many point to the hundreds or thousands of baptisms reported from short evangelistic series in various parts of the world. However, at the same time, the church is facing an unprecedented crisis. Worldwide, 42% of new members are leaving the church (Trim 2023). According to research by the Institute of Church Ministry at the Theological Seminary at Andrews University, the majority of those who leave were brought into the church through public evangelistic series (Dudley and Cincala 2013). David Trim, director of the General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, recently warned that while total membership continues to increase, the rate of increase is slowing significantly. "Our success in soul-winning seems to be plateauing. We have more members than ever, but they are not winning noticeably more souls for Christ" (2020).

Discipleship has become a slogan in our day, yet few practice it in the way that Jesus and his apostles did. The result is that the total population of the unreached in our world is actually increasing every year (Joshua Project 2022). We are hurrying in our mission work, investing less and less time per conversion, but the result is that we are falling farther and farther behind.

Biblical Foundations

A brief look at Jesus' life and ministry shows a very different strategy. Jesus invested 30 years in careful and thorough preparation before he began his active ministry (Luke 3:23, 2:52). He not only studied the scriptures but the Jewish culture and traditions and the stories of the people he came to reach (Mark 7:9; Luke 16:19-31; Creed 1930:109, 110). He became incarnate, not only joining the human race but becoming a Jew, dressing like a Jew, eating like a Jew, and speaking the language of the Jews.

When the time came for his ministry to begin (at the age in which Jews were considered to become an adult), Jesus began 3½ years of intensive ministry. Not a two-week evangelistic series. Not a one-year mission trip. He spent 33½ years to establish one small body of believers that was so thoroughly trained that they changed the world in one generation.

What did Jesus' ministry consist of? We commonly credit Jesus with preaching, teaching, healing, casting out demons, and feeding the hungry. Jesus' longest sermon, though, is found in Matthew 5-7. It takes maybe 15 minutes to read. Granting that it is likely a condensed version of the sermon, and only one of many, nevertheless it is clear that preaching only took up a small portion of the approximately 30,000 hours of Jesus' ministry.

Similarly, healing and casting out demons, while common activities for Jesus, still did not take up the majority of his time, nor were they the primary focus of his ministry. Only twice, in his entire ministry, do we read that he fed the hungry, and both times were under special circumstances.

So where did Jesus spend those 30,000 hours? In training the disciples. In Matthew 5:1 we read that when Jesus began his Sermon on the Mount, he called his disciples to him and began to teach them. Ellen White (1903:85) states that when Jesus was teaching the multitudes, his disciples always formed the inner circle. When Jesus healed people, his disciples assisted. Later they were given the same power and joined him in preaching and healing. Thus, we see that even when Jesus was preaching to the multitudes and healing the sick, he was doing this as part of the hands-on training (discipleship) of the apostles.

Most of the 30,000 hours of Jesus' ministry was spent in training his disciples. While Jesus was walking along the roads they were walking and talking with him. When Jesus was sleeping, they were sleeping right there next to him. When Jesus ate, they were eating with him. When Jesus was preaching and healing, they were listening and helping. Jesus was a master at using every circumstance to teach valuable lessons. When the disciples were crossing the lake and got caught in a storm, Jesus used this to train them (Matt 8:26). When they were hungry on Sabbath and picked

grain to eat, Jesus used this to train them (Matt 12:1-8). When they found a blind man who needed healing, Jesus again used this opportunity to train them (John 9:1-12).

Among Seventh-day Adventists, Ellen White's (1905:143) quote that "Christ's method alone will bring true success," has almost become cliche. The truth of that statement is undeniable. However, we often tend to interpret it in light of our own preferred methods of ministry. We love to hear that Jesus mingled with people and met their needs. We equate his call to, "Follow me," with the decision to be baptized. Often, however, we fail to remember that this was just the beginning of Jesus' discipleship process. The call to, "Follow me," was followed by 30,000 hours of blood, sweat, and tears as Jesus trained these disciples how to be a disciple and make more disciples. In the process he had a profound influence in shaping their worldview, their understanding of God, the scriptures, and how to do mission. This was not a fast process, nor was it easy for the trainer or the trainees.

As David Bosch (1991:50) points out, ancient Jewish tradition taught that the work of a rabi is not done until his disciples are rabis as well. Jesus did not just train the disciples to preach, teach, and heal. He primarily taught them to reproduce this discipleship process with others.

We can see this discipleship multiplication process in Luke 9 where Jesus sent the disciples on their first practicum. They had been studying under him for quite some time and now they needed to practice. From the record we know that the disciples practiced preaching, healing, and casting out demons (Luke 9:1-3). Was that all that they practiced, though?

When we compare Luke 9 with Luke 10, it becomes clear that there was one more major skill that they practiced. In chapter 10, after returning from their practicum and spending some more time learning from Jesus through on-the-job training, the disciples are sent out to practice again. This time, though, there are suddenly 72 (some translations read 70). There is no explanation given in chapter 10 for where these 72 new disciples came from. If we look back to chapter nine, however, we see that Jesus sent the disciples out two by two, making six teams. Let us imagine for a moment that the disciples were not only to practice Jesus' methods of preaching, healing, and casting out demons, but were also to practice the very core of Jesus' strategy, the making of disciples. If six teams of disciples each found 12 more disciples, that would come out to 72 new trainees to be sent out on the second missionary practicum in Luke 10.

If this seems too much like conjecture, look for a moment at Paul's strategy. In 2 Timothy 2:2 Paul is teaching his trainee, Timothy, how to be a good missionary. He says, "The things that you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to others who will be

trustworthy to teach others as well." Clearly Paul understood disciple-ship to not stop at the point at which a convert knows the truth, nor was it primarily about preaching, healing, and feeding the hungry. Each disciple trainee was to not only lead people to Christ, but to find their own trainees from among the converts, training them to go and repeat the evangelism and disciple-training process.

Notice how well this worked in Acts 19:8-10. Paul spent three years in Ephesus (Acts 20:31). After getting expelled from the synagogue he moved his base of operations to the school of Tyrannus. From there the text says that Paul taught every day. Every day Paul stayed in the central city of Ephesus and taught. According to verse 10, though, after those two years the entire province of Asia was reached.

How was this possible? From the record of Paul's work throughout the New Testament that like Jesus, Paul would start by preaching and heal-ing people. Then, from those brought to faith through these initial minis-tries Paul would begin training leaders. Some would become elders in the churches planted, others would be missionaries like him. These mission-ary trainees, such as Timothy, Apollos, Priscilla and Aquilla, Luke, and others would travel and work with Paul for a time. Then Paul would send them out to practice by planting churches and training disciples to replace them. Then they would come back to work some more with Paul or would be sent to another place to repeat the process.

Paul also did not rush his mission work. We often think that Paul preached powerfully, baptized those who believed, established a church, and then left in a few weeks or months. It is true that at times Paul only stayed a short time in a place, but this was only if persecution forced him to leave quickly (Acts 17:14). Whenever possible, Paul stayed several years (Acts 18:11), not only leading people to Christ but thoroughly train-ing (discipling) them to carry on the work, like he did in Ephesus (Acts 20:31). Even after Paul moved on to pioneer in a new place, he left one or more of his trainees to continue the work of establishing, training, and mentoring the growing church (Titus 1:5; 2 Tim 4:9-12). He also continued to personally mentor his disciples through letters and personal visits (Acts 15:36, 2 Cor 2:4).

Jesus' and Paul's methods were slow at the beginning and did not show results for several years. When Jesus returned to heaven only 120 (Acts 1:15) remained to gather in the upper room. However, both Jesus and Paul started slow in the beginning in order to go faster later. They invested deeply in training converts with leadership potential, training them not to just to go preach and convert people, but to be multipliers. Each of Jesus' disciples trained multiple disciples who in turn trained multiple other disciples. Not everyone converted by their preaching became a disciple

trainee, but enough did that the power of multiplication soon grew the work so rapidly that Paul was able to say in Romans 15:23 that there was no place left for him to preach as he had fully proclaimed the gospel from Palestine to Italy (Rom 15:19).

Missional Practices

The Four-Self Model

In our mission work among the Alangan and Tawbuid tribes, we attempted to follow Jesus' and Paul's strategy of discipleship leading to multiplying church planting movements. One of the ways in which we planned for this was to utilize the *three-self model* which Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson (Reese 2021) used to summarize Paul's methods of church planting. In more recent years, Paul Hiebert (2008:238) and other missiologists have found that the three-self model is lacking in the area of preparing converts and indigenous leaders to find new theological insights and solutions from the Bible to newly arising problems without the aid of the foreign missionary. In response, self-theologizing has been added to the original three. These four principles are sometimes looked upon by missiologists as outdated and simple (Goldsmith 1989). However, in our work in the Philippines we found them to be biblical, and useful tools in planning and implementing a mission strategy that would result in the kind of rapidly multiplying church planting movements that is demonstrated in Paul's work.

In practice, I applied the four-self model in several ways. The most controversial was my commitment that I would not do anything which the indigenous believers could not, or would not, do themselves. This principle guaranteed that whatever initiatives I started, whether religious, humanitarian, or development related, they would almost immediately be taken over by the indigenous leaders themselves, would be financially supported by them, and would be simple and contextual enough to be quickly reproduced by them.

While simple in theory, actual implementation of the four-self model was a delicate process. When starting new mission work in an unreached people group it is necessary for the missionary to be the primary worker at first. In order to develop a culture of discipleship from the beginning, we involved the people from the very first Bible study, asking them to reproduce the process with other non-believers. Later, as the church was planted and leaders began to be trained, it was necessary for the missionary to gradually but intentionally step back from leadership. This sometimes caused people to feel that we were abandoning them or not doing

our job. As they grew into their roles, however, and took ownership of their churches and mission, they came to deeply appreciate this empowering approach to mission.

In the area of financial sustainability, it was extremely stressful to manage the fine balance between helping those in need on the one hand and empowering the people to help themselves on the other. At times mistakes were made and feelings were hurt on both sides. With healthy doses of grace and love, however, the transition was made, and the local believers were thankful for the trust and empowerment placed on them. Today they find satisfaction, dignity, and a sense of ownership as they continue the mission in their own way.

Chronological Inductive Bible Study

In the churches which were planted, the local leaders began with chronological, inductive Bible studies, which were so simple that the Bible students could reproduce them with their family and friends from day one. The only material needed was a Bible and the facilitator did not need extensive education or theological training. By simply reading the Bible stories from Genesis to Acts and asking leading questions after the reading, the facilitator was able to lead people through the Bible and to faith in Jesus. Each study ended with a commitment from each student being required to apply the lesson and share it with another group of people before the next lesson.

These studies, rather than typical public evangelistic series, were the foundation of our mission work. Through them the believers were trained to look to the Bible for truth and answers to their questions. When they came to me with questions, I would point them to a Bible story and help them analyze how the story answered their question. Thus, dependance on the Bible was developed, rather than dependance on the missionary.

The inductive Bible studies also were simple enough, scalable enough, and reproducible enough to grow far beyond what the missionary or any formally trained Bible workers could do. From day one Bible students were required to apply the truths they discovered and pass them on to others who did not know Christ. Students who were faithful in applying and teaching others were given extra training in church leadership, church planting, and were encouraged to go plant new churches using the same inductive Bible studies.

Churches Planting Churches

We carefully cultivated a culture of churches-planting-churches, not just disciples-making-disciples. The minimum unit which we find in the New Testament is a church. (I use the term church to refer to a group of believers functioning like, and having the characteristics of, a New Testament church.) In the Bible we almost never find individual believers living by themselves. Rather, believers worshiped God and lived out their Christian life in the context of a church group. These believers worked to reach the lost in the territory surrounding their church. The few from each church who were called by God to go as missionaries to other unreached areas went as small teams, and with the purpose of planting churches, not just to convert individuals to Christ. This wholistic church culture is vital to healthy church planting movements which leverage the talents of all parts of the Body of Christ in order to plant churches which plant more churches.

In our situation, those who came to faith in Christ and joined the church, but whose talents and calling was not church planting, supported the work in other ways. They built missionary huts, took care of the missionaries' fields, led out in the health and education work, and participated in other ways. Thus, the whole church was involved in planting new churches in unentered villages.

Tentmaking

Early on in our mission work we learned a painful but valuable lesson. The moment lay leaders and missionaries were compensated, either through cash or food, the mission work ground to a halt and the church became riddled with strife. One-time investments in development projects, such as water systems, providing vegetable seeds, or other similar projects that helped them support themselves were helpful, if carefully managed to not create dependance or favoritism. However, the moment any worker was paid or regularly supplied with food, jealousy and strife resulted. Even worse, the involvement of the rest of the believers in the work stopped. Since one or two people were being compensated, the believers left the work to them and went back to earning a living for their families. However, when the entire church, including leaders, missionaries, health workers, and manual laborers all were in the same situation of bi-vocational mission work, there was a solidarity and industriousness that made the work advance rapidly.

This was an especially sensitive area for many of the local believers when they began serving as leaders and missionaries themselves. Many

felt that it was our duty to pay them to reach their people. We carefully guided them through the New Testament, teaching them about tentmaking and how to finance mission outreach. We tried our best to help them develop skills and industries, which would allow them to more easily support themselves. On our part, we did our best to live on the same financial level as the people that we were training. Like Paul (2 Thess 3:7-9), we also transitioned to partial tentmaking ourselves, planting a farm each year and at times running small businesses as an example to the local leaders and missionaries.

Training Leaders

As soon as churches were established and those whom God had called to be leaders became apparent, their formal training began. This was very simple. Since all leaders and missionaries were bi-vocational they could not afford much time away from work. Every month during the dry season when travel was relatively easy all the leaders and anyone else interested in leadership or missions would gather for three days. The first day was mostly spent traveling to the training site, usually a dry riverbed near an unreached village. The second day would start with a lecture by me on one of the steps of church planting. In the afternoon the trainees would practice the new skill on each other. Then in the evening everyone would go to the nearby unreached village to practice with the villagers. The next day after worship and a short planning session we would head home. Each trainee chose an unreached village in their territory and would apply the new skills as they planted a church in that village between training sessions.

During the first training season, I worked closely with several of the more advanced leaders and indigenous missionaries. That first year I gave them all the responsibilities of leading the training sessions, except for the new material I was presenting. The following year, when the second training season began, the leaders along with the rest of the trainees from last season were assigned to team up in groups of two to teach the new trainees for that season. Graduates from last season had advanced classes separately so that the new teachers would have space to grow into their new teaching roles without the senior leaders and I looking over their shoulders. Today, this training method continues with the indigenous leaders and local tribal missionaries having completely taken over the work of training new leaders.

House Churches

Finally, in our mission work, we never initiated the building of churches. In the New Testament the early Christians never built churches. Those early Christians met outdoors (Acts 16:13) or in the homes of believers (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Phil 1:2). Not until 200 years after Christ returned to heaven is there evidence of Christians remodeling houses into churches, and even later before they began building dedicated church buildings (Griffin 1987:35, 36).

Churches are not inherently wrong. The Jewish nation began the practice of building synagogues during the Babylonian captivity, and it worked so well that they continued when the exiles returned to Israel. Jesus and the apostles began their work in these synagogues.

However, when they were expelled from the Jewish synagogues, the energy and resources of the Christian church were so focused on fulfilling Jesus' commission to make disciples of all nations that they did not spend the time, energy, or money to build church buildings. Instead, they met wherever convenient, and used their resources in mission. It is interesting to note that the time period when the Christian church finally began building churches was also the time when the church's growth began to decline, and the focus began to shift away from reaching the unreached.

In our mission work we similarly do not worry about buildings. We worship wherever convenient, focusing on leading people to Christ and discipling them to the point where they repeat the church planting and discipleship process with other lost people. We never mention church buildings or talk about building someday. Inevitably, after a period of rapid growth and church planting, an older and more mature body of believers will, on their own initiative, start talking about building a church. We do not stop them if they want to. We warn them of the distraction and drain of time and resources that a church building will entail, but if they still want to build one, we do not discourage them.

However, we do not build a church for them, nor do we finance their building of a church. According to New Testament principles, if they want to build a church, they need to find a way to do so themselves. Most commonly the members will start by building a simple wood, bamboo, and grass-roofed structure. The believers will divide up the resources needed, each volunteering to bring a couple of posts or a bundle of roofing grass. We, as missionaries, contribute on a level with what they themselves are able to contribute.

When, in a year or two the native-materials church begins to decay, they again all contribute to upgrading their church, usually by adding a

tin roof, dimensional lumber posts, or cement footings. They continue this process of upgrading their church until they have a sturdy but contextual and self-built church building.

This process results in the mother churches developing a sense of accomplishment, and a realization that, with God's help and working together, they can provide what is needed to advance God's work without dependance on foreign aid. The process is part of their growth and maturing, and results in their more effective support and mentoring of the cutting-edge church planting which primarily meets in houses.

Conclusion

In the mission work that my family and I did among the indigenous tribes of Mindoro in the Philippines, we attempted to apply the church planting and discipleship principles that are found in the ministries of Jesus and Paul.

We worked to intentionally plant churches that embodied the four-self principles demonstrated by Paul. We were careful to only start initiatives and work in ways that the people themselves could handle and that they could take over and carry-on. We primarily used inductive chronological Bible studies in order to lead people to Christ and to train them to apply biblical principles and participate themselves in discipleship. We carefully cultivated a culture of entire churches planting more churches, involving all members, not just those who were religious leaders. We were careful never to provide financial or in-kind support to local leaders who were working among their own people. We established a simple and locally lead training programs to develop new indigenous leaders and tribal missionaries. We did not build church buildings. Rather, we focused on church planting and discipleship, meeting wherever was convenient.

The result was a mission project that took a number of years to only plant a handful of churches, which were deeply grounded on biblical principles and thoroughly trained to reproduce the process that they had gone through. The result was rapid multiplication. After AFM phased out the project, the indigenous leaders themselves rapidly expanded the mission work, entering four previously unreached tribes, planting 45 churches with more than 2,700 baptized believers. They have now planted up to four generations of churches, with expatriate missionaries only being involved in the planting and training of the first generation. They have their own ongoing leadership training program which trains new leaders in each succeeding generation of churches. All of this is governed, supported, and reproduced locally without any significant support from outside of their own tribes.

By God's incredible power and grace, this budding church planting movement continues to grow and multiply rapidly throughout the mountains of Mindoro and beyond. We look forward to the day when similar New Testament-like church planting movements are established around the world among previously unreached people groups and hope they will grow until every people group hears the good news.

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MILTON ADAMS

After 15 Years of Planting Simple House Churches Around the World, What Have I Learned?

This article will highlight five areas of learning: (1) the conventional church attendance crisis, (2) church history, (3) Simple House Church planting, (4) the future of "church," and (5) the rise of Disciple-Making Movements. It is intended to be descriptive. It is my story. In many ways, thanks to the input of many Simple Church planters, it is our collective Simple Church story of the past 15 years.

In hopes of adequately sharing what is currently taking place, this article will include a blend of statistical data, observations from personal experience, analysis of social trends, and a brief summary of my understanding of God's prophetic end-time vision to which all nations, tribes, languages, and people are invited.

There are still many questions along with the realization that we have made mistakes along the way. However, we have found some answers to the mounting challenges facing westernized churches.

As you read, there will likely be things you find helpful, insightful, disturbing, challenging, and some that may even make you angry. My goal has been to take a candid look at what is developing among God's end-time people.

The closing thoughts of this article will attempt to synthesize our experience, providing a look at possible next steps.

What We Have Learned About the Church Attendance Crisis

It all started in 2007 while I was doing doctoral research at Andrews University. I discovered church trends coming from Western Europe that

were expected to arrive on North American shores in ten to fifteen years. Given another ten or more years, these church trends would also reshape the church culture in the Global South, beginning in cities where young adults are most connected via the internet to the global culture. What are these church trends?

At the time of my discovery in 2007, about 5% of any given Western European country were considered practicing Christians (meaning they attended church once a month), and according to Barna, 46% of adults in the United States were practicing Christians (Barna 2020: first graph). Additionally, Christian churches spent roughly $1.5 million on church functions per baptism of one new convert in the United States (The Truth Source N.d.: para 6.).

Now, more than 15 years later, incoming statistics have added more detail to the picture. Church attendance in the United States in 2020 hit an all-time pre-Covid low of 25%. "Now [2020], just one in four Americans (25%) is a practicing Christian. In essence, the share of practicing Christians has nearly dropped in half since 2000 (The Truth Source n.d.: para. 5). Covid has legitimized noncommittal Zoom-churching (Barna 2020: para. 3). Church closures now outnumber church plants (Shimron 2021; Hill 2023:47).

Given these trends, the "Church," as we have known it in Western society, may be on the way out. Could anything good for the church be on the way in? A statement from Ed Stetzer, Executive Director of the Billy Graham Center, suggests that it could. Stetzer saw Covid as a "blessing." In his blog, which appears to have been removed from their web page but preserved in my digital library, Stetzer said, "In fact, we must not let the queen back if it means that the people of God are put back on the bench. We must not go back to seeing church as [only an activity on Sabbath or] Sunday morning. It was never all about the weekend, and too many pastors who said that made it too much about them" (Stetzer 2020: para. 10).

Takeaway: The conventional church attendance crisis in North America and eventually the Global South will likely continue to follow Western European church trends—but much faster than originally anticipated.

What We Have Learned About Church History: Constantine and the Clergy

If there is a "queen"—a church culture that keeps the people of God on the bench—we should not be surprised. It is the natural outcome of embracing a settled-pastor model, a model that harks back to when the Roman Emperor Constantine established a professional priesthood. This was one of a cluster of "reforms" through which he essentially married pagan theology and practices with Christianity (Edwards 2015:2, 3).

Fast forward to today, and the outcome of titled and settled clergy—initiated by Constantine, continued in Catholicism, and transferred to Protestantism, has steadily dismantled the priesthood of all believers by placing their functions in the domain of professional priests/pastors who preserve Constantine's core job description, which was to baptize new believers, perform marriage ceremonies, bury the dead, and oversee the dispensing of communion (Edwards 2015:2, 3).

Within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ellen White warned against following a method of having pastors assigned to churches when she said, "Church members that are thus looked after and labored *for* become religious weaklings" (White 1902:18.2).

Takeaway: Largely due to the changes made by Constantine, a church culture that keeps a majority of Christian lay people on the bench seems to have made a strong commitment to preserving this weakness.

What We Have Learned About House Church Planting

For the past 15 years, my family and I have been an active part of the "church" that meets in our house. During that same period of time, I developed and coordinated the Simple Church Global Network of house churches (www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com) with the goal of empowering lay people to do all the work of disciple-making in fulfillment of Jesus' Great Commission. In this role, I have been able to train lay people and advocate for mission-motivated house churches. The following observations and reflections come from working with members and representatives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but also with lay people and church leaders around the world who represent a variety of church denominations.

Eight Observations

1. A fully documented 52% of those attending is unchurched. Since Simple Church's inception in July of 2008, we know that over the last 15 years, an average of 52% of the attendance in our lay-led Simple Church Global Network has been secular, unchurched, de-churched, and non-churched—the very mission field we are trying to reach. This statistic has been remarkably stable over those years. This shows a sustained effectiveness, unmatched in the current Western church-scape, for connecting with those who would not otherwise be within the circle of Christian church fellowship and discipleship.

2. Money for ministry. Without buildings to maintain, budgets to fund, or professional pastors to hire, offerings are freed up and used to make a

practical difference in the lives of people who are within influence-reach of Bible truth. The ability to offer a no-strings-attached provision for their needs helps to soften and open their hearts to God's end-time prophetic story and invitation.

3. The myth of owning truth. Denominations do not own the Bible message they steward. For example, Baptists do not own the practice of baptism by immersion, although they have faithfully defended this biblical practice. Lutherans do not own the teaching of righteousness by faith, although they are historically known for this treasure of truth. And Adventists do not own the three angels' messages of Revelation, although they have been entrusted with a deep understanding of them. From this realization flows a freedom to entrust Bible truth to any who will receive it, obey it, and share it.

4. Do or die endeavor. Simple Churches begin with a CORE team consisting of a minimum of two or a maximum of four adults who embrace a "do or die" determination. In other words, there is no pastor to blame, no committee action to hide behind, and no office of personal ministry to ask for help. They must go to their knees and then to the mission field around them. It is this that makes them front-line missionaries.

5. Dispersion of the salt pile. In the Dead Sea or the salt flats of Utah, little or nothing grows. Salt is good only when it is dispersed. Simple Church missionaries are a people who:

LEAVE: Simple Church missionaries intentionally move away from the salt pile to free their time for front-line mission work.

MINGLE: Simple Church people spend time to find people whose hearts are open to God.

LISTEN: Those attending a Simple Church are taught to sympathetically listen to people's hopes and heartaches to see where God is already at work in their lives.

MINISTER: The goal of Simple Church is to minister to people's physical, mental, emotional, and relational needs.

WIN TRUST: Growing relationships help develop trust that allows Simple Church people to lead and encourage others to grow spiritually.

INVITE: The ultimate goal is to invite new people to follow Jesus and prepare for his soon coming.

This process does not seek to add people to a salt pile. We have discovered that people thrive spiritually when living in the trenches of front-line modern missionary work. "Whoever refreshes others will be refreshed" (Prov 11:25). "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

6. Re-reading of the Gospel Commission. Based on Jesus' own omnipotent authority, he entrusted this job description to every disciple. They are

all to make disciples, baptize, and teach others to obey Jesus' commands (Matt 18:19-20). This authority is not based on church policy or permission from a church leader (Adams 2019).

7. Re-empowerment of the laity. When a lay person baptizes someone they have led to Jesus and teaches him or her to obey Jesus' commands, this experience typically ignites a conviction that leads to a more focused and intentional life of spending time with the "least, the last, and the lost" for the purpose of making disciples.

8. Disciple-making toward accountability. Westernized cultures are typically individualistic rather than communal. Disciple-making toward accountability has been challenging. But we have recently had a breakthrough in our ability to disciple people in Western cultures. This discovery is not a simple formula. It is a process that works in the context of relational simple house churches where *being* the church is very different from *doing* church or *going to* church.

Five Challenges

1. Disciple-making takes longer than we expected. This is partly due to low-trust and slow-trust tendencies in Western cultures. And, perhaps, also due to expectations. Apparently, what we have come to expect of disciple-making is a relatively short process of leading a person to accept God's offer of salvation and then be baptized, when what we *should expect* is a disciple-making process of *continued* spiritual, mental, and physical healing; accountability; and dynamic growth (John 8:31). In other words, baptism is not a doctrinal arrival point. It is the beginning of a new life of turning away from all that devalues and destroys, and obeying Jesus as He prepares us to live forever with Him. Therefore, we must anticipate continued growth as part of disciple-making. And it takes time.

2. Multiplication has been difficult but not impossible. In our experience, most Simple Church multiplications happen when part of a CORE team physically moves and plants another Simple Church while the first Simple Church continues in its original location. This seems to indicate that most house church planters maintain a strong commitment to leading a simple house church, but are not inclined to divide an existing one, even for the purpose of multiplication. A friend who typically works with house church planting in non-Westernized countries has been house church planting in the United States for the past five years. He called me and shared, "If we had been doing this in another country for the same period of time, we would have 'accidentally' planted 15 house churches without even trying. Here in the U.S. it is much harder than I had anticipated." Of course, this begs the question, Why is it harder in the U.S.? More on this

topic will be shared in the sections called "The Future of 'Church'" and "The Rise of Disciple-making Movements."

3. Commitment to "the big three" requires blazing a new trail. The commitment of Simple Church to counteracting the effects of "the big three" changes Constantine introduced when he politically married paganism to Christianity has inevitably brought skeptical consideration from both denominational representatives, on the one hand, and house church advocates on the other.

And what are the "big three"? In short: (1) the priesthood of all believers was replaced with professional leadership (pastors, priests, lay pastors, Bible workers); (2) house church gatherings were moved to public church buildings (basilicas, cathedrals, and churches); and (3) while less well-known in Protestant denominations, the seventh-day Sabbath was politically changed to Sunday as the official day of worship (Geiermann 1957), For Constantine, this merger was a masterful stroke of genius. Every pagan priest who wanted to keep his job simply had to become a Christian. With house churches closed, his now-Christian temple experienced standing-room only. Since the lay people were forbidden to baptize, marry, bury, etc., the priest's job was secure. And since the seventh day Sabbath had been officially reassigned to Sunday, his day of worship stayed the same. This was a win-win-win for pagan priests and for Constantine himself, whose popularity benefitted from ostensibly honoring Christianity while practically benefitting paganism. The rest is history.

Even though our commitment to helping people evaluate church tradition in light of biblical truth has created a lonelier journey than we had originally anticipated, we are seeing an increase in the number of people who no longer blindly accept Constantine's "big three." They are digging into their Bibles with a zeal to find truth and live out their allegiance to Jesus and his commands.

4. Consumerism often runs deeper than mission. Over the years, we have learned that church members primarily evaluate the church by what they like. This should never come as a surprise since Western culture trains us to be consumers. Religious consumerism expresses itself in the questions people ask: "Do I like the children's programs?" "Do I like the music?" "Do I get 'fed' by the pastor?" "Do I have friends who are like-minded?" Notice the common denominator: "Do *I* . . .?" Moving from being consumers to "What's in it for me?"—to becoming other-focused servants is one of the greatest obstacles missionaries—in our case, Simple Church missionaries—must overcome.

Ironically, there is hope in a demographic (the "doers") who are leaving their local churches because they *do not* subscribe to consumerism. After valiant attempts to encourage other church members to move from being consumers to being missionaries, they have concluded that their

energies are better spent elsewhere. In short, they are done providing religious content for church members who happily consume week after week. An increasing number of Simple Church planters are repurposed "doers" (Packard and Hope 2015:20-23).

5. Preservation of the institution or the status quo often takes priority over the mission. Over half of the attendance in the Simple Church Global Network is comprised of people who, if they were not attending a house church, would not be within the circle of fellowship and discipleship that is typically called "church." This is a strong measure of missional effectiveness. (See above under "A fully documented 52%"). Even when house churches demonstrate effectiveness in mission, many denominations and denominational leaders are skeptical of them because they are not able to control them, normalize them into existing policy, or guarantee financial gain.

To be fair, there may be no one to fault. It is a typical pattern found in systems development theory in both secular and religious entities. Why? Because built into most systems, is a conflict of interest called "my salary." Institutions hire people to advance the mission or goal of the institution. This is to be expected. But what happens, according to Clay Shirky and others who have studied systems development theory, is that the original mission or goal of the institution takes second place as it is replaced by the new, first-place imperative of institutional preservation (Shirky n.d.). Top-level church leaders, independent of each other, have gently explained to me how the church will talk about creative models of reaching people, but when a model shows promise, it will need to "normalize" into the existing church policies or be ejected from the system.

Four Surprising Discoveries

1. Male initiative and involvement. Most Simple Churches have been started by men who own their own businesses or professionals who work in the medical field. Why? I suspect it has to do with real-life Kingdom risk-taking. In other areas of life, men fight for, defend, or die for a cause they believe in. They take risks and do what it takes to provide for their families. By contrast, Christianity for men in the free world has largely been dumbed down. Typically, they become passive spectators, pay their dues, and occasionally participate in low-risk church activities. Simple Church seems to touch a deep cord in men, giving them the opportunity to make decisions, shape outcomes, and take big and meaningful risks in God's Kingdom work—something worth living and dying for.

2. Cosmetic change and hybridization. As house churches have gained popularity, house church terminology and hybridized models are being adopted by conventional churches at a surface level.

Example #1: Church leaders who oversee several pastors and churches decided to buy homes and hire employees to plant "house churches" in these houses. This is one example of changing surface cosmetics without changing the deeper theological issues.

Example #2: When small groups were popular back in the 1980s and 1990s, mid-week prayer meetings, Sunday school classes, and Sabbath school classes were called and counted as "small groups." In the early 2000s "cell groups" became the new trend. And, as could be expected, small groups were now called "cells." With the rise of house churches, what used to be called "small groups" and "cells" are now called "house churches." But this surface adoption typically does not embrace the underlying theological revolution that re-empowers the laity to do all the work of disciple-making described in the Gospel Commission. Instead, hybridized models continue to (1) maintain the Constantinian laity-clergy divide, (2) preserve denominational control, and (3) feed the central worship service—which is typically referred to as "church."

I suggest that hybridization will eventually result in inoculation against a genuinely effective model of house church evangelism and discipleship for the following reasons. First, I suggest that exposure to the house church paradigm through hybridized models will—eventually—be detrimental to both missionaries and to their mission field. Lay missionaries often rightly see in house churches the hope of an effective missionary model. However, if a hybridized model poses as a house church, but at its core retains a commitment to conventional church values, then they may become disillusioned and conclude, "This looks strangely similar to what we've already tried." In this way they miss out on the usefulness of a truly effective model. On the other hand, spiritual seekers often rightly see in house church the hope of an organic, decentralized, and grass-roots space to experience God. But again, if a hybridized model uses the term house church, but retains the priorities and values listed above, the potential believers may be disappointed and abandon their legitimate quest.

Second, potential house church planters who, although they are open to a new model of mission work, might be deterred by the thought that "this looks strangely similar to what we've already tried." An expanded explanation of this phenomenon is available on the Simple Church Global Network's website (https://www.simplechurchathome.com/additional-resources/).

3. Non-public spaces versus public spaces—the important psychological difference. When a person walks into a grocery store, a doctor's office, a library, a gym, a gas station, a shopping center, or a conventional church, he/she goes in with an expectation to benefit from and consume the goods offered in that public space. We call them medical services, public services, and worship services.

A public space offers a public "service" that I pay for and have a "right" to expect. After receiving the goods and services, I pay a bill, an invoice, a fee, a tax, a voluntary or required tip, or—in the church—tithes and offerings. As much as one may not like this description, it is an underlying expectation associated with public spaces. In contrast, when I walk into a private space—a home—I do not come to consume goods or services. I come to receive a gift of hospitality. I come because I was invited into a personal space. I come because of friendship. And that awareness changes everything.

4. Children and the church. The most surprising discovery of the past 15 years has been how significantly our Simple Church experience has benefited my own three children (now young adults).

There is ample evidence that young people are leaving the church at alarming rates, and concerned adults are grappling with the question, "Why?" Surely, there are many factors. And it would be simplistic to suggest that the house church model completely solves any—much less all—of them. But I offer several observations.

For decades, Sabbath School and Sunday School classes have helped countless children draw close to Jesus. And churches continue to provide programs, classes, activities, and social events designed to keep children connected to the church and to its mission. But children, like adults, are susceptible to the consumerism that has taken Westernized cultures by storm. As "little consumers," children naturally ask, "Do I like it?" "Are my friends there?" "Do I like the teacher?" and "Is there a better option somewhere else?" Understandably, many churches respond by trying to improve the programs, activities, and events; but as they do, it takes only a short leap of child logic to conclude that "church is all about me"—an attitude quite opposite to mission-mindedness.

The same can happen in house churches, of course. A house church model does not fix the consumerism in hearts, but it does create a less consumer-prone church environment in several ways. As already mentioned, hospitality (whether given or received) helps to dispel the consumer mindset. Where there is no compensation for a service, it must be considered a gift. And gift-giving and receiving is the territory of relationships.

The simplicity of worshipping in small groups helps to reset expectations. House churches, with their smaller numbers of people, are unable to plan and staff events for various ages, genders, and special interests. House churches do, however, place a high value on relationships, even among people of widely differing ages, backgrounds, and walks of life.

House churches have no platform, stage, or digital stage. This small difference is significant. While providing a practical way of making a speaker visible to a large congregation, the platform also subtly defines two groups—the presenters/performers and the spectators. Children are

often encouraged to show their support and participation in church by "being up front." Some excel at this, while a large number feel more comfortable being spectators. In my opinion, both experiences fall short of the richness of participation and belonging that can happen in a humble house church circle.

Finally, and most importantly, Simple Churches are missionary endeavors. Without this commitment, I believe the previous characteristics would carry relatively little weight toward keeping children's hearts close to God and his end-time people. When asked what it was about their experiences in Simple Church that had strengthened them, our young adult children mention being "all-in," doing mission as a family, living it as a lifestyle, making personal sacrifices, discovering up-close how desperate is people's need for God, and seeing firsthand how the Gospel changes lives.

Three Unanswered Questions

1. Will a movement work in Westernized cultures? This is the million-dollar question. In 2021 I spent ten days with leaders of No Place Left and 24:14, two Christian vision-sharing communities for the support of disciple-making movements. Those I met with are currently working in the United States, but key leaders among them have spent decades in non-Westernized cultures leading very large movements. During our time together, I asked one key leader whether he thought movements would work in Westernized cultures. His answer was very insightful. He picked up a marker and began to draw a bell curve on the whiteboard. Sectioning off the beginning of the bell curve, he said, "We have been working in the U.S. for only ten years. But if movements can be likened to a bell curve, we have passed the 2.5% innovative phase and are into the early adopters. We have no idea, however, whether we will be able to cross the tipping point and see movements at the scale in Westernized cultures as we have seen in non-Westernized cultures."
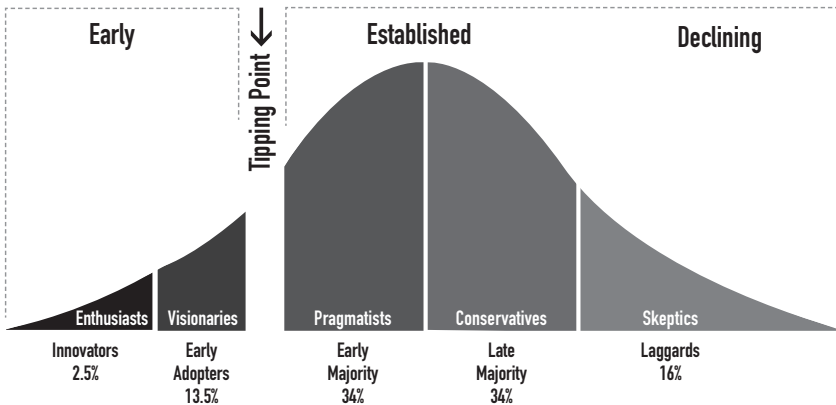
2. Will hybrids between conventional church and house churches work? Much of the drive for hybrids is an attempt to get the best of both worlds without losing institutional control. But hybrids are likely a temporary phase—one in which movement practitioners do not see much promise. Most hybridized models are promoted by conventional church leaders who are trying to harness the growth of movements and place it under the umbrella of institutionalized church structure.

What we are observing is that the spoken and unspoken values, success matrix, and goals between conventional church paradigms and movement paradigms are so different that, although they may appear to work for a time, hybrids do not gain long-term traction.

What will likely develop are dual-operating systems, similar to the parallel and cooperative operations of a business/institution and its skunkworks (Kotter 2014). Unique to these systems is their ability to accomplish the *same mission* without being encumbered by existing policies and expectations—spoken or unspoken. As stated on the Lockheed Martin Skunk Works web page, "Our team of dedicated engineers and scientists assume *it can be done*." (Lockheed Martin Web page). And for those operating under the Great Commission, an even deeper conviction is that *it must be done*. What will it take?

3. When will a movement of primitive godliness begin? Many years ago, I was introduced to this quote,

> Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His word. Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time to prepare a people for the Lord's second coming. The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; *and before the time for such a movement shall come*, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. (White 1911:464, emphasis mine)

From a research perspective, notice what is said and what is not said: First, "among the people of the Lord"—this revival is not limited to a specific denomination. It includes people in any denomination and people outside of a denomination. This synchronizes with the Revelation 14:12 concept of God's people as "saints" (KJV), "people of God" (NIV), "God's holy people" (NLT)—whose only common identity is that they "keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (KJV).

Second, "many will separate themselves from those churches." Any churches. The qualifier is descriptive: "in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His word."

Third, "many . . . will gladly accept those great truths." Notice it does not say people will become members of a denomination or switch denominations. It says, they "will gladly accept those great truths."

Fourth, especially notice the phrase, "*and before the time for such a movement shall come.*" Could it be that God's end-time prophetic grass-roots movement has not happened yet? Could it be the best is yet to come?

Takeaway: As encouraging, challenging, and surprising as the past 15 years have been, with questions for the future still unanswered, we must faithfully press on.

What We Have Learned About the Future of "Church"

If Western Europe is any indicator, the future of "church" *as we currently know it* in the United States is not hopeful. In addition to the church trends mentioned above in What We Have Learned About the Church Attendance Crisis, consider the church-scape painted by these statistics:

First, pre-Covid 83% of churchgoers tell researchers they have never heard of the Great Commission or do not know what the Great Commission is (Barna 2018: para. 3).

Second, pre-Covid the majority of Christians never shared the gospel (Earls 2019: para. 1).

Third, pre-Covid most churchgoers (53%) desired to build relationships with other believers, but not for the purpose of spiritual growth (Earls 2019: first graph).

Fourth, pre-Covid nearly two-thirds of U.S. 18-29-year-olds who grew up in church told Barna they have withdrawn from church involvement as adults after having been active as a child or teen. The void left is being filled with the religion of political activism on the right and left (Barna 2019: para. 1).

Fifth, one-in-three (33%) practicing Christians dropped out of church entirely during Covid-19 (Wang 2022: para. 3).

Some denominations claim they are the fastest growing, and indeed they may be. The fastest growing can also mean the slowest dying. But when one drills down, much of the growth comes from first-and second-generation immigration, which tends to confirm the conclusion that the indigenous Westernized Christian culture is quickly disappearing.

Takeaway: If the conventional church keeps doing what it is doing, we should not expect different outcomes.

What We Have Learned About the Rise of
Disciple-Making Movements (DMMs)

For me, 2017 was a game-changer on two accounts. First, I considered—and reconsidered—a career change. An acquaintance was retiring, and he had encouraged me to apply for his position. Just hours before my phone interview I received an email from a church leader in Australia whom I had met seven years prior but had not been in contact with since. His email was short. It said, "Proverbs 29:18." So, I replied, "Why did you send me this verse?" His response was, "The reason I shared that was I felt inspired that the Lord wanted you to continue with your awesome vision of growing a house church network in the US and ultimately worldwide." This experience became my *burning bush* experience.

Second, 2017 marked the beginning of a four-year study of religious movements. While not exhaustive, it did yield clear insights into the principles undergirding successful movements.

What is the prevailing definition of modern-day disciple-making movements (DMM)? They are fast-growing, indigenous (of the local culture), multiplying groups, made up of obedient followers or disciples of Jesus (DMMs Frontier Missions N.d.: para. 3).

> Practically, this means *if*, within a short space of time (three to five years), we see at least four generations of groups, a significant overall number of groups (between 50 to 100), and a growing number of obedient disciples—There is no exact number, but likely you will see at least 500 baptized—*then*, we can say a Disciple Making Movement, or DMM, has begun. (Former Staff 2018: para. 1)

Beginning with this definition, much of my research was a quest to find the principle-based components by which disciple-making movements have operated or are currently operating. These components do not constitute a formula to manufacture manmade movements. Effectiveness in accomplishing God's work is never by human might, nor by power, nor by advertising, nor by research—but by God's Spirit (Zech 4:6). Only God can start a God-honoring movement. Recognizing this, however, I studied to find principle-based components to use in cooperating with him in his movement.

I discovered four principle-based components:

1. Prayer—a commitment to daily, fervent, old-fashioned prayer as individuals or in prayer groups. *Simple Church application:* We are supported by a global group of prayer volunteers who re-commit every year to pray for Simple Church for 15-30 minutes daily. Every week a group email is sent to highlight specific prayer items and to give updates. To be part of this, email milton@adamsonline.org.

2. Expander Teams—expanders are pioneering missionaries who live on the front edge of the mission most of the time. *Our application:* After 2 years of prayerful study, we recently launched www.ExpanderTeams.com. They meet new people on their turf by going door-to-door or to public spaces, raise up simple house churches, plan and present semi-annual city-wide harvest events, and facilitate weekly/monthly house church mentoring meetings for new believers as they launch new house churches in their neighborhoods. This is a revolutionary employment venture of the Simple Church Global Network. To learn more, visit www.ExpanderTeams.com**.**

3. Sustainer Teams—**sustainer teams are the missionaries (often new believers)** who launch new house churches in their neighborhoods. They are essential for keeping an ever-expanding movement from imploding. Sustainer strengths lie in the day-in-day-out work of coming alongside people for discipleship. *Our application:* Sustainer teams are our CORE teams, which begin and sustain new Simple Church locations. For over 15 years, Simple Church has shown effectiveness in training and coaching sustainers to do all the work of disciple-making in their local house churches. To access the online training, visit www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com.

4. Convocations—there is a long history of God's people gathering for "holy convocations" (Lev 23; Num 28-29). These events of spiritual education and celebration were not to become exclusive (Deut 16:11, 14). In more recent history, during the Second Great Awakening in the United States, camp meetings served a similar purpose as both believers' convocations and outreach events. *Our application:* This year, we launched our first annual Maximize My Home for Mission convention. Nearly one hundred attendees from various faith backgrounds, cultural experiences, and locations across the United States and Canada came to learn how to become more effective missionaries in today's secular culture. Fellowship, networking, learning from each other, mutual encouragement, and inspiration to give Kingdom business our personal best were just a few of the hopes and dreams we had prayed toward in preparation for this convention. And God abundantly answered our prayers.

To subscribe to the Maximize My Home newsletter and be notified of early-bird registration for next year's convention, visit www.MaximizeMyHome .com.

Two last items are worth noting regarding what we have learned about the rise of movements and the implications for a final prophetic movement of people who will keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Rev 14:12).

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DMM DNA and Identity

The DNA of DMMs (Disciple-making Movements) include deep commitment to

> Reading the Word
> Obeying the Word
> > Immediate obedience
> > Radical obedience
> > Costly obedience
> Sharing the Word

Westernized cultures are typically void of religious persecution and therefore fail to understand immediate, radical, and costly obedience. But an extraordinary commitment to obedience forms the DNA of today's DMMs. This means existing movements are poised and ready to allow the truth of God's end-time prophetic story to sweep through them and go "to every nation, tribe, language, and people" (Rev 14:6).

Given certain parts of Christian history, when some Christians hear *obedience*, they think *legalism*. In today's disciple-making movements, obedience is rightly understood to be a love-based response from one who *has been saved*, not a means of *getting saved*. As Jesus says in John 14:15 (NIV), "If you love me, keep my commands." And one chapter later, in John 15:14, "You are my friends if you do what I command." It is all about a loving God who seeks a loving relationship with his followers, characterized by immediate, radical, and costly obedience to his Kingdom governance.

Movement identity is determined by the end vision. Currently, there is a lot of good discussion among those involved in movements regarding end-vision. This is similar, in many ways, to deliberation about mission statements and goals. But an *end-time* end vision must begin with, and ultimately be defined by, an understanding of *God's* end vision.

One of the clearest descriptions of God's end vision is found in the last book of the Bible—Revelation. To set the stage, it is important to begin with chapter 1, verse 1, "The Revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place" (NIV). Whatever we find in this book comes directly from Jesus.

As this prophetic end-time story unfolds, Revelation 14:6 clarifies that its essence is the "everlasting gospel," which is communicated, upon the authority of Jesus' Gospel Commission "to every nation, tribe, language, and people." No one is left out. All people are given an opportunity to understand and choose to be part of God's end-time story.

Those who believe God's prophetic story are *called out* by Jesus' end-time invitation (Rev 18:4, 14:12). God's disciple-making movement is invited to keep and obey the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This *is* their identity as love-motivated disciples of Jesus (John 14:15 and 15:14). And, as disciples, they are commissioned to make more disciples of the same identity—differing, perhaps, in every other way (nation, tribe, language, etc.), yet indistinguishable in their love for and obedience to Jesus.

What are people being invited to? And what keeps them actively engaged in the movement? People are invited to keep the commandments of God and have faith in Jesus, and they are actively engaged in the movement by teaching others to do likewise. As simplistic as these answers may seem, they are biblical and end-time relevant.

Takeaway: The current DNA of modern-day movements uniquely positions millions of people to embrace God's prophetic end-time movement, which is identified by God's end vision. Yet this will likely be neither defined nor confined by church structures as we know them.

Closing Thoughts

As "low trust" in institutionally based systems continues to erode into "no trust," people are voting with their feet. The future for such systems in North America, and eventually in the Global South, will most likely continue to follow the declining Western European church trends.

With the rise of decentralized systems (a few examples being home-schooling, home birthing, open-source software, cryptocurrencies, and crowdsourcing), church leaders must decide how they will respond to house churches. Historically, church leaders have either rejected house churches or cosmetically adopted house churches in a hybridized fashion.

I believe there is a third option that is better for God's Kingdom. It is my prayerful hope that denominational entities will embrace a dual operating system and wholeheartedly recognize the re-empowerment of the laity to fulfill Christ's commission by doing *all* the work of disciple-making.

It is apparent to me that God is empowering an end-time, grassroots, disciple-making movement, neither defined nor confined by church structures as we know them, who are hearing and accepting God's end-time prophetic invitation and counting the cost of radical and immediate obedience.

Indeed, I believe the best is yet to come.

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Milton Adams spent 15 years pastoring churches, primarily in the secular northwest of the United States, before starting the Simple Church Global Network. His award-winning doctoral dissertation from Andrews University focused on the development of this global network, which now serves house churches globally. Milton enjoys working with church leaders around the world and re-empowering missionary-minded believers who love Jesus and want to share the everlasting gospel with the secular and/or unchurched—the 60% (and rising in North America) who most likely will never walk into a conventional church.

Resources from Simple Church:
www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com. A global house church network.
www.ExpanderTeams.com. A revolutionary employment venture of the Simple Church network.
www.MaximizeMyHome.com. A house church convention hosted by the Simple Church network.

CURTIS SERGEANT

Planting Rapidly Reproducing Churches

Introduction

The principles in this article are ones gleaned from experience in planting rapidly reproducing churches in China. They were then tested through training, coaching, and mentoring church planters serving in over one hundred nations, mostly working among unreached people groups. Over the years I have come to the conclusion that it is difficult to make generalizations about evangelism, but it is more appropriate to make generalizations about discipleship and church planting. Evangelism is quite context-specific because half of the process is determined by what an individual believes and understands truth to be. Once someone has given themselves fully to the Lord, the discipleship and church planting processes become almost entirely about what God is calling us to, which deals with the culture of the Kingdom of God rather than the cultures from which we come.

All Disciples Are Involved

The main purpose of life is to glorify the Lord. We can do this best when we know him most intimately and serve him most fervently. It is God's intention for every disciple to be engaged in ministry. Those who are gifted with the five leadership gifts in Ephesians 4:11-12 are to equip those with other gifts to do the work of ministry, which results in the building up of the Body of Christ. Though each believer has a different gifting and a unique calling, everyone is to be engaged in living out the Great Commandment (Matt 22:37-40) and carrying out the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20).

If we are living out the Great Commandment, then we will be making reproducing disciples because part of the disciple-making process is "teaching them to obey everything I [Christ] have commanded" and the Commission itself is one of those commands. Hence, every believer should, by definition, be involved in making reproducing disciples. It is only a short step from this toward starting reproducing spiritual communities (churches) because several of the other commands demand a spiritual community to carry out God's purposes. Reproducing disciples will result in reproducing churches as a matter of obedience.

God is concerned both with what he accomplishes in us in conforming us to the image of Christ, as well as what he accomplishes through us in bringing glory to his name by being a blessing to everyone. We are to bless unbelievers by being a testimony of God's grace and mercy and to bless fellow believers as an encourager, partner, and equipper.

Live a Life Worth Reproducing

Our constant aspiration should be to grow in our character, faith, fruit of the Spirit, and obedience. Such growth in discipleship transforms us into something that is desirable to reproduce. God is not interested in multiplying mediocrity. Hence, one of the first considerations for every disciple to consider as he/she begins such a ministry is to spend time in introspection and if necessary, repentance. We must never become complacent or satisfied with the level of maturity and love and faith to which the Lord has already brought us. We must continually aspire to more fully and completely love the Lord our God with all of our hearts, minds, souls, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. One way we can pursue this is to structure our spiritual communities to provide what I like to call dual accountability. That is, accountability to obey the Lord, and accountability to pass on to others what we have received.

The spiritual economy differs from the earthly economy in that the spiritual economy is based on giving away what one has. God reveals more of himself to us when we are faithful in sharing with others what we already know of him. He gives more insight and revelation to those who are faithful in sharing with others what they already understand. He speaks to us more clearly when we obey what he has already spoken to us.

This means the most loving thing we can do for one another is to hold one another accountable for obeying what we learn from the Lord and to share it with others. This is not a matter of legalism but of love. This is what we must do if we truly want the best for one another—the greatest spiritual blessing and insight, the deepest intimacy with our Father.

From a practical standpoint, this can be carried out in many ways, but the simplest is my favorite. At the end of each time of Bible discussion and prayer, in small groups each disciple spends time expressing to others in the group what the Lord is specifically speaking to him/her about and with whom they plan to have a spiritual discussion about the topic. The person(s) with whom they share might be unbelievers, in which case the conversation might be more pre-evangelistic or evangelistic in nature, or they might be believers in which case the conversation might be more for encouragement or equipping. The next time the group gathers, each person shares how they did in obeying what the Lord had spoken to them and in sharing it with others. In such a setting, the entire group can remain on the same passage or topic until everyone in the group has proven faithful in incorporating specific applications into their own lives and faithful in passing on to others the insights they are gleaning. This keeps every disciple constantly involved in either evangelizing the lost or helping to disciple fellow believers or both.

Rethinking Leadership

Therefore, since ministry is not only for the *mature* but for all of us who follow Christ, all of us are *leaders* in some sense of the word. In the church we tend to think of leaders as those who serve in a role of one or more of the five-fold gifts in Ephesians 4:11-12, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers; or else in terms of the officers of the church, bishops/pastors, elders, or deacons. We tend to have an attitude that leaders in the church must be mature believers. This view is fine as long as we remember that is one type of leadership. In another sense, God has given each individual a sphere of influence. A poor, illiterate housewife in the developing world can be a *leader* for her children and neighbors. This type of *leadership* needs greater emphasis in the Kingdom of God today.

I like to think of this type of leadership in terms of the metaphor of a mother duck leading her ducklings. As they walk or swim single file, only the first duckling is following the mother duck. Each of the other ducklings is following the one preceding them in line. In order to lead a duckling like this, one does not have to be a mature duck, just one step ahead of another duckling. In this metaphor, it is important to realize there is only one Leader of leaders—Jesus. All the rest of us are simply ducklings. None of us is totally mature (to the fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ). We are all "in process." This does not excuse us from the responsibility to lead those whom we can, however. We still have the responsibility to steward whatever leadership opportunities God has given us.

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Helping Shape New Converts

The process of establishing a pattern of dual accountability and involving each disciple in leadership begins with immediately guiding new converts to evangelize their own friends and family. As soon as someone decides to repent and follow Jesus, I like to tell them, "It is a great blessing to bring others into a relationship with Jesus. It is a greater blessing to start a new spiritual community. It is the greatest blessing to equip others to start new spiritual communities. Right now, I want to help you have blessing, greater blessing, and the greatest blessing."

At that point I ask them to make a list of one hundred people with whom they need to share the good news about Jesus. I ask them to select five to share with immediately. I then teach them some contextually appropriate way to share the gospel and have them practice five times, each time envisioning they are sharing with one of the five people on their list. I do the same thing in helping them prepare to share their testimony and practicing it. This process takes at least two hours but is well worth the time invested. When I finish, I set a time for them to meet back with me and send them out to share their faith. I instruct them to follow the same process I followed with them should any of the five people they share with decide to follow the Lord. Frequently one or more people come to the Lord as a result and sometimes a new spiritual community (church) is born very quickly.

When I meet back with them, I model the dual accountability model and if they have not shared with five people and followed up with any who responded positively, then we go over the same material again and make sure they have all the preparation they need. This sets up a pattern for their spiritual lives. More responsibility and leadership are given to those who have been faithful in the small elements of responsibility they have already practiced. Small increments are important in this respect. This approach is most easily practiced in a small group setting so if you are part of a larger church then you should offer such accountability structures as a subset of the large group meetings.

Self-Feeding

Every new disciple must also be equipped to be spiritually self-feeding in at least four aspects: Scripture, prayer, church life, and persecution and suffering. These are some of the primary ways God grows and matures us.

In terms of being able to interpret and apply Scripture, this can most easily be done by teaching a series of questions that can be applied in any Scripture study. Generally, this will include questions of observation,

interpretation, and application. There are a number of sets of questions that can be used in this way, depending on the age or education level and the level of spiritual sophistication of the believers. The point is that after reading or hearing a passage of Scripture every believer should be able to tell what it says, what it means, and the implications it has for his/her life. Clearly someone's ability to do this and the depth at which they do it will increase over time, but the point is to establish a pattern for how they view and respond to Scripture.

Prayer is another key tool God uses to grow us into the likeness of Christ. Through prayer we speak to the Lord, hear from his heart and mind, minister to both believers and unbelievers, and more. Prayer is a teaching tool. It is an evangelism tool. In fact, praying for unbelievers in their presence can be one of the most powerful evangelistic tools that exists. It is often under-utilized. The best way to teach prayer to a new convert is by example reinforced by studying what the Bible says about prayer.

The church is not only a spiritual community but also serves as the Body of Christ. In Ephesians 4, 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and 1 Peter 4 the Bible expresses how we as members of the Body of Christ have differing gifts and abilities that are to function together in a coordinated fashion in order to build up the Body and bring it to maturity. Thus, for both individual and corporate growth and maturity we must understand how this works and participate in it. This idea is supplemented by numerous "one another" passages in the New Testament. More than fifty times we are told in Scripture to do something for one another in the Body. We need each other in order to grow.

Persecution and suffering are also venues for spiritual growth and development. The Bible tells us that all who desire to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (2 Tim 3:12). We know that we have an enemy who will also oppose us in many ways as we follow the Lord. New believers need to understand how God works to perfect our character, prove our faith, equip us for ministry, and provide a testimony for him through persecution and suffering. Being aware of this before it happens can help fend off discouragement and help us to be intentional about taking advantage of these opportunities rather than wasting them or responding to them inappropriately.

If a believer understands and can apply these basic opportunities for growth along with the pattern of dual accountability we implement, then they can initiate an entire movement of new churches if, for some reason, they are separated from their spiritual community. They have the power of the Holy Spirit and access to Scripture along with these basic skills to move them toward maturity and equip them to bring others along. There is no way to stop such a movement.

Training Cycle

As believers increase in their competence in these areas it is important to help them understand the phases of the training cycle so they know when and how to transition from modeling, to assisting, to watching, to leaving as they initiate work with new believers or new churches. This is a natural process by which they can help others grow into maturity both individually and corporately.

I like to compare this process to teaching a child to ride a bicycle. Though we rarely think about it, the first step in a child learning to ride a bicycle is seeing someone else ride one. This only takes a moment. The purpose is to create awareness. In making disciples or planting churches this can be an extremely quick process as well. It does not matter how good the model is, simply modeling will never train someone else to ride a bicycle. The learner must get on the seat and begin to pedal for themselves. This brings us to the second stage.

We need to begin to assist the beginner right away. This means the learner is on the seat and we are holding them up. They cannot do it without us, but from the first moments we are trying to reduce their dependence on us. As soon as we believe they have a chance of maintaining their own balance and momentum, we release them. We must be willing to let them fall as in learning it will happen repeatedly. We must not let our fear of them falling prevent us from letting go, however. That is part of the learning process. This stage of learning lasts a bit longer than the modeling stage, but it should still be kept as short as possible. I like to think in terms of getting through this stage in about three months in a church planting setting. During that time I *shadow mentor*, modeling with the natural leaders (alone) in the new church what they should do when the entire group meets together. During this period I am covering the self-feeding skills mentioned earlier.

After assisting, it is time to enter the observation stage. This is a much longer phase, often taking many years. It is carried out at arm's length, however, and is much more occasional in nature. One person can observe multiple churches at the same time. When someone learns to ride a bicycle, they must be able to mount, dismount, steer, brake, understand the rules of the road, and know when and where it is safe to ride. These skills take some time to learn. It is not safe to let a child ride on his/her own until these skills are mastered. In the New Testament we see the apostle Paul use this cycle. He would model and assist with new churches on his missionary journeys. This was a very brief process in all the churches except for Corinth (eighteen months) and Ephesus (three years). The observation stage, however, lasted for many years. He would come for repeat visits, send coworkers to check on things, write letters, etc. He needed to be sure the churches were practicing and passing on what they had received.

Once the basic skills are learned, it is time for the mentor to exit. It is not only embarrassing but also inconvenient and impractical for a teacher to always be present in order for someone to ride a bicycle. The same is true spiritually. As soon as possible, new believers and new churches should be at the point of being producers rather than merely consumers. Spiritual reproduction should be happening and, in fact, is one good indicator that it is time to consider moving to the next phase. Model for the first generation, assist while they model for the second generation, watch for the third generation and if the other indicators look good, then it is time to leave. We see Paul formally leave the Ephesian church in Acts 20:17-38. It is a touching scene that demonstrates when leaving becomes appropriate and not irresponsible.

Entering New Communities

New disciples and new churches also need to grow in their ability to *see where the church is not*. This is where they can begin to understand how to cross cultures and other boundaries in order to "make disciples of all nations (peoples)." I like to use maps with known churches indicated with pushpins. This can begin to sensitize people to geographic gaps. Very soon I will also begin to introduce concepts of gaps in terms of language, socioeconomic levels, education levels, ethnicity, and so on. This helps new believers begin to look for opportunities to reach out to the people and places in the greatest spiritual darkness.

It is important to model biblical approaches in ministry as well as to teach them. For example, people need to understand how to look for and identify a "person of peace" as they enter new communities. This term comes from Matthew 10 and Luke 10 when Jesus is giving instructions to his disciples. Essentially, a person of peace is someone who is responsive and has a circle of influence and will open the door to that circle. Of course, a person of peace can sometimes be a woman. Going in need of help and assistance can often uncover a person of peace as they offer assistance. One of my favorite ways of locating such a person is to begin a spiritual conversation. If someone indicates interest, rather than simply continuing to talk with them I will inquire as to whether or not they know of others who might be interested in discussing such matters. If they do, I ask if they would be willing to gather them. If they are willing, the chances are quite strong I have found a person of peace.

There are practical advantages to finding a person of peace. First, it is more effective to group unbelievers and win them rather than win individual converts and then group them. The new spiritual communities which are formed tend to be more durable and resilient, tend to function more smoothly and have higher trust levels, and tend to mature more quickly. If

we are not sure whether we have found a person of peace, we should still see if we can assist a new convert or seeker to establish a new church from among their own network of relationships rather than automatically adding them to an existing church. This can be done naturally when we have them begin sharing their new faith with their list of one hundred people who need to know the Lord. The pattern which was used in Acts and still works well today is that new converts are gathered into new spiritual communities with new leaders raised from among them. Our natural tendency is to add new converts to existing churches, which results in a hindrance with regards to multiplication of disciples and churches.

Conclusion

When basic elements such as those mentioned in this article are combined, God frequently moves in remarkable ways and the resulting disciples and churches seem to be especially fruitful and more resistant to false teaching. Also, you will often see a supernatural impetus to take the gospel where it has not gone, and therefore unengaged people groups around the new churches quickly gain access to the gospel. The pattern of involving every disciple to live out and share their faith, be involved in leading others is key. We can do this with new converts through helping them learn to feed themselves spiritually in a developmental way through using the training cycle. This can be done in such a way that the disciples do this beyond their own community and relationships. These simple and biblical principles can go a long way towards helping you equip new believers to become catalysts in planting rapidly reproducing new churches.

This was first published in *Mission Frontiers* in 2017 https://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/planting-rapidly-reproducing-churches.

Curtis Sergeant served with the International Mission Board (IMB) among an unreached people group (UPG) in China. After a movement started there, he began conducting training for the house-church networks in China and for others around the world in how to do the same. Later he served as a VP for Global Strategy with the IMB. Then he went to Saddleback Church and helped catalyze a large-scale church planting project in India that engaged nearly a hundred UPGs. He then served at e3 Partners as the International VP. Now he runs a disciple-making and missions training center called MetaCamp in Dadeville, Alabama (metacamp.org). He is also a co-facilitator of the 24:14 coalition (2414now.net), and founded the Zúme project (zume.training). If you would like to learn more, you can get a free copy of *The Only One* as an ebook or an audio book at https://TheOnlyOneBook.com. There is also free introductory training in more than 40 languages at https://Zume.Training.

PETER ROENNFELDT

The Importance of Discovery Bible Reading in Households of Faith

Discovery Bible Reading is a simple, reproducible process that fosters discipleship: disciple-making, spiritual growth, maturity, and biblical literacy. It is innovative, non-threatening and easy to use, with in-built protection against heresies and conspiracies. Pastors and leaders cultivating multiplying missional communities are enthusiastic about it, and it is increasingly seen as a feature of worship in *households of faith*.

"Literally anyone can do it," Eunice Winship, who facilitates a *household of faith* in her home each Sabbath, explains. "It is really effective when introducing Jesus to those who have never read the Bible, as well as for people of other faiths, our children, young people, and mature believers."

"It is truly amazing," Eunice adds. "My husband—who has not been a regular church attender over the years, and two others new to faith, are leading out in Discovery Bible Reading." Participants are meeting Jesus and growing in their relationship with him. "It is a beautiful thing," she says. "Questions are raised, challenges and struggles are discussed, and our lives are being changed."

Dale Stephenson, senior pastor of Crossway, Australia's largest Baptist multi-campus church with eight campuses, sees the "Bible Discovery Method" (as he calls it) as the way to unstick "the point of paralysis" in churches—where participation in mission is reduced to "just being able to invite someone to something." "No books (are) involved except the Bible, and you discover things together," Stephenson explains—emphasizing that "making disciples should be so simple that anyone, anywhere, anytime, can do it" (in Green 2023).

Where to Start?

Very few know much about Jesus today, and most are wary of church and being preached at. However, if you have a relational connection, and you invite a friend to your *household of faith*—explaining that you simply read through Bible books—you may be pleasantly surprised at who will accept your invitation.

If you are wanting to start a new Discovery Bible Reading group, with a view of launching a new *household of faith*, first identify *persons of peace*. Jesus used this type of language when sending out the 72 to multiply disciples (see Luke 10:1-9). Persons of peace are hospitable and willingly engage in conversation.

Jesus spoke of how to connect in all cultural and social environment with these key people. First, he said, *eat* their food—and listen to their stories. It starts with food—eating their food and listening to their challenges and brokenness. Second, *heal*, encourage, and support them—sharing that God is deeply interested in them. And thirdly, *tell them* God's kingdom and presence "is near" (Luke 10:8, 9).

These steps—taking time to eat and listen; healing and encouraging them; and sharing God's care for them—will reveal where God is already actively at work, and you can then join him "in the work he is already doing by inviting that *person of peace* to read the Bible with you" (Stephenson in Green 2023).

We have learned that Mark's gospel is a good place to start. It is the shortest gospel, easy to read and interesting, and a great introduction to Jesus for friends and colleagues who have little biblical knowledge or background.

After Mark, you could go to John's Gospel for an introduction to all the essential ideas of the Christian faith, and then Acts—the inspiring account of the early believers empowered by the Holy Spirit, multiplying disciples and churches to fulfil God's mission. These three—Mark, John, and Acts—are available as an attractive compilation entitled *Discover Jesus* (see Signs Publishing Company).

There are 66 Bible books to explore, so there is no need for reading guides. Just read the Bible. When about to start a new Bible book, one in the group could research the background to that book—who wrote it, when and why?—and share a short introduction. A great resource for this is the *Filament Bible* app, which provides a historical background, and a wide range of maps, videos, devotional and study material.

How Does It Work?

Some will have a favourite Bible, and a variety of translations enriches discussion. However, introduce those new to Bible reading to an easy-to-read translation[1]—either paper or downloaded onto smart devices. Also, have a supply of Discovery Bible Reading bookmarks outlining the process—available free in a variety of languages and styles from www.following-Jesus.com, with some designed specifically for children.[2]

The process is simple—integrated into the time set aside for sharing, listening to music, singing, and stories for children, food, fellowship, giving and serving—with the Lord's Supper or Agape meal a regular, perhaps even weekly, feature of eating together.

Discovery Bible Reading Process

1. Read each Bible book from beginning to end—the way they were written to be read. While this process can be used to explore any verse, passage or chapter, its impact is greatest when each book or letter as a complete whole is read.

2. Start with a simple prayer. If our prayers are too complicated, we *teach* people not to pray for fear they will not use the right words. On the bookmark, we have this prayer: *Dear God, please guide us. Thank you.*

3. Start at the beginning of the Bible book and read one section or story at a time. If the section is very short, it is better to read two sections.

4. Read the section twice—reading from beginning to end—with another retelling the story in their own words. Never read one-verse-at-a-time around the circle, and the one retelling does not explain the passage but simply recalls it. In this way all those in the group, including those new to Bible reading, become familiar with the story. A child might be one reader, with an adult the other. This creates a basis for shared conversations.

5. In *Discovery Bible Reading* we then discuss the scripture, using the same five discussion questions each time.

Five Discussion Questions

1. What is new to us?
2. What surprises us?
3. What do we not understand?
4. What will we each apply or obey this week?
5. Who will we share with, and what will we share, this week?

These are very direct questions to which all, including unchurched people, can relate easily. At first some church people may feel these questions are not spiritual, but most quickly find that these non-religious questions lead to very deep discussions.

> The "Bible Discovery Method" follows a similar process. "You read a short passage . . . a couple of times out loud. Then," Stephenson explains, "you retell the passage from memory collectively and ask, 'What stands out for you?'" Also, it is "important to provide an appropriately calibrated challenge such as, 'What could we do differently in our lives with what we've discovered today?'" (Green 2023)

Another tool that can help is to give each person a *Discovery Bible Reading* bookmark and encourage different ones to ask the questions each time. In this way, each one also learns to share faith.

It is important to respect the time constraints agreed by all in the *household of faith*. Usually, 20-30 minutes works well, but the time needs to be agreed upon. The time can also include *conversational prayer*, perhaps closing with the prayer on the bookmark: *Dear God, thank you for your Word. Help us to follow you. Amen.*

Strengths of Discovery Bible Reading

Discovery Bible Reading allows the Holy Spirit to be our teacher. Your friends will experience what Jesus is really like, become believers in the fellowship of a small supportive faith community, and be able to share with others using this same simple process.

Discovery Bible Reading cultivates theological thinking. This was a strength of New Testament churches. Let me explain. Early believers were devoted "to the apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:42), the two historic realities of faith: (1) Calvary—Jesus came in the flesh, died for our sins, and rose from the grave; and (2) Pentecost—Jesus ascended, is at the Father's right hand, but present by his Holy Spirit and returning in glory. Every aspect of life, and all biblical stories and prophecies, were seen through these truths. This is theological thinking—and is what *households of faith* do in Discovery Bible Reading.

Discovery Bible Reading fosters spiritual growth and biblical literacy. Participants are not spectators, just listening—but actively engaged in growing in their understanding of God. Rather than disconnected verses, perhaps on a screen, all have their Bibles open—reading Bible books in context. Even for church attenders, this can be new. Unlike brief social media messages, they engage deeply with God's Word.

Discovery Bible Reading encourages participation. Like physical exercise, participation strengthens and sharpens our experience with God by refreshing and revitalizing our relationship with him. Inviting friends who are not yet followers of Jesus is a vital component of this journey—and all will be able to participate. Sharing faith is essential for our spiritual health.

Discovery Bible Reading equips disciple-makers. This is Bible *reading* rather than *study*, which implies a teacher with the answers. It is simple, natural, and reproducible; literally, anyone-can-do-it at no cost. Each time it is used in your *household of faith*, all involved are being equipped to use it with their friends.

Discovery Bible Reading allows for questions to go unanswered. No one has answers to all questions, and nor does the Bible. If there is something that is not understood, we do not argue or conjecture. A fear of questions for which there is no answers, inhibits many from sharing their faith. But simply thank each other for their insights—and the best answer is always, "Let's keep reading."

Discovery Bible Reading facilitates the use of spiritual giftedness. When Jesus ascended, he gave gifts to his church. In each *household of faith* these will be apostles (those more specifically sent to initiate new groups, church plants and multiplication), prophets (with spiritual discernment), evangelists, pastors (or shepherds) and teachers. These equip and build each other up for God's work, cultivating unity and maturity "in the Lord" (Eph 4:7-13).

The apostle Paul emphasized that participation protects a church from immaturity, from being "tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching" and being "influenced" by those who "try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth" (Eph 4:14-16). Discovery Bible Reading creates an environment for conversations, growth, and participation—providing protection from heresy and conspiracies.

Learning from the Past

The Great Awakening and Great Advent Revivals of the 18th and 19th centuries were some of the most significant since New Testament times. The "keystone" for the Methodist movement was a simple process of weekly Bible reading, prayer, and fellowship that John Wesley called "class meetings"—led by people in their communities, using standard discussion questions all could follow (Bevins 2019:104, 105).

Sadly, denominations birthed during that time, and in the subsequent charismatic movements of the 20th century—in the broad category of what could be called evangelical-type churches—have been easy targets for a rash of conspiracy theories. Why is this so?

It is worth reflecting upon several possible reasons:

First, the revivals that birthed these churches were largely anti-intellectual and anti-scientific, fostering a spirit of individualism (distrust of others); immediacy (past faith is suspect so choose now); dogmatism (a convincing simplicity), and anti-traditionalism (they are of *Babylon*) (Noll 1994:59-64). These tend to isolate people from others of faith, leaving the unscrupulous to promote conspiracies—to gain adherents and their money.

Second, fascination with speculative end-time scenarios such as Dispensationalism, the Secret Rapture, and the idea that Israel with America would figure large in these events, leaves a church vulnerable to grasping the next exciting theory.

To start with, a careful progression of Bible reading was fostered. For example, Adventists—from the Great Advent Revival—found within the flow of the end-time messages of Revelation 14:6-13 a frame for a comprehensive six-stage evangelistic approach.

1. The context and interests of those receiving the messages were considered. Then, the priorities were:
2. The good news or "eternal gospel" of Jesus (verse 6).
3. Practical Christian living—how to "fear God," pray and read his Word (verse 7).
4. Distinctive teachings, including judgment and worship (verse 7).
5. Then, prophetic warnings of attacks upon God's people (verses 8-11).
6. With the call to faithful obedience and disciple making (verses 12, 13) (Roennfeldt 2015:24-27).

However, over time this comprehensive message has been truncated, producing an abbreviated message of judgment and law with undue attention upon the trinity of evil—dragon, beast, and false prophet. Such a narrow focus then becomes a platform for every possible apocalyptic twist and turn, and every conceivable conspiracy.

Third, an evangelistic method that unduly emphasized *new secret information* that others do not have or know, along with a demand for results, cultivates an environment where conspiracy theories flourish.

In the New England States—where in the 19th century all attended weekly worship services, Bible classes, and prayer meetings—the questions that shaped evangelism were, "What message would be most effective? What do people most want to hear? What can we say that will both convert the people and draw them to our particular church?" (Noll 1994:67).

As the decades pass, this individualistic revivalism that is suspicious of others, has a fascination with speculative end-time scenarios and an evangelistic approach largely obsessed with information others do not have, creates a breeding ground for every heresy and conspiracy imaginable.

Couple this with a void of biblical literacy, knowledge, understanding or experience with Jesus—with the 24-hour social media and video messaging, but very little Bible reading—and the warning lights should be flashing, with sirens blaring.

Read Your Bible Again

When visiting a friend of many years, he excitedly told me of the latest news feeds, asking: "Have you heard of what the Pope is doing? Are you aware of his latest secret decrees? Have you seen . . . ?"

My friend was unaware that each time he showed an interest, the internet served him even more startling and dramatic *secret information*. Social media algorisms create what you might call an echo chamber, that is a place where you receive information that reinforces what you have shown an interest in and want to hear again . . . and again . . . and again. He was an easy target for the latest conspiracy theories.

When he paused, I suggested, "Perhaps it would be good to simply close your tablet and open the gospels. Why not stop, and start reading the story of Jesus again?" His wife breathed a sigh of relief, responding, "Now, that would be a good idea!"

In your households of faith, it is important not to be hijacked into following one person's hobbyhorse. Avoid a diet of YouTube videos featuring a particular speaker claiming access to secret information about end-time events. Remember, heresies come from bad preaching, not from Bible reading, so keep reading—following the theme of each Bible book.

For more in depth Bible teaching and the study of complex themes, including the prophetic chapters of Daniel and Revelation, invite your pastor to teach for a few weeks, or request that your pastor recommend a good Bible teacher to share a short series of seminars—but then get back to Discovery Bible Reading.

Discovery Bible Reading provides an environment for the Holy Spirit to work in households of faith, generating theological thinking, spiritual growth, and biblical literacy. It encourages participation, equips, and releases disciple-makers for God's mission, facilitates the use of spiritual gifts for Christian maturity, and protects against heresies and conspiracy theories. It introduces new people to Jesus and encourages believers to be faithful to the inspired Word of God and the testimony of the apostles.

Tell others of this Bible reading plan. Invite others to join your household of faith. Give each person a bookmark and encourage them to form other groups—multiplying Discovery Bible Reading groups and households of faith.

Church at Home

Households of faith are not the only way to think of church. However, the "two or three" gathered in Jesus' name is the basic unit of church and unless church is built and multiplied at this level—upon Jesus as the foundation "rock," using the gospel "keys" to unlock God's kingdom to our families, friends, and communities—it cannot fulfil its purpose of accomplishing God's mission.

The increased interest today in churches at home—whatever the reason—presents the whole Christian church with significant opportunities. Mission agency and denominational directors, together with local church ministers, pastors, and leaders, need to be on the front foot—enthusiastically engaging with and multiplying households of faith. This time the idea of church at home might not just be an aberration or passing fad—but a return to an essential frame for mission, for the gospel to go to all.

Some Discussion Questions

1. Who could you team up with to start a Discovery Bible Reading group?
2. Read *If You Can Eat . . . You Can Make Disciples* and then discuss it as a team?
3. Using the three-step process Jesus outlined in Luke 10:8-9, who could you connect with to begin a Discovery Bible Reading group?
4. How could your household of faith use the Discovery Bible Reading process?

Endnotes

[1] Peter Roennfeldt, *Enjoy the Living Word*, Signs Publishing, 2021, for an overview of inspiration, manuscripts, how the Bible books were chosen, and the story of translation.
[2] Download free *Discovery Bible Reading* bookmarks from https://www.following -jesus.com/resources/.

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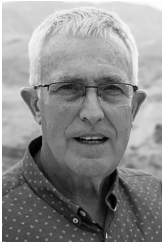
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MONTE SAHLIN

How Should the Adventist Denomination Deal with the House Church Trend?

Millions of Americans have abandoned the conventional structure of religion—the congregation or parish and denomination—for small, informal groups that meet for prayer, Bible study, and fellowship in homes or other temporary locations. A similar pattern is underway in Europe, and there is evidence that it is beginning in urban areas in Latin America and Africa. In fact, it has been a primary form of Christian faith in China, India, and the Middle East for some time and this includes Adventist missions.

Survey research suggests that one in five American adults attends a house church at least once a month. "An increasing number of Americans are moving from First Baptist on Main Street to living-room congregations," said an American Baptist Press news release published July 5, 2006 (ABPNEWS 2006).

National surveys conducted in 2006 in the U.S. by the Barna Group with a random sample of 2,008 interviews (with a margin of sampling error plus or minus two percentage points at the 95% confidence level) found that more than 20 million adults attended services in house churches each week and as many as 43 million attended once a month (Barna Group 2006).

In these surveys, a house church was described as "a group of believers that meets regularly in a home or place other than a church building. These groups are not part of a typical church; they meet independently, are self-governed and consider themselves to be a complete church on their own" (Barna Group 2006).

The survey found that 93% have spoken prayer during their meetings, 90% read from the Bible, 89% spend time serving people outside of their group, 87% devote time to sharing personal needs or experiences, 85%

spend time eating and talking before or after the meeting, 76% have a formal teaching time, 70% incorporate music or singing, 52% take an offering from participants that is given to organized ministries and 51% share communion (Barna Group 2007).

Ed Stetzer from Lifeway Research found a similar response. When asking if a group of 20 people or less praying and studying the Bible was a respondent's primary form of spiritual gathering, he reports that "26.3% of the 3,600 Americans who were asked that question indicated that they did so as their primary form of spiritual or religious gathering." Stetzer cross-tabulated those respondents who indicated that they also attended a larger church gathering regularly and concluded that somewhere between 1.4% and 6% of the American population is part of a house church of some kind. That is somewhere between 4,300,000 and 18,420,000 American adults (Stetzer 2009).

This trend in North America and Europe is driven largely by new generations who do not see why it is important for local groups of believers to spend so much time and resources on owning and maintaining property, hiring employees, and the organizational activities related to these non-spiritual functions. Even if the bulk of these operations are shifted to denominational units, they still require support from volunteer local groups. New generations today would rather keep things simple so that their spiritual fellowship centers entirely on the core elements; prayer, Bible study, friendship, and occasional projects that demonstrate Christ's compassion and grace. They are uncomfortable with the conventional form of religion, not its spiritual content.

The Seventh-day Adventist denomination cannot escape this reality. It is in many ways parallel to the emphasis on lay witnessing and ministry that has long been emphasized by the denomination, and it has specific similarities in many stories from denominational history. In fact, one of the most important strategic questions for the denomination at this point in history is, can this development in contemporary culture provide an opportunity to reach new generations and large numbers of people who are not responding to established methods? Is this trend really an opportunity opened for Christ's mission by the Holy Spirit?

From the perspective of denominational leaders who have given their lives to the mission and corporate health of the Seventh-day Adventist Church this trend creates certain problems. Do these problems make it impossible to respond to this strategic opportunity? Are the risks involved prohibitive?

1. The problem of liability: If a small group of people meet in a home on Sabbaths and engages in prayer, fellowship, and Bible study does that make the denomination liable for any eventuality that might result in the group?

Of course not. Groups of people gather on Sabbath for spiritual activities all the time. This has always been true. There is no legal precedent for one of these informal groups to be assigned to the liability of the denomination even if Seventh-day Adventist church members are involved in the group. The denomination does not and cannot control all the informal personal activities of church members. It cannot be held liable for these informal, personal activities because such control is an impossibility and very probably illegal in a free country like the United States.

The issue is really about control, and it is precisely the urge for control that is being rejected by new generations in the current cultural context. Organized religion is in decline in North America and Europe precisely because new generations (as well as sizable slices of older generations) are unwilling for their spiritual lives to be controlled by institutionalized structures. They see spiritual fellowship and discussion as entirely in the personal sphere.

If it is necessary to reach new generations with this sense of religion as highly personal by encouraging informal activities by believers, are we willing to take that risk? Or is it more important to try to maintain some kind of control over lay activities?

Is there any real risk in the arena of informal small group activities? Is there any real legal basis for liability for the denomination if the participants in these activities operate in terms of the personal and informal? Is there a greater basis for concern that defensive attitudes on the part of institutional structures will become a barrier to the mission of Christ in our contemporary cultural context, in reaching new generations?

2. The handling of tithe: Will small house churches handle donations of tithe and other offerings in a way that honors denominational policy and the intentions of the donors? There have been several years of experimentation in a number of local conferences in the North American Division that have proven to provide ways in which small, informal house churches send tithe to the conference. The fact that the conference does not pay for leadership personnel in these groups has not proven to be any more reason for participants to object to sending tithe to the conference than it is among members of conventional congregations with denominational employees on their pastoral staff.

There is a concern among today's younger generations that too much of the funding given to the denomination is consumed by essentially bureaucratic activities, but this concern has been around for a long time and to assign it specifically to the house church concept is simply not fair or realistic. And there is ample opportunity with the communication tools available today through the Internet to address these concerns and seek support for the many important ministries which the denomination

funds. The direct giving system that the denomination has had in place for several years provides a way for donors to make sure that their giving goes where it is intended. The experiments with informal house churches that are already in place among Adventists have demonstrated that this approach to church is no more likely to be a problem in terms of support for the Tithe Fund than are the attitudes of some members of conventional congregations that have been in place for nearly a century.

3. *The doctrinal integrity of baptism:* There is the temptation for small, informal groups to baptize individuals in an informal setting without assuring that they are recorded as members of the denomination or that they recognize that they are joining the larger structure of the denomination. Experiments with the informal house church as an approach to mission have shown that this is, in fact, no greater problem than it has been for many decades among conventional congregations and established church structures. It is a well-known reality among denominational administrators that evangelists sometimes baptize individuals who are not officially entered on the denomination's membership records. Some of these situations have to do with individuals who have an objection to membership in a denomination, and many of these individuals later choose to regularize their membership while some do not. It has not proven to be a major barrier to the success of public evangelism as it is conventionally implemented. The recent experiments with informal house churches have not revealed any greater likelihood of a problem.

It is also true that in frontier missions over the past century or more there have always been a segment of the converts who are not comfortable with joining the denomination at the time of their baptism. This has never been a barrier to the ongoing Adventist mission or the use of methods and approaches that best fit particular cultural contexts. Is it really fair to use this reality as a reason to block an approach that appears to provide the most effective way to reach new generations in the cultural context of today?

4. *A dual operating system cannot be in parallel; it must be under the authority of the existing denominational system.* In fact, long ago the Seventh-day Adventist denomination found an approach to this issue called "ASI." So-called "self-supporting" missionary activities have long existed and have been acceptable to the denomination so long as they were supportive of the denomination. The same kind of solution exists for the new phenomena of informal house churches through the Simple Church organization.

Many of the people who prefer an informal house church may be uncomfortable with personally recognizing the "authority" of a denomination. This is also not an unfamiliar situation for Adventists considering all the years we have pointed out the unbiblical authority assumed by

the papacy and other episcopal entities. Do we want to make a barrier for reaching new generations out of an attitude of preference for faith outside of authoritative structures? Is there really something wrong with making room for people who prefer not to be under the "authority" of any religious structure? So long as these informal house churches are not institutionalized structures, do not own and operate business enterprises and nonprofit institutions is there really any conflict with the denomination?

Is it possible that we can make institutionalized religious structure like that of denominational organizations and policies into a kind of idol if we allow them to become barriers to the mission of Christ simply because of changing cultural contexts? By asking this question I do not want to be read as disrespectful of denominational leadership. I spent much of my career as a denominational employee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in jobs in local conferences, union conferences, and the North American Division of the General Conference. I know personally that many of us labor in these roles with a strong personal commitment to advancing the mission of Jesus Christ in the world.

Nonetheless, we have come to a point in history where negative attitudes toward institutionalized, bureaucratic structures are widespread and growing. It should not be surprising that some people want their personal faith and spiritual life to exist outside of such structures. And it should not be surprising that some of these people are attracted to the Adventist message. Is it not possible that the informal house church provides a place for us to evangelize them, disciple them, and support their mission to others with similar attitudes?

Will we miss an opportunity opened by the Holy Spirit if we ignore the house church phenomenon? German missiologist Wolfgang Simson has published a global status report on house churches, and he sees them as "the fastest growing expression of Christ-followers on the planet." He points out that house churches like we read about in Acts have been present throughout church history, and these groups have often been sidelined and even persecuted by the larger and more powerful church structures (2009).

Many Adventists involved in missions in Europe and North America, as well as elsewhere in urban contexts have felt, in recent years, that the cultural context is more and more difficult. There seems to be growing resistance, growing barriers to the way we have implemented evangelism and church planting. If the informal house church offers a tool for progress in the contemporary cultural context is there really any good reason to ignore it or prohibit it? Should we not welcome it as a solution to current barriers to Christ's mission among secular, urban people?

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KOBERSON LANGHU

The Challenges Faced by Seventh-day Adventists in Communicating the Gospel During the Last 50 Years of British India

Introduction

Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) missionaries brought Adventism to British India in the 1890s. The first five decades of the fledgling denomination coincided with the last five decades of the British rule in the country. During this period, a series of national and international events unfolded which impacted the operation of Seventh-day Adventists missionary work.

Adventists had to face the increasingly hostile and volatile Indian national freedom movement that in some places tended to boycott anything foreign including the Christian faith. The imminent political freedom also meant that missionaries had to make important decisions for the survival of the church in future India. They had to maneuver through the impact of the First World War, the Great Depression, and the Second World War. Then, there were other equally daunting challenges such as language barriers, culture, climate, disease, antagonism from other religions, and finance.

This article highlights the various challenges faced by Seventh-day Adventists as they sought to communicate the gospel and establish their roots in a Hindu-majority nation. It employs a historical-literary method of research based on available primary sources. Historiography of the denomination in India indicates an unfortunate dearth of research in this area which lends value to the study. The study seeks to create awareness and appreciation for the work of Adventist pioneers in India and to uncover the various methods of the missionaries in communicating the gospel under difficult circumstances, which may have current application.

In describing the challenges of doing missionary work in India, M. M. Taylor penned, "The work in India is hard, and always will be hard. We must battle for every inch of ground gained, but surely there will be some stars in the crowns of the workers who have so faithfully labored there" (1924:22-23). Adventist missionaries had to bravely face daunting tasks or fail.

Challenges from World Events

The last fifty years of British India witnessed three significant world events. The first event was the First World War that had a measure of impact on Adventist missionary work. The Great Depression soon followed. As the world was still reeling under the devastating impact of the Great Depression, the Second World War struck.

The First World War

The First World War (1914-1918) delayed shipments from the General Conference headquarters. As a result, fifteen percent of the colporteur sales order could not be delivered. The late arrival of important office supplies, press machinery, quarterlies, and other items caused many inconveniences for the developing work in the country (Raymond 1915:14). Similarly, the war restricted missionaries from traveling to India for their service. For instance, by 1917, a total of only twenty new missionaries arrived in India while an equal number returned home (Shaw 1919:24; Menkel 1918:1; Fletcher 1918:14-15). This meant that a small band of missionaries had to carry multiple responsibilities as the denomination continued its expansion.

The war made traveling more difficult and dangerous. The Indian Union Mission field lost its superintendent in 1915 when Professor Homer R. Salisbury drowned in the Atlantic Ocean when his ship was sunk by a German submarine. He was pronounced lost at sea as his body was never found (1916:4; Wellman 1916:3-8). Another impact of the war was that thousands of expatriates returned to their countries which resulted in subscription losses to the denominational periodical *The Oriental Watchman*, which had a large number of European subscribers (Nelson 1915:7).

On the positive side, the war aroused interests in Bible prophecy among many people. The denomination seized upon such interests by publishing timely articles on the signs of the last days (Raymond 1915:14). Furthermore, the reduction of foreign workers catapulted more Indians to positions of responsibilities. This contributed toward the building of a stronger indigenous mission workforce.

The Great Depression

Before World War I, Adventists in Europe supported mission work in many parts of Asia and Africa. However, during and after the war, such responsibility fell on North American Adventists. Europeans also had the additional responsibility of restoring the work in Europe. The financial situation became worse due to the post-war recession and even more precarious with the 1929 Wall Street Crash that led to the Great Depression in the 1930s. This greatly affected the financial income of American Adventists so that they could no longer provide the same support to the work of the Church. The General Conference found itself in financial crisis and had to reduce mission appropriations that affected the work in India. The wages of workers were cut by 27.5 percent (Torrey 1932:4; Nelson 1936:5). The departure of many missionaries due to the military conflict in the region further worsened the financial situation as it meant a significant loss of income (Wilson 1937:2).

In an effort to save mission funds, the division urged workers to travel in third or inter class, deterred the return of missionaries from furlough, assigned multiple responsibilities to many workers, convened the division council with a reduced delegation, used large sums of trust funds including Uplift funds for regular operation, and appealed to all members to be faithful in tithe and offering (Torrey 1932:4; Cormack 1933:1). Workers were also encouraged to commute on buses instead of in private or mission-owned vehicles, to take leave to nearby hill stations, and to find cheaper apartments. Several of the annual meetings were moved to later dates (Torrey 1931:2). Thus, denominational leaders made every possible effort to weather the financial crisis.

The Second World War

The Second World War (1939-1945) had a greater impact on Adventist missionary work than the First World War since part of it was fought on Indian soil. One of the immediate results was that the war delayed communication between the General Conference and Southern Asia Division (SUD) headquarters. This further delayed crucial decision-making and missionary activities.

War conditions had an adverse effect on the publishing work as it increased paper scarcity and cost. In addition, the government issued a Paper Control Order which drastically limited the number of pages in any publication. L. C. Shepard, the manager of the Oriental Watchman Publishing House (OWPH) pointed out that the government reserved 80 percent of all paper manufactured in the country. The publishing house

was granted 4 tons a year (Shepard 1965:156). The reduction of pages in the denominational publications meant the loss of opportunities to communicate important messages.

The Japanese Army infiltrated parts of northeast India and ravaged Burma which was then administered by the SUD. The military conflict forced most foreign workers including missionaries to flee the country. Many missionaries found refuge in India. Communication between the Burma Union and the SUD headquarters was virtually cut off for four years (from 1942 when the Japanese invaded the country until they were driven out by the Allies in 1945) (Lowry 1942:3; Christensen 1942:8). All mission schools in Burma closed down (Morrison 1946:96). Several mission properties were completely destroyed while others suffered heavy damage. Church members and missionaries lost everything they owned. Pastors Po Shwe and Saya Po Ngwe were killed in 1942. The Japanese took many Christian prisoners, especially church elders and pastors, whom they accused of being Allied spies (Ham 1945:6; Ham 1945:13-14; Manley 1946:13, 15; Manley 1946:14).

The devastating impact of the war on missionary work in Burma created fear among missionaries in India causing many to leave. In 1943, Eric Meleen reported that out of the 89 missionaries serving in the SUD, 33 missionaries departed (1943:2). This left many mission stations without a foreign missionary supervisor. F. H. Loasby lamented, "In the stations where our Indian workers had been left more or less as 'orphans,' there was, of course, considerable perplexity and some discouragement, and in other places, also, it became necessary to make certain adjustments" (1942:3). The adjustments included overloading responsibilities on the remaining missionaries. It also meant the closure of some departments and projects (Ham 1944:24; Loasy 1942:3-4). The departure of missionaries and Europeans also reduced student enrollment in Adventist mission schools, especially at Vincent Hill School. Some schools could not fully function for fear of bombings (Loasby 1943:2-3). Prices of food and other commodities also soared, which made it difficult for boarding schools to obtain sufficient food supplies for students. As a result, some schools closed down earlier than normal. Such conditions meant the loss of many opportunities to communicate the gospel.

A Myriad of Local Challenges

Adventist mission workers were confronted with a number of challenges within the country. These included the Indian Freedom Movement, climate, diseases, language barriers, lack of workers and financial resources, the caste system, and hostilities from various religious groups.

Indian Freedom Movement

A series of events transpired that further alienated the Indian people from the British colonizers. Foremost was the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre of April 13, 1919, when the British Army fired upon a crowd of Indian protesters leaving hundreds dead and injuring hundreds more. The massacre played a pivotal role in India's freedom movement, which at times became religious and anti-Christian. The political atmosphere compelled several Adventist missionaries to temporarily leave their mission stations and settle in Madras or Bangalore where the situation was calm (Lowry 1921:6).

The volatile political condition hindered the work of colporteurs as they faced "special difficulties and obstructions" (Fletcher 1922:3). Such obstacles most likely included the refusal to buy or sell anything that was considered foreign and/or Christian. The denominational periodical *The Oriental Watchman* and *Herald of Health* was banned for a short period of time with the authorities labeling it as being political in nature. H. Maxwell Kent succeeded in persuading the authorities to withdraw the ban (1939:5-6). Some Hindu fundamentalists rejected anything foreign and Christian. The Indian Freedom Movement became a catalyst that increased Hindu national pride. As a result, they sought to prevent conversion of Indians to Christianity and even to reconvert former Hindus (Mookerjee 1947:22).

The Indian Freedom Movement entered its final phase in the 1940s. The ensuing partition of the country into India and Pakistan resulted in unprecedented bloodshed that left over a million people dead and 15 million displaced. Although no Adventists died in the massacres, they faced uneasy and at times threatening situations. A few colporteurs were caught by a mob when they were out selling literature. They were spared when they identified themselves as Christians (1947:8). In some places such as Delhi, the local annual meetings and other evangelistic meetings had to be cancelled. Furthermore, the curfews imposed by the government to avoid communal riots made it risky for Adventist workers to visit church members (Kimble 1947:3).

Christians and missionaries in general perceived that political freedom for India was a matter of time. This made them apprehensive about the future of missionary work in the country. Delegates at the annual meeting of the National Missionary Council in Coonoor in November 1917 appealed to all missionaries to pray for the political leaders and to render their support (1917:4, 6). Seventh-day Adventists on their part sent a three-member delegation of L. G. Mookerjee, A. F. Tarr, and R. L. Kimble to meet several top political figures of future India and Pakistan in an effort to convey the denominational position on "religious liberty, non-combatancy, Sabbath

observance, and other matters" including the relationship between religion and state[1] (Tarr 1947:1-3; Tarr 1947:1,16-17). They also assured them of the continuing support and cooperation of the SDA Church to the governments. A memorandum of the denomination was also dispatched to important political leaders. It is worth noting that Adventist missionaries like most missionaries in India in general supported the British government and deplored the Indian freedom struggle due to their concern that it would destabilize the country and hinder missionary work.[2]

Culture

"Indian culture" is clearly a misnomer. There is not a single Indian culture but numerous cultures with vast differences. In most cases, one's culture is dictated by one's religious and ethnic backgrounds. India has always been one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse nations on earth. Church historian Robert Frykenberg rightly calls India a 'mixing pot' rather than a 'melting pot,' where people groups with diverse cultures, traditions, and languages mingle together but continue to maintain their distinctive features (2008:27). There are four major language families in the country namely Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic, and Sino-Tibetan. Each of these have several languages and dialects as well.

The first task of missionaries was to learn the language of the people in order to share the gospel more effectively. Missionaries normally spent the first 2-3 years of their service for language learning with periodic language examinations. Despite such rigorous efforts, many missionaries found it extremely difficult to master Indian languages. Furthermore, the diversity and complexity of Indian cultures demanded diverse and complex mission strategies to share the Christian message. Outreach strategy needed to be contextualized based on the target community.

Missionaries were also confronted with the ancient caste system that permeated large portion of the Indian society. According to N. Z. Town, it was "perhaps the greatest hindrance to the progress of Christianity since the first missionaries entered India" (1929:6). It affected many aspects of community life. Converts to Adventism were usually considered out-castes. They could no longer bury their dead in the community cemetery or draw water from the well. Such circumstances forced Christian denominations to obtain burial ground and wells for church members (Montgomery 1931:19; James 1935:14).

In the early years, missionaries at times considered it necessary to accommodate the caste system in their operation of educational institutions. The first Adventist mission school in Calcutta was organized for

the high-caste Bengali girls (Wilcox 1896:574). In some places, parents from high caste communities refused to send their children to schools where they would study with children of lower castes or another religious background. In 1910, Luther and Georgia Burgess established an industrial school in north India for Hindustani boys all from Brahman and Rajput high castes. In order to accommodate caste distinctions among the students, school authorities had to draw lines to make divisions so that students of different castes could cook and eat in their assigned places (Salisbury 1913:18).

In addition, missionaries faced other equally disturbing challenges such as child marriage, female infanticide, the dowry system, the plight of widows, and the *purdah* system which confined Indian women to their private homes. These made missionary work extremely challenging.

Lack of Workers

The lack of workers was another challenge that constantly plagued all mission societies in the country including Adventists (Miller 1906:18). As a result, the small group of missionaries had to perform multiple tasks to the detriment of their health. The appeal of George F. Enoch for more workers reflected the situation. He said,

> If after a few years, when one is just getting hold of the work, the health breaks, or the life is laid down under the heavy burden, and no one has been associated with the lone worker, years of labor are lost, and no one can be found who can take up the burden where it is laid down. It, therefore, seems reasonable to us in the field, to plead for companies of strong young men and women, representing the evangelical, and medical branches of our work in each of these great languages of heathenism. (1908:13)

In 1926, India had about 335 million people with only 487 mission workers including Europeans and Indians[3] (Cormack 1926:7). The Foreign Mission Board of Seventh-day Adventists could not meet all the requests from India for new missionaries. Furthermore, missionary Floyd Smith lamented that students in American Adventist schools preferred South America for missionary work (1924:6). Such conditions were exacerbated by frequent changing of workers and missionary furloughs that created vacancies which remained unfilled for long periods of time. Furthermore, the geographical distance from the sending countries posed serious difficulty as it took 30 to 50 days for American missionaries to reach India.

The stringent British visa laws and procedures also complicated matters. It generally took several months to process the papers of missionaries.

T. E. Bowen explained to J. E. Fulton just how difficult it was to obtain the necessary permits from British authorities for missionaries of countries other than England. He also believed that British authorities favored other mission boards and were making efforts to prevent the Adventist FMB from entering India (1920). Such bureaucratic challenges continued until 1921, when the Foreign Mission Conference of North America finally placed the FMB in their list of recognized missionary societies. The acceptance of this list by British authorities expedited the visa process to just 2 or 3 weeks (1921:8).

Lack of Financial Resources

One of the primary reasons for the dearth of workers in India was the scarcity of financial resources that remained a significant challenge for Adventist mission. At times, workers donated their personal salaries to enable the continuation of mission activities. Adventist mission in the country was one of the highest recipients of the General Conference financial appropriation through the years. Yet, the resources were never sufficient, partly due to the incredible needs of the vast Indian mission field (Daniells and Spicer 1904:18). W. W. Prescott who attended the India Union Mission workers conference in 1910 recognized the condition in the country. He wrote,

> It was saddening to receive word from America that the funds were very low, and that it would be impossible to open up new work until the treasury was replenished. There is nothing more distressing to the worker in these far-off fields than to be compelled to turn a deaf ear for the rapid extension of the work, and he sees many opportunities for entering upon new ground. It is hard to be compelled to defer and defer and defer. (1911:14)

In the early years, the General Conference supported all the missionary work in the country. The denominational leaders in India did make earnest efforts to put the work on financial self-sufficiency with a measure of success. However, "total self-financial independence remained elusive" (Langhu 2017:356). For instance, the church in India carried out self-supporting efforts in 1918-1919 when they were able to support the vernacular evangelical, medical, and educational work. The General Conference (GC) continued to support much of the work including the salaries of foreign workers, construction of mission buildings, and purchase of expensive equipment (1917:28; Fletcher 1918:14). Unfortunately, such efforts did not have a lasting impact. By the 1930s, the GC was assisting every

branch of the work except the literature work. At the SUD Council in 1937, N. C. Wilson lamented, "Our Division is probably the farthest from self-support—the most dependent on the General Conference of any in the sisterhood of divisions" (1937:2).

There were many reasons for the lack of financial self-sufficiency. Most Indian converts were poor. As a result, their financial contribution through tithes and offerings was small. The way missionaries treated Indian converts may have contributed to the situation. They built schools, provided free education, supplied students with stationery items, and catered to their other needs. They bought lands, erected churches, and furnished them without expecting the converts to contribute. Such acts, though in themselves noble, did not help the cause of the work in the country as Indians developed a receiving rather than a giving mindset. Furthermore, they failed to develop a sense of ownership of mission properties. Many parents refused to pay part or whole of their children's school fees (Lowry 1928:2-4). Missionaries recognized the problem and made earnest efforts to change such perceptions (Lowry 1928:1); however, it would take a sustained effort through the years to bring changes.

Oppositions from Families of Converts

Families and relatives of converts posed difficult obstacles for Adventist mission work. At times, they filed lawsuits against Adventists to prevent their children from becoming Christians. Most of the time they would lose the court case as it was the personal decision of their own children. Many young people endured beatings, hardships, and heartaches for the sake of their faith. Some of them were forcefully removed from their homes without the opportunity to see their loved ones again.

In 1941, a Muslim father severely beat up his son because he wanted to become a Christian. He was then isolated and starved. As a result of the ill treatment, the unnamed youth died (Steeves 1941:14). He stands as the second Adventist martyr in India after John Last. In another incident, a wealthy Syrian Christian father disinherited his son because he decided to become an Adventist. Another time, a staunch Catholic mother in Pondicherry beat up her son, drove him away from home, and hired a magician to cast a spell on him (Osmunson 1942:11-12; Ham 1945:14-15; Pierson 1943:10). Chikea was a Bengali girl of the criminal tribes of Bengal. When she expressed her desire to become a Christian, her father threatened to kill her (Barlow 1914:1). Mundari was named after the family god. When his parents found out that he was secretly reading the Bible in an effort to become a Christian, they tied him to a tree and beat him with ropes (Mattison 1924:7).

A young Tamil became an Adventist and decided to marry an Adventist woman. His mother did not approve of his decision and pronounced a terrible curse upon him saying, "May you have no children [which is a terrible thing in India]. If you do have children, may they all be girls. And if you have any boys, may they be blind and deaf and dumb" (Carter 1930:18). In Coimbatore, a Hindu family disowned their Christian son and performed a ritual declaring him dead and his wife, a widow (Lowry 1916:12). Missionaries rescued many such abandoned youth by providing shelter, education, and employment. Such efforts often put enormous financial strain on the mission.

Oppositions from Non-Christian Communities

Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and other religious communities posed some of the most serious challenges to missionaries and their converts. Each time a Hindu or Muslim decided to become a Christian, he or she faced the risk of being branded an outcaste and driven from the community. Examples provided here are only illustrative rather than exhaustive.

Sometimes Sikhs in the Punjab assaulted the local mission workers and threatened to kill the villagers who showed interests in becoming Christian. The situation at times became so dangerous that they had to seek police protection (Loasby 1924:12). Although seldom violent, one such opposition in 1911 led to the physical torture and eventual death of John Last, a high-caste Hindu convert, the first known Adventist martyr in India.[4]

Among the Hindus, Brahmins played a lead role in their opposition against Christians. A certain Brahmin fabricated an extraordinary story that Adventists were making special oil out of the students of Roorkee Training School by hanging them over a hot fire and collecting the oil from their body in a large pan (Simpson 1935:12-13). Hindu fundamentalists made determined effort to convert former Hindus through inducement, bribery, and intimidation. In 1918, three Brahmin youths in Tinnevelly became Adventists. The conversion infuriated the local Hindus so that they held open-air meetings and urged parents not to send their children to Christian schools. They also appointed a committee to raise funds in an effort to improve their schools and offer financial assistance to their youth. Further, they offered compulsory religious education in their schools and started a Young Men's Hindu Association like the Young Men's Christian Association. They made every possible effort to reconvert the Hindus who had become Christian (1918:8).

It was not uncommon for Hindus to use violence against Adventists. Hindu zamindars prohibited Adventist missionaries from holding

meetings in their villages. As a result, Adventist workers often held secret meetings at night. Sometimes, the zamindars sent spies to beat up the attendees and brought false accusations against Adventists. Sometime in November 1922, some Hindu rogues poured kerosene oil on the roof of the mission school building at Lakkavaram. Fortunately, mission workers smothered the flames just in time before it caused severe damage. In many Hindu villages, residents were prohibited from donating or selling their properties to Adventists for the construction of church buildings (1922:10).

Local Adventist mission workers and church members often faced greater persecution than foreign missionaries.[5] At times, they were threatened and beaten. In 1938, a Hindu mob caught Arulprakasam, a Tamil lay preacher. They then tied him to a tree and stoned him before releasing him. Daniel Bunsode, a mission worker at Thakurpadi village, narrowly escaped being murdered. As a man got hold of Bunsode's hair to kill him, he began to shake uncontrollably and lost his strength. Similarly, Arumanayagam, a Tamil teacher-evangelist, escaped a murder plot (Wilson 1938:17; Lange 1937:11-12; Skau 1938:13-14). Such were the dangers Indian workers faced.

Oppositions from Christian Denominations

Seventh-day Adventists were latecomers to the Indian mission field. By the time they arrived in the 1890s, several Christian denominations had already established their roots in the country. Some of these denominations, especially the Roman Catholic Church, posed some serious challenges to Adventist mission. Such challenges came in various forms including violence.

Family members of converts often created difficult problems for both the mission workers and their converts. In northwest India, a certain influential Christian warned his wife against following her interest in Adventism. At that time, he was actively involved in pushing for Sunday observance in the country (Brown 1899:690). An Anglican youth while attending the Adventist school in Nazareth (Tamil Nadu) became interested in becoming an Adventist. His parents persecuted him even to the point of poisoning him through the help of magicians. A Bengali Christian family refused to send their son back to the Adventist school because of his expressed desire to become an Adventist. Another Bengali Roman Catholic father attempted to stab his 20-year-old son with a dagger because he refused to cut paddy on the Sabbath (Thomas 1913:26). In some places, Adventists suffered persecution at the hands of their former churches. In Gopalgunj, Adventists were no longer allowed to bury their dead in the community cemetery (Mookerjee 1906:4).

Adventists faced persistent opposition from other missionaries and societies in nearly every place. The primary reasons for their opposition seem to be theological differences and frustration or fear of losing their church members to the Adventists. They resorted to publishing articles and tracts in which they criticized Adventist doctrines, especially the Sabbath (James 1911:15). A Christian lay person in Simla published a pamphlet titled, "Seventh-day Adventism Exposed." In Lonavla, a Methodist Episcopal Church lay preacher wrote articles against Adventists. Missionaries also taught their native Christians and workers to speak against the Sabbath and wrote articles against the doctrine. They circulated Dudley M. Canright's criticisms against the SDA Church (Menkel 1917:7; Brown 1919:2; Miller 1906:1).

Missionaries and pastors often attacked Adventists through their sermons and lectures. In Simla, several ministers of different denominations publicly preached against canvasser H. A. Skinner urging the people not to purchase his literature. In Mussoorie, a missionary lectured on the topic "The Saturday Sabbath, a Jewish Heresy" (Poley 1912:17). In 1906, the Scotch Mission in Gopalgunj called for a 3-day Bengali Christian Conference of different missions. On the final day of the conference, several people spoke against Adventists and their beliefs. They even accused L. G. Mookerjee of using bribery to win converts. Besides, they distributed tracts against Adventists. W. W. Miller who attended the conference along with L. G. Mookerjee, J. C. Little, B. N. Mitter, and A. C. Mookerjee wrote, "We now have a better idea of what kind of people Bengali Christians are than we ever had before; we have more to fear from the heathen who profess Christianity and are tutored by the churches than we have from the heathen who still worship their idols" (Miller 1907:15). The situation was no different in Bombay as Carl A. Hansen reported that "the churches are fully united in one thing, namely, in keeping each other posted as to our moves, and in sparing no means to fight the truth" (Hansen 1906:4).

Adventists by necessity often mentioned the role of the Roman Catholic Church in their preaching, particularly in the historic change of the Sabbath and Sunday law enforcement in the last days. This often prompted some Roman Catholics to respond. Dores A. Robinson was conducting public meetings in a town hall in Darjeeling. The authorities asked him to stop preaching against the Catholics. When he refused, he was asked to move his meetings to a hotel room. The Catholic leaders also tried to persuade the editor of *Darjeeling Standard* to write against the Adventist missionaries. However, he refused and instead, asked Robinson to write a summary of his talk for his newspaper (Robinson 1899:495). Catholic bishops also tried to prevent their members from becoming Adventists through inducement with social and material benefits or threats of excommunication and

lawsuits (Skau 1937:4; Skau 1938:6-7; Israel 1939:6-7). The Catholic Church in Bombay published articles in their church paper and urged Catholics to pray for a young Catholic woman who they claim, "has been led astray by the Seventh-day Adventists" (Enoch 1922:4-5).

Syrian Christians generally took pride in their alleged ancient heritage and tended to view modern religions with prejudice and skepticism. They also placed much importance on cemeteries and church buildings. Seventh-day Adventist mission in the early years often lacked such facilities. As a result, most Syrian Christians did not find Adventism an attractive option. When some of their members converted to Adventism, they got upset and made it an issue of public discussion in newspapers, lectures, and market places (Meleen 1937:14: Nelson 1939:13).

At times, Christian opposition to Adventism took some form of violence. In 1922, the pastor of a local church in Neyyoor (south Travancore) warned his members from attending Adventist meetings. When they refused to heed his warnings, he organized a mob who disrupted the meetings by throwing stones on the roof and hurling all kinds of false accusations against the Adventists. As a result of the strong opposition, they were compelled to close the meetings (Thomas 1922:6). At other times, opposition was more subtle. In Ootacamund in south India, some people informed the police that C. Stafford was an American spy, a Christian Scientist, and was collecting subscriptions for the Christian Science hospitals (Knight 1916:9; Stafford 1916:3-4).

Medical Challenges

Climatic conditions, poor hygiene, lack of medical knowledge and facilities, and a number of other factors meant that mission workers often succumbed to diseases. Church leaders made earnest efforts to combat the health crises.

Climate

The hot Indian climate remained a challenge for most overseas missionaries who were accustomed to cooler climate in their home countries. The hot summer usually lasted eight months (March to October) while the winter lasted four months (November to February). At times, the thermometer hit 65 degree Celsius (150 degree Fahrenheit). William Lenker lamented that the Indian climate was his "greatest obstacle" (1896:123). Similarly, Dores A. Robinson described it as a "steam bath" and that it deterred some people from serving as missionaries in India (1898:639). In

1897, a sanitarium was opened in Calcutta. However, due to the unfavorable climatic conditions in the city, it became a practice to move the sanitarium to the cooler hill station of Mussoorie during the summer months. Such an arrangement continued until 1908 and exerted a heavy toll on the finances of the sanitarium (Ingersoll 1904:34; Shaw 1904:14).

Diseases

Closely related to the adverse climatic conditions were the threats of numerous diseases such as malaria, cholera, leprosy, smallpox, and plague which claimed many lives. On December 29, 1899, missionaries Dores A. Robinson and Frederick W. Brown succumbed to malignant smallpox that broke out in the orphanage at Karmatar mission station. These two pioneers like all others in the mission would have survived had they agreed to be vaccinated. However, they considered it a denial of their faith in God's protection and refused the vaccination. John Shaw lamented, "It is useless to contend that the climate in India is as favorable to the foreigners as Europe or America. We have two graves in India which thus far witness to our efforts, and we must not be discouraged if there are others to mark our way among these unwarned millions. They are appeals, silent appeals, for more men and means to push and hasten on the work" (Shaw 1905:14-15).

During the years 1910-1930, at least fifteen missionaries (and their children) died from diseases such as cholera, dysentery, malaria, and smallpox.[6] Many Indian Adventists also succumbed to these and other diseases (1912:8; Lowry 1912:11-12). Several missionaries returned home due to illness without completing their term of service, some even returning after only a few months or a year or two of service. R. D. Brisbin in 1918, reported that out of 180 missionaries who came to India, sixty-one missionaries (one-third) returned home due to health reasons (Brisbion 1918:6). C. L. Myers, GC Secretary, reported at the 1932 GC session that about 51 percent of missionaries sent to different parts of the world returned home permanently after the first term of service (Torrey 1932:3; Lowry 1932:6). Further, G. A. Nelson pointed out that during the 1932-1936 period, 79 missionary families from the SUD returned home out of which 28 missionaries or 35.4 percent were due to health reasons. Nervous breakdown accounted for the return of 11 missionaries[7] (1937:14).

The lack of knowledge and personal health care seems to have contributed to the poor health of the missionaries. V. L. Mann urged his fellow missionaries to follow basic health principles (1915:2-3, 1918:3). J. E. Fulton mentioned the example of Bishop J. M. Thoburn who served 46 years as a missionary in India. Thoburn often pointed out that missionaries could

be healthy if they only followed basic health habits (1920:13-14). Brisbin concurred with Mann on this matter when he stated, "We are safe in saying that the climate of India is *not* to blame for all of this" (A Serious Wastage:6).

Measures to Combat the Health Crises

Adventist missionaries established sanitariums, hospitals, treatment rooms, dispensaries, and small medical centers in many places with varying degrees of success. They struggled with sanitarium efforts but had better success with hospitals and small health centers. Most health centers consisted of a single room with little equipment and operated by one or two workers. Medical workers believed that their primary duty was to share the gospel. They considered medical work as an entering wedge for the gospel ministry. This is not to conclude that conversion was always the end goal. They also perceived their work "as part of the Gospel or the Gospel in action" (Langhu 2017:281).

Medical missionaries and nurses not only treated their patients at the medical centers but often visited the villages for health check-up and treatment. At times, their medical tours lasted several days and weeks (Mann 1914:9). Although most people asked for medicines, the missionaries preferred hydrotherapy treatment. They treated all kinds of diseases such as cholera, smallpox, boils, blindness, malaria, sore eyes, and skin diseases which were common among the people. Both the elites and the poor of the society received treatment. Many people who could not afford to pay the medical costs were also given free treatments.

The denominational leaders passed several measures to solve the health crisis of missionaries. In 1934, the division committee extended the term of service to 8 years for married missionaries and 6 years for single missionaries (1934:2). In order to minimize illness among workers, they made routine medical check-ups mandatory, usually during workers meetings. They also urged all workers to get immunization for smallpox, typhoid, cholera, and plague (1931:43). Typhoid fever vaccination for mission workers was carried out during the biennial meetings in 1914, the first of such vaccination drives undertaken by the church. V. L. Mann warned that failure to be inoculated was "a serious offence." He arranged another vaccination program for typhoid and cholera during the 1916 biennial conference. The biennial council urged that all mission workers along with their respective family should undergo a yearly medical check-up at a mission hospital (Mann 1914:1-2; 1916:11). The denomination also established the Mountain Mission Home in Mussoorie, a hill station where missionaries could spend their vacation to renew their health instead of

returning to their home countries. Yet, these earnest efforts did not solve all the problems (1925:4).

Missionaries began training nurses as early as 1897 soon after they started the first medical center in Calcutta. Korada Bose and Nanibala Biswas, two early Indian converts, were among those who received such training (Langhu 2017:132). The nurses' training programs became better established beginning in the later part of the 1910s. Foreign medical workers were also expected to enroll for a course in tropical disease in order to be more effective in treating their patients (1929:12: Cormack to Beddoe 1927). In 1945, a pivotal decision was made to train Indian nationals as medical doctors to serve in mission hospitals. The Christian Medical College in Vellore agreed to accept three or four Adventists for medical doctors' training annually. The first batch of Indian Adventist medical doctors entered denominational medical work in post-independent India. A fully credited nurses' training school was also established at Giffard Mission Hospital (Flaiz 1945:9; 1946:8; Rao 1946:4-5; Binder 1947:6). Such progress helped Adventists to better tackle the health crises.

Most medical missionaries in India were women. With few qualified medical doctors, nurses were compelled to perform some of the medical work normally carried out by male doctors (Scholz 1910:17). The lack of trained medical doctors was one of the biggest challenges facing Adventist medical work. The few missionary doctors were overloaded with work demands. When they return to their homeland on account of sickness, transfers, or furloughs, the only solution was to close down the hospital or downgrade it to a dispensary under the charge of an Indian medical worker, usually a nurse. There was not a single national Adventist medical doctor serving in the mission hospital across the division during the pre-Independent period (Kelly 1943:3; 1944:8).

The outbreak of World War II exacerbated the problem further as many missionaries including medical workers returned home due to the military conflict. Dr. H. C. Menkel, Dr. Joseph Johannes, and two nurses, Emma Binder and B. Gore, were the only foreign medical missionaries who remained in the country. Surat Hospital and Simla Sanitarium managed to remain open. However, the mission hospitals at Narsapur, Chichoki Mallian, Bobbili, Karmatar, Rangoon, Gopalgunj, and Nuzvid were closed (Flaiz 1945:9; Ham 1946:54). After the war was over, several medical missionaries returned to India to resume their service. However, most of the hospitals remained closed.

Conclusion

As shown in this article, the last fifty years of British India were challenging times for the Seventh-day Adventist mission. Missionaries were confronted with a myriad of obstacles both internal and external. The health crisis in the country posed a serious threat to Seventh-day Adventist mission. Such obstacles often impeded the growth of the denomination; yet they made earnest efforts to share their message with the Indian people. It was not possible to find a one-fit-solution for all their problems. However, they strove to find some solutions one step at a time.

Endnotes

[1] The political leaders consisted of Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Acharya J. B. Kripalani, Dr. John Matthai, and M. A. Jinnah.

[2] A. W. Cormack, the SUD president, argued in 1930, that although people try to overthrow established government through non-violent means, violence is still unavoidable. He stated that "the spirit of anarchy and rebellion is abroad in the land, seeking to take advantage of the opportunities of the troubled situation" and urged missionaries to pray for the government authorities.

[3] North America with a population of 125 million people had 7,512 Adventist mission workers.

[4] Last was converted to Adventism in 1908 following which he engaged in singing and preaching in the streets of Patiala, the capital of an independent native state at his own expense. He usually sang a song of his own composition and then delivered a message. The police arrested him after his Muslim neighbor's complaint about his preaching. He was released as no charges were brought against him. He was soon arrested a second time in May 1911 being falsely accused with the death of a sick Muslim woman in the same building where he lived. The police stripped him of his clothes and beat him. He was placed in a solitary cell without receiving any medical treatment for his wounds. His wife tried to secure his release but failed. On May 10, 1911, 5 days after his arrest and beating, John Last died inside the jail (Burgess 1911:11).

[5] This is most likely due to the respect and admiration most Indians had for westerners on account of their education, wealth, and lifestyle.

[6] Frieda Christine Barlow died of acute dysentery; John C. Little and Gardiner Kellogg Owen of cholera; Gerald Enoch of malaria; and Charles F. Lowry and William Charles Morris of smallpox.

[7] L. G. Mookerjee drew up a list of missionaries who died in service in the Southern Asia Division from 1895 to 1944. This list is not necessarily complete but was drawn up from available records.

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WILLIAM WELLS

Seventh-day Adventist Mission to Immigrants from 1920-1965: An Exploration of Immigration Trends, Laws, and the Church's Missional Response

As I have testified for years, if we were quick in discerning the opening providences of God, we should be able to see in the multiplying opportunities to reach many foreigners in America a divinely appointed means of rapidly extending the third angel's message into all the nations of earth. God in his providence has brought men to our very doors and thrust them, as it were, into our arms, that they might learn the truth, and be qualified to do a work we could not do in getting the light before men of other tongues. (Ellen White 1914:4)

Introduction

For nearly fifty years, Ellen White advocated, spoke, and wrote about the importance of reaching immigrants coming into America during her lifetime. I wrote in a recent article (Wells 2019:185-199) about the correlation between the waves of migration, Ellen White's comments on the matter, and the response of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church in evangelizing the new arrivals. The quote above is her summary statement on the matter at the end of her life.

In the previous article, there were three key items discovered in the research. First, as the church grew in its ministry to other language-speaking immigrants in North America, the ideas of mission also grew. Second, there was a repeated call over the course of fifty years for more laborers to work with foreigners in America. Finally, the mission strategy began with

tracts and publications. As conversions grew, young people were educated and equipped to work in ministry for the multiplication and expansion of ministry (198).

Some of the questions posed in the previous article (2019:198) will be considered in this paper, namely, how did the North American Foreign Department change and adapt to the trends of immigration? What advances were made in the department's mission to immigrants? What were the models of ministry that were utilized by the North American Foreign Department? This research is a follow-up to that article in that it explores the trends of immigration, immigration law, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church's missional response to immigrants between the years of 1920 and 1965. Understanding the societal context surrounding immigration and immigration law can help inform how to understand the mission strategy for reaching immigrants.

Researching this extensive time period will be conducted in four specific stages. The first section considers immigration trends and statistics from 1920 to 1965. This will help inform the context and setting for understanding the Seventh-day Adventist response to immigrants. The next section is an overview of the immigration laws during the nearly five decades of immigration. In the third section, a review looking at the development and history of the North American Foreign Department seeks to explore and understand how the SDA Church adapted to the changing times. The last section attempts to discover what the mission strategy was for the Foreign Department.

When considering this topic of research there are a few delimitations that need to be specified. First, numerous books have been written on the socio-cultural trends, which prompted the imposition of immigration restriction (Bayor 2016; Daniels 2004; Hartmann 1979; Kennedy; 1964; Krautt 1982; Reimers 1992; Soerens and Yang 2018; Tempo 2008; J. Yang 2020; P. Yang 1995). Much more can be written on this, but due to the complexity and depth of the trends and history, I will be limiting the discussion about the socio-cultural context that prompted the immigration laws to brief highlights and summaries of key forces behind the laws and what the laws did to impact immigration. Another delimitation to this study is that it is primarily looking at European immigration coming into North America. This view is admittedly rather Euro-centric. One factor for this delimitation is that western hemisphere immigration did not become a growing concern until World War II (WWII) (Reimers 1992:31-36). Western hemisphere immigration has a deep and rich history and is vital to understanding American history and should not be neglected. However, the focus of this article will not place as much emphasis on western hemisphere immigration because it was not codified into law until 1965 (García

2016:67-85; Reimers 1992:37; P. Yang 1995:14-15). Between the years of 1920 and 1965 there was also a significant migration of Blacks from the southern parts of the US to the northern states. This is an important area of study. Although this paper will be limited to matters of eastern hemisphere immigration (primarily Europe), it is important to at least mention the significance of African American migration within the U.S. Joe Trotter points out that between 1920 and 1965, that there were two great Black migrations. Some three million Blacks migrated from the rural and urban south to urban centers in the north and west before WWII and another three million moved north and west by the 1970s (2016:90, 93). Much more can also be learned about Asian immigration and the Asian experience in the U.S., but this paper is unable to incorporate all of these details in a short article. Brief mentions will be made about Asians more generally, but since their exclusions to citizenship and barred entry by the Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882, the Gentlemen's Agreement, 1907, and the Barred Zone Act of 1917 where all Asian migration was finally and fully barred entrance, except Filipinos, the place and role of Asian immigration does not come into view until the 1940s and 1950s (Hsu 2016:53-57; Soerens and Yang 2018:52, 55; P. Yang 1995:10-12). It is important to note that the presence and role of Asian immigrants in the United States is another area of great research and one of great importance in U.S. immigration history.

A major limitation to the study is that there are not enough written documents about the North American Foreign Department and its subsequent changes to provide enough material for a thorough understanding. With the main sources being books on general SDA history, General Conference Committee (GC) Minutes, General Conference (GC) *SDA Yearbooks*, and one publication by Louis Halswick in 1946 about the history and role of the North American Foreign Department, enough has been gleaned to get a general understanding of the Foreign Departments growth and changes. Another limitation is that missiological understanding on immigrants and diasporas have made great gains in understanding migration since the 1960s. Given the advancement in understanding and changes in missiological approaches, it can be seen how the Adventist Church's missional considerations of reaching immigrants reflect the evangelistic and mission models present at its time. Finally, out of consideration, much of SDA work with immigrants leading up until 1965 appears to have a general "whiteness" to it, in that the dominant focus was on northern and western Europeans. Just as will be observed below, southern and eastern European immigrants were not welcomed publicly and, while mission efforts were made to reach them with the Adventist message, the primacy and focus of such are relegated to a simple clause of "miscellaneous languages" under the departmental organization (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1922:15; 1930:9).

Immigration Trends and Statistics: 1920-1965

Throughout U.S. History, numerous waves of immigrants have flowed into the "new world." In reality, a fair understanding of the history of the United States is incomplete without considering the numerous and varied trends of migration. The first major wave of immigration, often called "old immigration," is commonly referred to as happening from 1820-1860, and totaled about 4.9 million persons (P. Yang 1995:10; Hoerder 2016:42). The second wave of immigration began in 1860 and ended in 1880, with about 5.1 million total immigrants (P. Yang 1995:10). Between 1880 and 1900, again a third major wave of immigration occurred which totaled some 8.9 million persons. And then the last and largest of the waves of immigration, often termed "new immigrants," occurred from 1900 to 1915 in which some 13.4 million people immigrated to the United States (P. Yang 1995:11; Hoerder 2016:43, 44). These migration waves are marked as such because the numbers of immigrants peaked into the hundreds of thousands and millions in different decades, with the later waves being far greater in terms of total numbers. They are also noted as being different in the make-up of the people who immigrated to the U.S. The early waves (1830-1880) of migrants were mostly northern and western Europeans and Protestants, namely German, English, Scotch, Irish (Catholic), Danish, and Scandinavian (P. Yang 1995, 10; Hoerder 2016, 42). The later waves (1880-1915) were mostly Southern and Eastern Europeans, for example: Italians, Slavic peoples, Romanians, Russian Jews, Polish, and Ukrainians, who were predominantly Catholic or Jewish, and of vastly different cultural backgrounds than the more predominantly white Northern and Western Europeans (P. Yang 1995:11; Hoerder 2016:43, 44). The differences in migration patterns noted above are important to understanding how immigration laws developed. These changing dynamics of who was immigrating into America also impacted how the SDA Church responded in its mission activities.

With a brief review of the various waves of migration, it is time to consider what migration looked like beginning in 1920. In table 1, the total number of immigrants entering the U.S. are tabulated for each decade. In the decade leading up to the first immigration restriction law, total immigration was very high. Just as previous decades saw large numbers of immigrants, this decade was no different. The vast numbers of immigrants arrived primarily before World War I. Hoerder points out that immigration was largely on hold during the war years (see table 2) (2016:46, 47). When the first immigration laws began to take effect in the 1920s not only did the total number of immigrants decrease, but the identity of migrants shifted from southern and eastern Europe back to northern and western Europe, the more favored and preferred nationalities (P. Yang 1995:13).

Table 1: Immigration by the Decade into the United States: 1911-1970

Decade:	Total Number:
1911-1920	5,735,811
1921-1930	4,107,209
1931-1940	528,431
1941-1950	1,035,039
1951-1960	2,515,479
1961-1970	3,321,677

Source: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2000,* U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, DC, Table 1, 18.

Table 2: Yearly Immigration: 1911-1970 (in millions)

1911: (5.7)	1921: (4.1)	1931: (0.5)	1941: (1.0)	1951: (2.5)	1961: (3.3)
'11: 878,587	'21: 805,228	'31: 97,139	'41: 51,776	'51: 205,717	'61: 271,344
'12: 838,172	'22: 309,556	'32: 35,576	'42: 28,781	'52: 265,520	'62: 283,763
'13: 1,197,892	'23: 522,919	'33: 23,068	'43: 23,725	'53: 170,434	'63: 306,260
'14: 1,218,480	'24: 706,896	'34: 29,470	'44: 28,551	'54: 208,177	'64: 292,248
'15: 326,700	'25: 294,314	'35: 34,956	'45: 38,119	'55: 237,790	'65: 296,697
'16: 298,826	'26: 304,488	'36: 36,329	'46: 108,721	'56: 321,625	'66: 323,040
'17: 295,403	'27: 335,175	'37: 50,244	'47: 147,292	'57: 326,867	'67: 361,972
'18: 110,618	'28: 307,255	'38: 67,895	'48: 170,570	'58: 253,265	'68: 454,448
'19: 141,132	'29: 279,678	'39: 82,998	'49: 188,317	'59: 260,686	'69: 358,579
'20: 430,001	'30:241,700	'40: 70,756	'50: 249,187	'60: 265,398	'70: 373,326

Source: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2000,* U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, DC, 2002. Table 1, 18.

Finally, as the 1920s move into the 1930s, migration was impacted by the Great Depression. As can be seen in the two previous tables, total migration dropped significantly. This was partly due to the passing of the Johnson-Reed Act, which is also knows as the National Origins Act or the Immigration Act of 1924. It began enforcement in full force in 1929 (Soerens and Yang 2018:56; P. Yang 1995:13; Zolberg 2006:258-263). Though

the Johnson-Reed Act limited immigration, the most important causes for fewer overall immigration numbers is because of the national and international impact of the Great depression and WWII (P. Yang 1995:13-14). Not until the 1940s, and mostly after WWII, does migration into the U.S. begin to increase. This was due to a changing of numerous policies under President Truman and the effects of displacement that took place during WWII. The restrictionist laws of the 1920s were still enforced in the late 1940s during which a wave of new migrants, refugees, and displaced persons, were resettled under presidential orders, thus evading immigration quotas (Daniels 2004:81; Reimers 1992:22-24). Finally, the 1950s and 1960s saw a return to more consistent flows of immigration into the U.S. These were the result of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act, which both reaffirmed the quota's set in the 1920s and granted the ability for Asians, beyond Filipinos, to migrate again into the U.S., although in limited quantities (P. Yang 1995:14).

The peak decade with the highest number of foreign-born persons living in the United States was 1910 with 14.7 percent of the total US population identifying as being born outside of the US. Due in part to WWI and then the Immigration Acts of the 1920s, the percentage and ratio of foreign-born persons steadily declined until it bottomed out at only 4.7 percent of the U.S. population in 1970. Even though immigration was beginning to rebound in the 1960s (see table 2), numbers were much lower than what had been experienced before. Table 3 below charts those changing trends. With each decade the changing trends of immigrants and the pace at which they acculturated into the stew pot of American culture resulted in diminishing the "foreignness" of persons in America as well as the nature in which the SDA Church conducted its outreach. Daniels notes that the significant reduction in foreign-born population is because many immigrants were older when they arrived than in previous years and fewer entered between 1930 and 1970 (2004:4). Moreover, more people entered in the first decade of the 20th century, 8.8 million, than in the four decades leading up to 1970 which only totaled 7.3 million (4).

Both the trends of immigration and sheer numbers changed significantly between 1920 and 1965. By 1965, when the Hart-Cellars Act was passed and finally took effect in 1968, immigration was opened up based upon fair treatment of every nation and no longer upon the restrictionist arguments, which informed the earlier immigration quotas based on race (P. Yang 1995:15). For the first time in nearly 100 years, America's doors were opened again to immigration from Asia, Africa, and beyond.

Table 3: Foreign-Born population and their Percentage of the U.S. Population, 1910-1970

Year:	Foreign-Born Population:	Percent of U.S. Population:
1910	13,515,900	14.7
1920	13,920,700	13.2
1930	14,204,100	11.6
1940	11,594,900	8.8
1950	10,347,400	6.9
1960	9,738,100	5.4
1970	9,619,300	4.7

Source: Gibson, Campbell, and Kay Jung. 2006. Working Paper No. 81, Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850 to 2000. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau. Table 1, 26.

Immigration Laws Influencing Migratory Flow

Entire books have been written on the subject of immigration law and its development and changes in U.S. History (Bayor 2016; Daniels 2004; Hartmann 1979; J. Yang 2020; Kennedy; 1964; Krautt 1982; Reimers 1992; Soerens and Yang 2018; Tempo 2008; P. Yang 1995). This research is not intended to be comprehensive in detail but to provide a succinct yet accurate reflection of the development of laws restricting immigration from 1920 to 1965.

To be fair, the first discussions about immigration occurred in the very early years of the United States (Zolberg 2006:85-87). As immigration grew in waves during the 19th century, leaders, politicians, political groups, and business leaders began to speak about the issue. The first immigration restriction law was passed in 1882. It was called the Chinese Exclusion Act and effectively barred any further immigration of Chinese laborers (Soerens and Yang 2018:52; P. Yang 1995:10-12). This was prompted because of the fears and prejudices of those on the west coast of the United States. This exclusion was enacted for ten years at a time and was renewed every decade until 1943. The second major move to restrict immigration was the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 which forbad the entrance of Japanese laborers into America and, shortly after, Koreans. Following these restrictions, another major move was the 1917 Immigration Act, also known as the Literacy Law, which created the Asiatic Barred Zone that prevented all Asian immigration from East Asia to the Middle East from

entry. In 1924, the Johnson-Reed Act "prohibited the entrance of aliens ineligible for citizenship" which was in agreement to the 1790 Nationality Act which limited citizenship and naturalization to "free white persons" (Hsu 2016:54; P. Yang 1995:10-12). Other than Filipinos, who had a small immigration quota because they were a colony of America, all Asians could not enter the U.S.

The rise of anti-Asian, -southern, and -eastern European immigration arose from the presence of xenophobia, bigotry, racism, and the pseudo-science of eugenics as it related to white race superiority (J. Yang 2020:30-32, 35-39; Soerens and Yang 2018:56). As the restrictionist or nativist (which is how the movement of race superiority, bigotry, and xenophobia was commonly referred to) movement grew to promote anti-immigration laws, their efforts eventually won out resulting in the following laws: 1917 Immigration Act, Immigration Restriction Act of 1921 and 1922 and the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 (Daniels 2004:45-50; Soerens and Yang 2018:55-56).

When the 1921 Immigration Act was passed it set a benchmark for immigration at 3% of the corresponding nationality according to the 1910 census. This resulted in an annual ceiling of about 358,000 persons. Some 200,000 slots were for northern and western Europeans and 155,000 for southern and eastern Europeans. The remaining quota was divided between African and other countries that were not barred in 1917 and had status as European colonies. Although the law was temporary and was set for one year only. It was renewed in 1922 and then extended to 1924. This law was the beginning of the quota system that would play a significant role in the era of immigration restriction. (Soerens and Yang 2018:55-56; P. Yang 1995:13-14; Zolberg 2006:258-263). Though immigration slowed down significantly after the temporary restriction laws, it was not enough for some who desired stronger restrictions (Reimers 2016:16). In 1924, congress took up measures to further limit immigration. The Johnson-Reed Act, or National Origins Act, made the quotas permanent until 1965. This new immigration law did two things. First, it changed the percentage of those able to enter the country from 3% to 2%. Second, it changed which census the percentage would be based on, from the 1910 census to the 1890 census. Although it was passed in 1924, it went into full effect in 1929 (Daniels 2004:49-53; Reimers 2016:16; P. Yang 1995:13-14). Daniels points out that this law is of great importance and "hard to overemphasize" (2004:49). Philip Yang describes how the 1924 law limited total migration to 154,227 persons per year. Of that total number, 82% of the visas (126,466) went to northern and western European nations, 14% (21,592) to southern and eastern European nations, and 4% (6,169) for all others, which was a 100-person maximum for every other country outside of the previous designations (1995:13).

During the 1930s, the Great Depression put a near halt on immigration. No further laws were put in place. Even western hemisphere migration dropped significantly (García 2016:73). What is important to note is that the quota system focused primarily on eastern hemisphere migration, not western. Thus, there was less attention to the matters of the southern border until WWII. During the 1940s changes in immigration policy and practice began to take place. In 1943, the Chinese Exclusion act was repealed. Four key reasons for this change include changes to foreign policy, namely, the alliance between China and the U.S. to oppose the Japanese. Second, American public opinion shifted because many Chinese Americans contributed to the war effort. A third reason for the change came from the lobbying efforts of special interest groups. Finally, as the economy began to boom and grow, there was less fear about immigrants taking job, thus less resistance to the idea of allowing more immigration (Bayer 2016:6; Daniels 2004:91, 157; P. Yang 1995:11, 12).

By the late 1940s, changes to immigration began to happen. Philip Yang points out that in 1946 an India Bill was passed which allowed South Asians the possibility to immigrate as well as up to 100 Filipinos based on the assigned slots available. The only Asians not excluded by the Barred Zone Act were Filipinos. In 1934 they were granted a quota of 50 persons per year to immigrate to America (1995:6, 7, 15). In addition to allowing more Asians, President Truman took action through his presidential power to allow entrance for refugees from Europe. In 1948 the Displaced Persons Act would allow up to 400,000 refugees over the next four years. These were in addition to the quota's already set (Reimers 1992:22-24). In 1953 and 1957, laws granting the further support of European refugee resettlement and Chinese refugee resettlement allowed for additional persons to immigrate beyond the specified quotas. By 1960, some 700,000 refugees had been resettled in the United States and were mostly from Europe (24, 25). Another important piece to immigration law in the 1940s was the Bracero program. It operated from 1942-1964 and brought about 400,000 laborers from Mexico, Canada, and the Caribbean to work in the U.S. (39-41). At first, this was to meet agricultural and industrial needs during WWII but because it provided cheap labor, it was continued until 1964 (Soerens and Yang 2018:57, 59; Reimers 1992:39-46). Other changes in the 1940s include the War Brides Act of 1945 (updated in 1947) which permitted spouses of servicemen from other countries to immigrate with their husbands to the U.S. (Reimers 1992:21, 22).

Besides the Displaced Person's Acts in the 1950s other major changes to immigration would be made. In 1952 the McCarran-Walter Act, or also known as the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, was passed. It reaffirmed the principles of the national origins quota system from 1924 and

maintained the immigration ceiling based upon prejudice of the restriction era (Reimers 1992:20). However, it did do away with all immigration and naturalization exclusions for Asians. Even though Asians were now allowed to immigrate to the U.S., their quotas were stricter than compared to those coming from Europe. This law introduced four main visas that could be granted to each country. This law, like those before it, did not address migration in the western hemisphere. Thus, the concern was primarily about Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Levant (Middle East) (Reimers 1992:20, 21; P. Yang 1995:14).

In the last decade leading up to 1965, the most significant and substantial change to immigration took place. The National Origins Act, the McCarran-Walter Act, and the quota systems that dominated U.S. immigration policy were overhauled and replaced by a system of immigration, which treated equally and fairly all nations of the world. Though it was passed in 1965 and signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, it would go into effect in 1968 (P. Yang 1995:15). Much has been written by David Reimers on the Immigration Act of 1965, which is also commonly referred to as the Hart-Cellar Act (1992:61-91). It is important to summarize a few key points about this law. First, it was based on a set of preferences, where each preference was allotted a percentage of the whole. Second, yearly immigration limits were set for 290,000 people. Of this number, 120,000 were set aside for western hemisphere immigration. Third, this law was based on a first come first serve basis, where no country in the eastern hemisphere had a quota but each was set with a maximum of 20,000 persons allowed to immigrate until either the 20,000 limit for a country was filled or the maximum allowable persons able to immigrate for the year was filled. This cap was only subject to those, as Daniels puts it, to numerical limitations (Daniels 2004, 138). Thus, the quota system was abolished. Western hemisphere countries had no limit for any country except for the stated 120,000 persons allowed. Fourth, some 6% of visas were reserved for refugees. Finally, family reunification was permitted and was under a non-quota statue in the law which allowed entry for spouses, parents and unmarried minor children, which had no influence or effect upon the total number of allowable immigrants (Daniels 2004:133-138; J. Yang 2020:259-260; P. Yang 1995:15; Reimers 1992:80-81; Soerens and Yang 2018:59-61).

Having an understanding of these changes as it relates to migration trends is important for numerous reasons besides just national or historical. What they reveal is how immigration from southern and eastern Europe was effectively cut off in the 1920s and Asians before that. Through the changing trends and global movements, U.S. immigration began to reopen the golden door of opportunity. This meant that the flow of people

from Asia, African, Middle East, and South American were granted the opportunities to either reunite with family or immigrate to America based on the preference systems (J. Yang 2020:264). President Lyndon B. Johnson summarizes it best with the following, "This bill that we sign today is not a revolutionary bill. It does not affect the lives of millions. It will not reshape the structure of our daily lives, or really add importantly to our wealth or our power" (Daniels 2004:135). In the same speech he also noted that "the days of unlimited immigration are past. But those who do come will come because of what they are, and not because of the land from which they sprung" (Soerens and Yang 2018:60). Jia Lynn Yang accurately points out that the law's impact and transformation on immigration would take years to see and understand, which were only seen and felt in later decades (2020:264).

Development and Change to the North American Foreign Department

Seventh-day Adventists are not the only ones to respond to the influx of immigrants and the ministry opportunities possible in sharing the Advent message. After numerous appeals by Ellen White to reach the foreigner with the Advent message, the SDA Church responded by creating the North American Foreign Department in 1905 (Wells 2018:193, 197). During the first decade at least six new nationalities had their first churches established in North America (198). One thing to note about the North American Foreign Department was that besides the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbooks* and a handful of General Conference Committee notes and general Adventist History books, only one publication, published in 1946, is dedicated to explaining and understanding the role and activities of the SDA Church in reaching immigrants in North America. Louis Halswick wrote his book, *Mission Fields at Home*, as a means of bringing awareness and attention to the matter (1946). The research and insights below are an attempt at bringing together these few resources in order to create a clear understanding of SDA mission to immigrants.

For comparison sake, another Christian writer, Howard B. Grose, published *The Incoming Millions* in 1906 with the express purpose of recruiting Christians to minister to the incoming foreigners. In his book, he details the difficulties and problems that immigrants have and then provides a sampling of what various Christian denominations, namely, women's ministries in Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Episcopal churches, around the country are doing to reach the immigrants (150-172). Both Christians and Adventists sought to accomplish a similar goal and end purpose, the evangelization of the nation's coming into America.

The development of the North American Foreign Department takes a fascinating journey after its formation. First, G. A. Irwin was appointed as secretary in 1905, with a handful of undersecretaries which were responsible for more specific management of specific language work (Schwarz and Greenleaf 2000:317; Spalding 1962:3:312). In 1909, O. A. Olsen was appointed as secretary and served until 1915. The department started by focusing primarily on German, Danish-Norwegian, and Swedish immigrants (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1915:15, 16; Spalding 1962:3:312).

By 1918, when under the leadership of L. H. Christian, the department was reorganized and renamed the Bureau of Home Missions. Greater emphasis was also given to expand its ministry to the French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Jews (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1919:7, 9, 13; Spalding 1962:3:312). However, it was not as if these groups were being reached for the first time (Wells 2019:193-196), but greater emphasis and awareness was placed upon these groups by creating an undersecretary position which managed "miscellaneous languages" (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1919:7).

Table 4: Development of the North American Foreign Department: Secretaries and Name Changes

Year	General Secretary	Department Name	Source
1905-1909	G. A. Irwin	North American Foreign Department	Spalding 1962:3:312
1909-1915	O. A. Olsen	-	General Conference (GC) of Seventh-day Adventists (SDA)1915:9, 13; Spalding 1962:3:312
1917-1919	Steen Rasmussen		GC of SDA 1917:12, 15
1919-1920	L. H. Christian	Bureau of Home Missions	GC of SDA 1919:7, 9, 13
1920-1924	P. E. Broderson	-	GC of SDA 1920:15
1925-1932	M. N. Campbell	-	GC of SDA 1925:14-15; 1932:9-10
1933-1936	W. H. Branson	-	GC of SDA 1933:13; 1936:13
1937-1939	M. N. Campbell	-	GC of SDA 1937:13; 1939:13
1940-1942	H. T. Elliot	-	GC of SDA 1940:13

1942-1950	L. Halswick	Home Foreign Bureau	GC of SDA 1942:10; 1950:9
1951-1952	W. B. Ochs	North American Home-Foreign Bureau	GC of SDA 1951:15; 1952:15
1957	???	North American Missions Committee	Cooper 1968:117
1964-1965	???	-	GC of SDA 1964:23; 1965-1966:23

O. A. Olsen's management of the North American Foreign Department saw the creation of schools specifically designated for training workers in specific language fields. Seminaries in French, German, Danish-Norwegian, and Swedish were in full operation by 1910 and 1911 (Schwarz and Greenleaf 2000:321; Spalding 1962:3:313, 314). During WWI, ministry to minority groups was hampered because of the rise in prejudice against Germans and other foreigners from Europe (Schwarz and Greenleaf 200:321). Following WWI ministry resumed, publications were distributed, and the departments focusing on mission to reach immigrants in North America was back on track. One glimpse into how the department worked in post WWI years can be observed in the General Conference Committee Minutes of 1919. Though not much is said, these committee minutes record how ministers with language specific skills were called and directed by recommendation of the Bureau of Home Missions to be appointed to certain regions of North America. For example, notes from May 6, 1919 recommend that all conferences should focus work for foreign speaking persons in their territory and that specific workers were appointed to work with Syrian, Russian, and Polish groups in New York, Chicago, and Detroit respectively (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists [GC] 1919:300-305). From this reference, it can be inferred that throughout the duration of the department's operation, the appointment of ministers to language specific groups were conducted through similar means until it was dissolved in 1951.

By 1920, the Bureau of Home Missions was in full operation with five main undersecretaries managing work among the French, Germans, Danish-Norwegians, Swedish, and miscellaneous languages (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1919:7). In 1922, a Spanish undersecretary was added to the Bureau and the miscellaneous languages committee was divided in two, east and west of the Mississippi, so that the other languages scattered in those areas could receive greater attention

from two undersecretaries (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1922:15). Even though this decade saw the decline in immigration and the passage of laws limiting such, the statistics indicate above that there was still a very large body of first-generation immigrants with several hundred-thousand arriving yearly. Yet, as noted above, the immigration restrictions focused on limiting southern and eastern Europeans and allowing a greater portion of northern and western Europeans. It seems that from the data gathered from archived materials and Adventist history books, that the primary focus of the Bureau of Home Missions was towards the larger population of immigrants who were allowed to enter the U.S.

With the Great Depression in full swing during the 1930s and immigration at an all-time low, the Bureau of Home mission continued with its mission. But by the end of the 1930s there was a consolidation of the departments and a reduction in staff. During the latter part of the decade, the Spanish undersecretary added Portuguese and Native peoples to their field of labor. The French and Jewish departments were dropped, and all miscellaneous languages were under the Management of the Danish-Norwegian undersecretary (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1940:13). Schwarz and Greenleaf point out that during this decade European interest had largely dissipated, but that evangelistic activity and growth moved towards Hispanic populations (2000:321).

When Halswick published his book in 1946, he included a keen summary of the history behind working with migrant populations. In 1942, the Bureau of Home Missions was again renamed and changed to the Home Foreign Bureau. By the mid-1940s, Adventist work was being conducted in twenty-five different language groups with 160 foreign-speaking language workers working full-time with these different nationalities. He estimated some 15,000 believers with an average of 1,000 baptisms per year and more than one million given in tithe in 1943 alone (23, 25). It is astonishing that with such growth and activity in nearly forty years of ministry that not more is written upon the matter. The only other report given of a similar nature is on October 14, 1919 where L. H. Christian notes that in 1918 there were 311 churches of foreign-speaking peoples in North America that had a combined membership of 11,791 persons. In 1919, there were 330 total churches with 13,632 members. Furthermore, work was being conducted with Lithuanians, Slavic speaking nationalities, Polish, and Italians (GC 1919:439, 440). Spalding notes the specific language groups that were being ministered to in the 1940s. He lists: Armenian, Chinese, Czechoslovak, Danish, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Icelandic, Indian, Japanese, Jewish, Yugoslav, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Romanian, Spanish,

Slovak, Swedish, Ukrainian (1962:3:312). Beyond these two summary statements in 1919 and 1946, very little is mentioned about the sheer numbers of growth and activity. And though Asian and other language groups are mentioned, the department retained a mostly Eurocentric focus in its mission. This is simply in keeping with the trends that were summarized above. Yet two questions surface when comparing the statistics from 1919 and 1946. Did membership from foreign-born persons ever reach more than 15,000? If so, what were the factors behind the gain/loss or steady consistency of less than 20,000 total members?

After WWII, immigration began to pick up again. Refugees from Europe were being resettled. War Brides from other nations were coming back to the U.S. with servicemembers. However, most immigration was with Europeans, except for the Bracero program which brought temporary workers from predominantly Mexico. By 1951, the Home Foreign Bureau had run its course. Emma Howell Cooper (1968) makes mention that the Home Foreign Bureau was discontinued in 1951 as a department of the GC. The North American Missions Committee was set up in its place to manage, in cooperation with Union Conferences, the work with foreign language speaking groups (116-118; Schwarz and Greenleaf 2000:321, 513, 514). According to the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, the Home Foreign Bureau experienced another name change. It is changed to the North American Home-Foreign Bureau (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1951:15). By 1952, it disappears altogether until 1957 when the General Conference Committee Minutes mention that the Home-Foreign Committee[1] is to be changed to the North American Missions Committee and will officially include once again work for the Native American tribes (GC 1957:879). The North American Missions Committee continued to operate but with little mention or record of its presence or activity until the1964 and 1965-1966 *SDA Yearbooks* where, once again, it is supervising the work with Jewish immigrants, Eskimos, Native Americans, and the Deaf (Cooper 1968:118; General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1964:23; 1965-6:23).

What began in response to the pressing and urgent needs of reaching immigrants in 1905 slowly dwindled until 1965. The robust strength and energy of the North American Foreign Department urged into action by the direct encouragement of Ellen White continued unabated until the effects of immigration began to impact the population size of foreign-born migrants living in North America. As seen above, by 1970, only 4.7% of the U.S. population was foreign-born. The North American Foreign Department and its subsequent names continued its work after its reorganization in 1951. It is important to consider the strategies adopted by this department in order to see how its legacy continued between 1951 and 1965.

Exploring the Mission Strategy Towards
Immigrants Between 1920 and 1965

The mission strategy towards immigrants seems to have a shared and common thread from the earliest days when Ellen White made her appeals in the 1870s until 1965. In previous research, it was pointed out how White's appeals for working with immigrants called for the publishing of tracts and books as well as equipping workers to go teach and preach (Wells 2019:189). Implied in the teaching and preaching of foreign-speaking peoples is the idea of education. Educating new laborers to work with the foreign-speaking immigrants was critical to making progress in sharing the Advent message. Beginning in 1905 with the creation of the North American Foreign Department, not much is mentioned about its strategy for evangelizing immigrants. It appears that in keeping with past actions and urgings for publishing and distributing tracts and books, that much of the same strategy continued into the early 20th century. Halswick notes the use of literature, trained Bible instructors, and public evangelism as the key means for rapidly expanding the knowledge of the Advent message (1946:23, 127). When Olsen became general secretary in 1909, the prominent role of education and the training of language specific ministers took shape (Spalding 1962:3:313). Essentially, the very way in which ministry to foreign-speaking migrants in North American began in the 1850s and again urged in the 1870s (Wells 2019:188, 189) seems to have continued into the 1960s.

To understand the strategy of the North American Foreign Department, later called the Bureau of Home Missions, Spalding points to the creation of language specific seminaries for the training of Bible instructors and ministers. Three of these schools began in 1909. Olsen started with creating German, Danish, and Swedish language seminaries. They were named, Clinton German Seminary (Clinton, MO), Danish-Norwegian Seminary (Hutchinson, MN), Broadview Theological Seminary (Chicago, IL) (1962:3:313). By 1918, Broadview College, added additional departments for training in Italian, Romanian, Russian, Yugoslavian, Ukrainian, Hungarian, Czechoslovakian, Polish, and Finnish. By 1934 all of the language specific seminaries closed and were incorporated into Emmanuel Missionary College. Any students needing language specific education were sent to attend schools in the respective countries (3:313, 314). M. E. Olsen (1926) points out that a French seminary was in operation at South Lancaster Academy, MA and a Russian seminary at Harvey Academy, ND, both beginning in 1911 (694, 695). Not much is ever mentioned about what happened to the French school in its later years. It must be assumed that it also closed eventually due to the lack of need sometime in the 1920s

or 1930s. Little is mentioned about the schools and their impact in later years, the fact that they were in operation until 1934 points to the reality that there was a significant work accomplished. The increased use of the English language with immigrants led to the eventual phasing out of each northern European language seminary (Spalding 1962:3:313). As Louis Halswick was quoted in the previous section, some twenty-five language groups had about 160 active workers. The role of education and training Bible instructors, pastors, and evangelists did extend the Advent message with immigrants (Olsen 1926:687-697).

The use of publishing and literature has been a fundamental cornerstone to the spreading of the Advent message. The clearest indication made about the use of literature in reaching foreigners is made by Louis Halswick. At the end of his book he summarizes the success of the work that came from the use of the printed page and literature distribution (1946:126). He continues to note that because of the central role of literature in mission strategy, the International Publishing Association was created in 1904. It was later adopted by the Pacific Press and renamed the International Branch of the Pacific Press with headquarters in Brookfield, IL. By 1944 the following languages were being printed yearly: Armenian, Bohemian, Chinese, Croatian, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Ruthenian, Serbian, Sioux, Slovakian, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Syriac, Ukrainian, and Yiddish (126). That is twenty-eight languages in total being sold and distributed across North America. In the GC Committee Minutes of 1919, a handful of other languages are referenced as having been published at one point in time. They include Bohemian, Japanese, Chinese, and Serbian (GC 1919:424, 425). Later GC Committee Minutes in 1964 and 1965 point to the fact that German, Ukrainian, Italian, and Yugoslavian were still being printed (GC 1964:832, 833; 1965:1131). To summarize simply, from the inception of the North American Foreign Department until the North American Missions Committee in 1965, the use of literature and publishing played a central role. While space does not allow to give details, Halswick outlines in his book several examples of how the use of literature opened opportunities for ministry with migrant groups and then spread it far and wide (1946).

Some of the last observations made about strategies of working with foreigners in America are best summarized in the GC Committee Minutes of 1964. While it is not a statement of a mission strategy, the fact of its formation points to probably the most succinct mission strategy in reaching immigrants with the Advent message after Halswick's book of 1946. Although brief, the North American Missions committee was directed to handover its foreign language Bible correspondence program to Faith for

Today (FFT) and Voice of Prophecy (VOP) (GC 1964:832). Very little is recorded about the reason for the transfer. Other than a capacity issue, since the North American Missions Committee was small with few workers, nothing more can be said about the transfer of managing Bible study materials. In addition to this switch, the primary goals outlined for this small committee are to create and encourage branch Sabbath school and VBS programs in other languages; use radio and Bible correspondence materials for the specific language groups located in each local conference; encourage ministers, Bible workers, and church members to increase the distribution of foreign language publications through radio and newspaper ads; VOP and FFT will manage foreign language Bible correspondence courses; VOP will produce German and Yugoslavian Bible correspondence materials and manage the schools; and finally, foreign-language churches need extra help from departmental leaders from the conferences and unions so they can have the guidance and assistance necessary to operate (833, 837). The addition of radio, VBS, and branch Sabbath schools (small groups) is about the only new shift in the strategy of reaching foreign-speaking persons in America.

Considering the more than 100 years ministry to immigrants in America, for which the above is but a brief synopsis, the overall strategy to reach immigrants does not appear to change very much. The focus has been on literature production and distribution, education, public and personal evangelism, and radio. By comparison, Howard B. Grose (1906) outlined his strategy of ministry to migrants. Of course, his premise is that working with migrants is only a women's duty and should be limited to women only because the assumed level of influence of women is greater upon the home (109-112). To summarize briefly he points to medical missionary work, personal evangelism, education, and friendship (106-129). Though the comparison is not entirely identical nor the same decade, yet similarities and differences can be observed. Throughout SDA literature related to reaching migrants in North America, nothing has yet been found relating to the use of friendship evangelism or medical missionary work. An argument from silence is not sufficient to rule out the lack of these two activities which very well could have been in practice on the field but not recorded. What seems to be the most important discovery when looking at the mission strategy between 1920 and 1965 is that it was fairly consistent with the methods adopted beforehand. With the exception of the introduction and use of radio broadcasting, branch Sabbath schools, and language specific VBS programs, the strategy for reaching migrants stayed basically the same.

Conclusion

This article explored the trends of immigration, immigration law, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church's missional response to immigrants between the years of 1920 and 1965. Immigration changed significantly between 1920 and 1965. In the first two decades of the 20th century, the dominant immigrants were southern and eastern European and were commonly called "new immigrants." As public opinion increasingly moved in opposition to the massive influx of immigrants, immigration laws were put in place to stem the tide of immigration and revert it back to being predominantly northern and western European. These changes in society impacted the nature and activity of the North American Foreign Department or Bureau of Home Missions.

As to the question asked above about the adaptation of the North American Foreign Department to the trends of immigration, changes did occur. During its total years of operation, from 1905 to 1951, and then re-organized into a committee and continued until 1965, much of the mission focus was on reaching Germans, Danish-Norwegians, French, and Swedish, all of whom were northern and western European. Even though the department worked diligently to share the Advent message with other language groups, including Spanish, Portuguese, Native Americans, Russians, and Ukrainians, many of the other foreign languages did not have their own organized committee lead by an undersecretary. Granted there was a "miscellaneous languages" segment under the operations of the Bureau; however, little was written about it. Outside of Louis Halswick's single volume giving a detailed history of ministry and mission being expanded until 1946 and Spalding's record in 1962, which is a short summary, numerous details can still be added to how the department learned, grew, and adapted to the historical and socio-cultural influences of the time.

The North American Foreign Department went through several re-namings and reorganizations. The first and most significant was in 1918, when it became the Bureau of Home Missions. Beginning with L. H. Christian and ending with Louis Halswick, that title stayed with the department for 24 years. In 1942, it was renamed as the Home Foreign Bureau under Halswick's supervision. Just before the department was phased out it was renamed the North American Home-Foreign Bureau. And finally, from 1957 on it became known as the North American Missions Committee. For how long this committee continued to operate and influence mission work with immigrants in North America is still unknown by the author. This prompts further questions, such as, what happened next? How did this committee continue to grow, change, or adjust to the changing circumstances of immigration?

But probably the single most important discovery that this article discovered was seeking to understand the mission strategy with immigrants between 1920 and 1965. What was learned through the materials accessible for research was that the initial strategy of literature, personal and public evangelism, and education, continued to be the four main means by which immigrants were reached in the United States. Other than the one comment in 1964 about the use of branch Sabbath schools, VBS programs, and radio broadcasts to the overall strategy, not much really changed. In many ways, the overall strategy observed through the decades seemed to match the general trends already in practice by the Seventh-day Adventist church during this time. As both Halswick and Spalding summarized above, there had been an expansion of both churches and numbers of foreign-born believers in the SDA Church. But as questioned above, did the total number of foreign-born members in the Adventist church ever exceed 15,000?

There are many more questions that need to be considered. Besides the few mentioned above, there are gaps in the materials relating to working with immigrants between 1920 and 1965. It would be important for further and more detailed research to be given to this end. Where can additional information be found? What more is hidden and waiting to be discovered that can add greater depth and richness to this study? What happened to the North American Missions Committee after 1965? Who did it work with? When did foreign-language radio and publication cease to be of any importance? Since immigration trends changed dramatically after 1965, in what ways did the committee shift in working with the new arrivals who came from countries beyond Europe? Did the influx of refugees affect in any way the strategies and missional practices of the committee and North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists? And finally, as new immigrants were starting to come predominantly from oral and collective cultures, what challenges did those pose to the long-practiced strategies? These are all questions which, if explored and answered, would help to lay the foundation for understanding how the Seventh-day Adventist Church perceives and strategizes working with immigrants in the 21st century.

Though much has changed in the make-up of immigrants in the United States between 1920 and 1965, one thing remains—there are still several million foreign-born people who have immigrated to the United States, which suggests the continued need to reach them with all the fervor and energy that existed in previous years. In the words of President Johnson, "the days of unlimited immigration are past" (Soerens and Yang 2018:60, yet it can be seen that the future holds a multitude of opportunities among the new and often vastly different migrants coming to live in America.

Endnotes

[1] The Home Foreign Committee was also called the Home-Foreign Work Committee in some locations. Tracing the name, operations, committee chair, and activities of this former department becomes challenging after 1951. Few publications include any comment or reference to this committee beyond mere hints. Likely more information lies within the General Conference Committee Minutes. No other published documents and Adventist history from the 1980s to present include comments about the Home Foreign Committee (North American Foreign Department) besides Richard Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf in their book Light Bearers (2000).

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AMY WHITSETT

An Appeal to Medical Missionaries to Pray or Not to Pray for Healing

Introduction and Background

When thinking about prayer and healing the first text that comes to my mind is James 5:14-15, "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven" (NKJV). This passage along with the myriad verses about asking for and receiving answers to prayer suggest that the life of the Christian should be marked by regular, and even daily, answers to prayer. They indicate that we have unlimited access to the power of heaven to effect good in this life. As a missionary these promises gave me hope. After all, the mission stories I read as a child seemed to indicate that answers to prayer were more common and much more abundant in the mission field than what I saw at home. But looking back on my sixteen years of cross-cultural missionary experience, I see what seems to be more unanswered prayers than those that were answered—particularly related to healing the sick and suffering.

In the early 2000s, our family moved to Southeast Asia. It was a dream-come-true for me as I had dreamed of being a missionary doctor since I was a mere five years old. Having studied nursing, I used my skills doing informal medical mission work. Initially, my patients were church members and their families who presented me with everything from gastritis to malaria, from leprosy to advanced cancers. I saw each case as a puzzle to solve and enjoyed the challenge of diagnosis and treatment. Over time I began seeing patients who were non-Christian friends and neighbors of members whom I had treated. So, it seemed that I was being at least somewhat successful.

But as I saw each patient, I was keenly aware that my medical ministry was not just a healing ministry. Each of my patients presented an opportunity for spiritual ministry and care as well. I truly believed that each time I treated a patient's physical body, it was a unique and special opportunity for God to touch the patient to both awaken them to the reality of himself as well as to reveal his true compassionate character (Blue 1987, 78). So, I made it a habit to pray with each patient, however, I struggled to know exactly how to pray. The Bible says that if we ask, we will receive (Matt 21:22), so shouldn't I be able to ask for immediate and miraculous healing? At that time, I was afraid to put God on the spot. While I knew without a doubt that God had the ability and power to heal people instantly, but what if he chose not to? What would the patient's view of God be then? I feared that I would be responsible for turning my patients away from God rather than turning them towards him; therefore, I chose instead to pray less boldly—to pray *safely*. I hedged my prayers with phrases like "if it is your will," or with suggestions that God could "work through the medicine to bring healing."

But I wasn't satisfied, and so began a search for a better understanding of how intercessory prayer works, and specifically how it works in relation to physical healing. The questions I asked were: What principles can be gleaned from Jesus' example as a healer? What, if anything, does research reveal about the efficacy of intercessory prayer? What did Ellen White and other contemporary authors suggest regarding intercessory prayer for healing? And what are the principles that, if applied, would lead to more effective intercessory prayer and healing?

Differentiating Sources and Types of Unwellness

In his book simply titled *Healing*, Francis MacNutt outlines four kinds of sickness that is important to be aware of. First, is spiritual sickness caused by one's own personal sin. While this can lead to physical manifestations of illness, generally it leads to spiritual apathy and a general loss of well-being. Second, is emotional sickness resulting from past hurts. As with spiritual sickness, this can be manifested as physical illness and/or disability. Third, the area this paper focuses on is physical sickness or unwellness caused by accident and/or disease. These can be acute or chronic illness as well as short- or long-term disability resulting from injury of some kind. Fourth, are issues related to demonic oppression (MacNutt 1999:130). This differentiation, he argues, is as important for healing prayer as a physical diagnosis is for determining appropriate medical treatment. While identifying the root issue of someone's condition may not be simple, it is critical for a proper and effective prayer ministry. For

the purposes of this article, I will focus on the third category of physical illness and disability. I will also assume that the practitioner has already properly identified this as the root of the patient's complaints.

Learning from Jesus' Example of Healing Ministry

The Gospels are full of stories of Jesus healing the blind, the deaf, the lame. And, while not stated, I am sure he healed a good share of common-cold sniffles and settled the nauseous stomachs of those suffering the stomach flu or food poisoning. Author Barbara Ryan, in her book *Healing Prayer: Spiritual Pathways to Health & Wellness* notes:

> The Gospel narratives reveal that Jesus did not follow a set pattern or technique in his healing ministry, but each request for help was treated differently. One paralytic is told to take up his bed and walk, and another is advised that his sins are forgiven. Jesus laid his hands on one blind man to restore his sight, and he applied a mixture of mud and spittle to heal another. (2001:36)

In other words, Jesus treated each person and each case individually, adjusting and adapting his approach to each unique situation. How did he know how to approach each case? The answer is prayer.

In 1903, Ellen White wrote, "Jesus of Nazareth is the great pattern medical missionary, the greatest minister of righteousness. He preached the gospel and practiced the gospel. *He spent whole nights in prayer. . . . He opened the way for all other medical missionaries to labor*" (Letter 51, emphasis mine). To effectively minister as Jesus did by treating and bringing healing to those who are suffering physical illness, we must also be people— men and women—of prayer. We must be connected to God, the source of life and health and strength. It is through that connection that we will be receptive to the Holy Spirit's prompting and able to discern how to approach each individual case.

The question is, How do we pray? What do we pray for? Should we be asking for miraculous and instantaneous healing or is there something else we should be praying for?

Pastor Pavel Goia, Associate Ministerial Director for the General Conference Ministerial Association, shares that we need to change our prayers from asking God to do something specific and instead asking him to work his will in our lives. He suggests that our prayers need to be more about submitting ourselves and our needs and wants to God's will. "God can never work in us or use us until we make His presence and plans our priority" (Goia 2022:22). This requires a big paradigm shift, but the only

way Goia believes we will experience answers to prayer is if we recognize that prayer is not about getting God to do something but is rather about aligning ourselves—our goals and purposes—with God's goals and purposes, and then allowing him to work his will in and through us. Ellen White states in *Gospel Workers*:

> True faith and true prayer—how strong they are! They are as two arms by which the human suppliant lays hold upon the power of Infinite Love. Faith is trusting in God—believing that He loves us, and knows what is for our best good. Thus, instead of our own way, it leads us to choose His way. In place of our ignorance, it accepts His wisdom; in place of our weakness, His strength; in place of our sinfulness, His righteousness. (1892:259)

Beverly Ryan echoes this idea. She says, "Many times our prayer requests don't bear fruit because we have neglected to discover what the Lord wanted in the situation. We assume that his will is the same as ours without first asking for his guidance" (2001:34). It is therefore important that we take time to evaluate how we are praying. Are we praying in a way that is telling God what to do or are our prayers a dedication of ourselves and our work to be used by him for his purposes? There is a big and important difference between the two.

Jesus also treated people individually (Ryan 2001:36). As wonderful as it would be to have a one-size-fits-all prayer that would guarantee immediate and miraculous healing, Jesus' example demonstrates that that is not possible. Each persons' experience and spiritual condition is different, and as a result, their needs are different. As Ryan notes, some patients whom Jesus healed needed physical healing while others needed spiritual healing even though their physical presentations may have appeared the same. How did Jesus know the difference? He invested in one-on-one time with his Father. And the result was a connection through which He could discern the Father's will for each individual He healed.

But what does that discernment look like? Francis MacNutt suggests that "God often uses our natural intuitions and desires as a way of leading us, if we will just give him the chance" (1999:159). In other words, if we are spending time connecting with God, dedicating ourselves and our medical missionary practices to him, we can trust that he will guide our intuition and 'gut' impressions. Care must be exercised, however, as this can easily turn into self-confidence. It is only through a daily connection by prayer that we can be sure that the impressions we receive are indeed from the Holy Spirit.

Will God Really Answer Prayers Today?

While it may be easy for us to believe the stories of miracles and answered prayers that we read about in the Bible, we may struggle to believe that God will answer prayers in the same way today. Perhaps this is because the Bible times feel so distant, and we forget that the people Jesus healed were just as human as we are today. But regardless of the reasons for doubt, if we are going to see answers to our prayers in our medical mission practice, it is important that we recognize and truly believe that God can still provide miraculous healing in response to intercessory prayer today.

In 2013 Ian N. Olver, respected Australian oncologist, cancer researcher, and bioethicist, published a book entitled *Investigating Prayer* in which he describes a scientific study he performed to test the efficacy of intercessory prayer on improving sick people's quality of life. The study was a randomized double-blind trial in which intercessory prayer was added to conventional cancer therapies. After study participants had been identified, he enlisted the help of an established prayer group to pray for a randomly selected group of study participants for a period of six months. At the beginning and again at the end of the six-month period, all study participants were asked to fill out surveys that assessed their quality of life. The findings were remarkable as the study group who had been prayed for showed improved levels of spiritual and emotional well-being.

Though somewhat controversial in both the scientific and religious communities, studies such as Olver's show that God answers the prayers of faithful believers who are praying on behalf of those who are physically ill and suffering as evidenced by improved quality of life. Simply put, intercessory prayer works.

A second study worth noting is a study published in the *British Medical Journal* by Leonard Leibovici in 2001. Leibovici reasoned that because God is timeless, then intercessory prayer should also be timeless. So, he designed a study that measured the effectiveness of intercessory prayer—retroactively. In 2000, he selected patients who had had blood infections, or sepsis, sometime between 1990 and 1996. The study group was randomized into two groups: a group that would be prayed over and a control group. After a designated time was given for prayer, the patients' medical charts were assessed to determine hospital mortality, length of hospital stay, and duration of fever. Interestingly, the results showed slightly better outcomes for the intervention group even though prayers were said years after the incidence of sepsis.

Though Leibovici's study has been heavily criticized as absurd, a fol-low-up article in the same journal two years later suggests that, while we may not fully understand the dynamics of prayer or even feel comfort-able attempting to measure its effects objectively, we should not rule it out as impossible, improbable, or absurd. The authors defending Leibovici's study state, "Rather than dismissing studies of prayer because they do not make sense or confirm our existing knowledge, we should consider them seriously. . . . In the history of science, findings that do not fit in often yield the most profound breakthroughs" (Olshansky 2004:1468). As Christians we should agree. Just because something cannot be explained scientifi-cally does not mean that it isn't real. This becomes especially true when we recognize that, as Paul says, "we see in a mirror dimly" (1 Cor 13:12) and that our human minds in this sinful state are not capable of fully un-derstanding God and his ways.

In his book *Authority to Heal*, author Ken Blue suggests that

> the real tension is not between church and science but between a secu-lar world view and a view of reality which allows for the activity of the living God . . . . [T]he church all too often seems to agree with the world's skepticism about the possibility of God acting in the world. . . . Where people do not expect miracles, they rarely see them; and where they do expect God's power to be at work, they often see it. (1987:59-60)

So, in spite of the weaknesses in Leibovici's study, and even if it were in fact a farcical study, because we do not fully understand the rules of en-gagement between the power of God and the power of darkness, we have to admit and believe that "with God all things are possible" (Matt 19:26), even retroactive intercessory prayer.

The Role of Faith

Some authors writing about healing prayer state such things as "we ought not to demand proof that Jesus miraculously heals the sick today before we are willing to pray. We are to "renew our minds" by first sus-pending our scientific skepticism about miracles and then beginning to pray for the sick to be healed" (Blue 1987:61). This same author goes on, "The faith to be healed and to pray for the sick is nothing other than child-like trust in the loving character and purpose of our Heavenly Father" (103).

While this would suggest that we can, in faith, pray for immediate and instant healing, a couple of authors provide a little balance, which I be-lieve is helpful and necessary. "Healing prayer is a petition asking God to

do the most loving thing for someone" (Ryan 2001:76). The most loving thing. That is something to think about. What could possibly be the 'most loving thing' for each of our patients?

Shane Clifton, an Australian theologian, became a quadriplegic after suffering a spinal cord injury in a tragic accident in 2010. Confined to a wheelchair and dependent on others for help with basic needs, he recently wrote a paradigm-shifting article entitled, "The Dark Side of Prayer for Healing." In it he discusses the challenges and hurts he and others have experienced when confronted by well-meaning Christians who have prayed for their healing. His conclusions have profound implications. He states rather candidly,

> There is overwhelming evidence among people with disabilities, by the very fact of continued disability, that healing prayers are not normally answered, and that this is not because God has it in for the disabled but, rather, because supernatural healing itself is rare—is miraculous—and injury, suffering, and disability are a part of life. (2014:213)

This is not to say that we should not pray for those who are disabled or who are living with a debilitating chronic medical condition. On the contrary. The question is not whether to pray or not to pray. Rather, the question is what we should pray for.

In his book *Spirituality in Patient Care*, author Harold Koenig notes that many patients rely on religious practices and beliefs as a form of coping (2013:30). One study showed that over 40 percent of patients in certain parts of the United States report religion as "*the most important* factor that keeps them going" (30). He also notes that "well-being and positive emotions such as joy, hope, and optimism are also more prevalent among the religious" (37). This would indicate that the majority of patients do not look to religion to heal them or to remove their suffering. Rather, they look to religion for strength, courage, and hope with which to endure their suffering. And for many that is as much an answer to prayer as immediate healing would be.

Adding to this thought Clifton remarks,

> For most people with long-term disabilities, however, coming to accept that situation—to learn to live and even flourish with it—is one of the essential stages of healing. This suggests a potential way forward, a broadening of what is intended by the affirmation of divine healing, redirected to what I shall call "well-being." (2014:216)

What Does the Patient Want?

This leads to an essential principle. It is helpful to ask the patient what they want. Because we recognize that we live in a sinful world in which sickness and suffering are a part, we must work with the acceptance that not all sickness and suffering will be eradicated until Jesus restores this earth. There is a degree of suffering that we as humans are called to endure because we are living in the *now but not yet* period of God's kingdom. Jesus died and rose again, and his sacrifice has been accepted by his Father. But God's wisdom and love for the lost is causing him to delay the full establishment of his kingdom. Because of this reality, it is not always best, or even biblical, to pray for immediate and complete healing for every patient. Again, the question is, What DO we pray for?

Harold Koenig states, the health professional "should always ask the patient what he or she would like prayer for. It is unwise and perhaps even rude for the [health professional] to assume that he or she knows. Asking the patient about what the [health professional] should pray about shows respect and humility" (2013:72).

Koenig continues, it may be "appropriate to emphasize God's love for that person, asking for peace, comfort, and strength for the patient and for the family to help them endure through the illness, and wisdom and skill for the doctor" (72).

In a lecture at Andrews University, Dr. Bruce Bauer, retired missionary and professor of mission, suggested the following when praying with patients. First, learn to listen to the patient and their family. What are they concerned about? What are their fears? What do they hope you - and God can do for them? Second, ask questions so you can pray specifically for the patient. Are their needs simply physical? Do they need peace or, if they are Christian, do they need a sense of assurance that God has not forgotten them? Are there areas in their life that are affected by their illness that God can heal, such as broken or strained relationships, financial struggles, etc.? When asking questions, look for areas where God can do something specific to demonstrate his personal interest and love for them. Finally, ask your Christian patients what they want Jesus to do for them. Some non-Christians may also be open to the question if they know something about God and his character.

This practice of asking the patient what they want prayer for may be a little intimidating, especially if one assumes that each patient will want physical healing. However, MacNutt suggests that "Some [people] are not ready to be healed, even when they ask for prayer" (1999:157-158). The only way to know if this is the case is to be listening to the patient and family, asking questions, and listening for and seeking to discern God's will.

But what if it's not clear how to pray for a patient? Koenig suggests that it is okay to "point out to the patient and family that we as humans have such a limited perspective on things and don't really know what is best for our life . . . requiring that we trust God to bring about the very best response to our prayers" (2013:73). By praying for God to work out his will in a patient's life, we give opportunity for the Holy Spirit to respond to our prayers in a way that will best benefit the patient, their family, and others who may be watching. In Muriel Cook's book, *Kitchen Table Counseling*, she calls this "believing" or having faith for others. She and her daughter, Shelly Cook Volkhard, co-author of the book, say that many people who are experiencing a physical crisis are often also experiencing a spiritual crisis or crisis of faith. And in those situations, they need a person of faith to believe for them (2006:15-16).

Sometimes, however, it is not the patient's faith that is wavering. Rather it is ours. Francis MacNutt shares his experience:

> I don't always know whether the person I pray for will get well. Unless the Lord reveals to me all the necessary details of the situation, I simply do not know whether healing will take place at this time. Does this mean I don't have faith? No, I don't think so; it simply means I am human. My faith is in God, not in my own powers—not even in my own faith. (1999:95)

Ryan agrees. She says, "Prayers for others must always take into consideration our human limitations since we cannot fully comprehend the work of God" (2001:70). So, recognizing and admitting that we do not know God's will or exactly how to pray for a patient is not necessarily a sign of lack of faith on our part. Instead, it is a sign of our humanity. In those instances, we should then simply pray for the issues we know the patient and family are struggling with. We can pray for God to bless them with peace, restored relationships, and that he will provide for their physical needs. And we can also pray that God will bless the medical professionals guiding the care for the patient with wisdom, clarity, and discernment so the treatment can be most effective.

Ellen White says the following about faith:

> True faith lays hold of and claims the promised blessing before it is realized and felt. We must send up our petitions in faith within the second veil and let our faith take hold of the promised blessing and claim it as ours. We are then to believe that we receive the blessing, because our faith has hold of it, and according to the Word it is ours. "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" Mark 11:24. (1882:72)

This does not mean that we must pray for healing. But it does mean that we can have faith that God will answer our prayers to execute His will in our patients' lives.

However, some caution is advised. In *Testimonies for the Church* volumn 2, Ellen White recounts an experience in which an Adventist member requested prayer for healing. Not knowing the man, the Whites did not feel comfortable praying for his healing and told him that they could not pray for him without knowing God's will. That night, after prayer, God revealed to them in a dream that the man was harboring known sin in his life and that because of his unwillingness to surrender the sin, God was not able to heal him (1868:349-351). While sad, this story illustrates the seriousness of sin and how it can prevent God from working his will in a believer's life. So, when working with Christians, it is important that some pre-work be done to be sure that the patient has confessed and forsaken known sin. For those who are not Christians, they may be participating in activities or indulging in addictions that they know are not good for them. While they may not know it as *sin*, it is no less sin. In such cases it may be that the focus of prayer should be asking for a spirit of confession and repentance or asking God to help them break their destructive habits, rather than praying for healing.

When we sense, through the Holy Spirit's prompting that the patient needs prayer for something other than healing, then we should still do what we can to relieve the patient's suffering. Ellen White states, "when the suffering body has been relieved, and you have shown a lively interest in the afflicted, the heart is opened, and you can pour in the heavenly balm" (1892:403). The good news is that even if all we can do is bring some relief to suffering, and possibly even if all we do is demonstrate our compassion particularly if our attempts to relieve suffering fail, our care and concern can open doors for spiritual ministry. And isn't that the most important thing? If we are not engaging in medical missionary work for the purpose of using it as a bridge to gospel ministry, what differentiates us from secular medical care providers?

The Risk of Praying for Healing

While every medical missionary would love to have the experience of praying for and receiving a miraculous answer to prayer, there are some risks involved that we must be aware of. Shane Clifton suggests that "the way pentecostals [sic] preach and pray for healing negatively impacts people who are not healed, especially those with a disability" (2014:213). In the article he shares a story in which a young woman was physically injured by overly-aggressive prayer warriors seeking healing for her

life-long scoliosis. Pulling her out of her wheelchair and forcing her to stand left her bruised and triggered severe and painful muscle spasms in her back that lasted for several days. But worse than the physical injury was the emotional damage. Clifton relates how he and others have been hurt by those attempting to cast out various demons such as the demon of pain or the demon of paralysis. While those praying may be sincere, they often do not realize that when their prayers are not answered, the message they send is that those who are physically imperfect are in some way also spiritually imperfect. He says, "The trouble is that the message of healing is inevitably alienating to the "unhealed." (214).

The question is, what do those with disabilities and chronic illness really need? While they would each love to receive healing, many have made peace with the fact that healing is not God's plan. Clifton again states, "The concept of well-being recognizes the reality of our limits. So, rather than seeking to escape our finitude, it looks to individual and communal flourishing in the midst of our limitations" (221). Simply stated, those suffering with unhealed illness and/or disability have had to come to terms with the fact that they have to live with pain and suffering the rest of their lives. What they need is a community of support and care who can help them find and experience flourishing and well-being in spite of their limitations. I would take this a step further and suggest that they need support from a caring and understanding Christian community to help them sustain and maintain their faith and belief that God does care about them even though he allows them to remain unhealed while confined to life on earth.

What If God Does Nothing?

One question remains: What if I feel impressed to pray for someone's healing but God does not answer my prayer? What if it appears that God is doing nothing? It can be embarrassing and even humiliating when our prayers are unanswered. And perhaps you can relate to my fear of unanswered prayers turning potential disciples away from Jesus before they even have a chance to hear the gospel. So how should we respond when God seems silent?

Based on my study I would suggest the following. First, pray for discernment and clarity. Was there something the patient said that we did not hear or understand? Is there a hidden sin in my life or in the patients' life that prevented God from being able to intervene? Spend time in prayer asking God to give understanding and clarity so you know how to better pray for the patient.

Second, work hard to maintain and deepen your relationship with the patient and their family. Even though we may feel embarrassed or ashamed because our bold prayers did not lead to miraculous healing, we should not withdraw from them. Rather, we should come closer and continue to exhibit faith that God is still deeply interested in the patient but has a different answer. But we must remember that the patient and family are in no less need than they were before we prayed. So, it is important that we continue to offer friendship and support.

Third, seek to relieve the suffering of the patient. Helping them to find comfort and finding ways to increase their well-being can help mitigate the disappointment they may feel and help reorient and refocus their faith and belief. We should also invite other believers to become involved in the life of the patient and their family. Based on his experience becoming disabled, Shane Clifton shares that "the church can do what the medical profession cannot: create communities that welcome those with long-term injury and disability and help them to flourish" (2014:218). When God does not answer a prayer for instant or complete healing, it does not mean that God did not hear or that he does not care. Nor does it mean that he has given up on the patient or their family. In these situations, the patient and family may benefit from a community of believers who can support them as they grapple with the reality of having to learn to live with the illness or disability. The support and help given by a community of faith can even help them to find God in the process.

Fourth, continue to pray with and for the patient. Ask God to give them a sense of his presence and to help everyone involved experience him in some way. Keep looking for other needs and continue to pray for God to intervene in their lives.

Finally, never give up. Just because God does not answer one prayer doesn't mean he won't answer the next prayer. Persist and persevere. Keep talking faith. Ken Blue suggests, "The real question is not, "Do I believe strongly enough to be healed or to pray for the sick?" but, "Is God the sort of person I can trust, and am I willing to be open to his love?" (1987:103). Seemingly unanswered prayers do not mean that God has given up or does not care. Rather, we should see them as perspective-changing experiences. We need to recognize that our assumptions may not have been correct and allow the Holy Spirit to use these times as opportunities to teach us something new about God's character and his ways. Rather than weakening our faith, they can serve to strengthen our faith.

Conclusion

Prayer for healing for those who are sick and who suffer is a special ministry and it has the potential to connect people from all different backgrounds and persuasions to the God who created and loves them. And by knowing how best to pray for those we are caring for, we will see the results Ellen White saw: "Medical missionary work has been presented as the entering wedge of present truth. It is by this work that hearts are reached, and those once prejudiced are softened and subdued. This is the work that is to be done today" (1902: para. 25).

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REYLOURD REYES

Sharing Christ with Young Urban Nones in Metro Manila

Introduction

The secularization movement is continuing to gain popularity, which is shown most clearly in metropolitan areas, and as a result, urban people's worldview has undergone significant change. Global factors, including industry, education, transportation, communication, and politics, have contributed to extraordinary urban growth since the start of the nineteenth century (Hiebert and Meneses 1995:258).

The difficulties brought on by rapid urban population growth are described in the World Cities Report (UN Habitat 2016). Urbanization, shifting family structures, rising slum and informal settlement populations, difficulties in delivering urban services, climate change, social exclusion, and rising inequality, insecurity, and increased international migration are a few of the challenges cities face. Missions in cities are significantly constrained by a number of these components (Onongha 2019:28).

Several initiatives have been taken over the last twenty years to revitalize the urban church. The terms "seeker-sensitive church," "emerging church," "organic church," "simple church," "missional church," "liquid church," and "healthy church" have been used to describe various viewpoints. Many of these initiatives have given rise to extensive networks of new initiatives for establishing and growing churches. (Van Engen 2017: Loc. 5130). While many of these endeavors and the associated publications provide beneficial insights and constructive vision, it would seem that these movements have not influenced the real metroplexes in which they are situated (Loc. 5136).

More people have become comfortable with not belonging to a religious organization as secularization and urbanization have taken over today's culture. Such people are now more generally referred to as the Nones. According to the World Values Survey and the European Values Study, by the year 2017, roughly 25.9% of people worldwide were not affiliated with any religion (Balazka 2020:27).

The Nones' population in the Philippines is likewise expanding quickly. According to the Philippine Statistical Authority 73,248 of the 92,097,978 Filipinos do not identify as religious (2015:1-30). On the other hand, Michael French (2017) of The Atlantic concurs, placing the Nones at 0.1 percent of the country's inhabitants. Lealy Galang and Fernando (2016) cite a different survey from the Dentsu Communication Institute in Japan that claims there are around 11 million Nones in the Philippines, or roughly 11% of the total Filipino population (Lambino 2010).

Even though there are significant differences in the numbers from these studies, there is no denying that the Nones population is growing and the majority of them are young professionals in Metro Manila. This non-religious worldview is more prominent in the cities where young adults are also the major driving force, thus, calling for Filipino Christians to devise strategies and methodologies relevant to the context of young urbanites. Therefore, this article focuses on mission to young urbanites of Metro Manila, describing the ministry context, theological foundations, the needs of the community, and the available resources needed for such a study.

Theological and Missiological Foundation

Harvie Conn's biblical theology of the city, as cited by Wendal Mark Johnson asserts that "the Bible begins in a garden and finishes in a city." He adds Andrew Davey's words that "there is no great 'urban narrative' in the Bible that takes us from the city of Cain to the New Jerusalem, in much the same way that the urban histories of the twentieth century take us from Athens to Chicago or Los Angeles." Yet urbanization is a force that permeates the Scriptures, towering, drawing, confronting, devouring, and requiring a response (2020:29).

Contrary to popular misconceptions, the Bible is a book for both urban and rural areas. The culture of Moses, David, Daniel, and Jesus "was arguably more urban than any Western civilization for the subsequent 1,500 years" according to Robert Linthicum, as reported by Howard Olver (2010). He continues by pointing out that by the year 2000 BC, Ur, Abraham's city, had a population of 250,000 people. Because of its size, it took three days to traverse Nineveh during Jonah's missionary mission. (4-5).

Running water, flushing toilets, and an unmatched irrigation system until the eighteenth century were all features of King Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon. When the apostle Paul lived, Rome was the first city with a population of over a million. Rome built the first multi-story apartment complexes 2,000 years ago (Olver 2010:4-5). It is essential to look at urban missions mentioned in the Scriptures in order to build a theology of mission to the cities.

One can make a case for urban mission in the Bible by looking at several factors. The priesthood in the Old Testament was an "urban institution," according to Ray Bakke, as quoted by Onongha (2019). He adds that the most significant Old Testament personalities resided in cities, including Moses, Joseph, Daniel, and Nehemiah (25). "Mission in the New Testament was primarily an urban movement," according to Roger Greenway, as cited by Onongha (2019). Capernaum, a prominent city in Jesus' day, served as the hub of his mission. All of Paul's letters were written to big cities with established congregations. Because of this, Jesus and Paul were fully aware of the importance of city ministry (25).

Although most of Jesus' deeds in the New Testament take place in small towns, it is important to keep in mind that at the time, a city (like Jerusalem) and the nearby villages were interconnected in a single territory with solid economic and social ties. Jerusalem is often depicted as the epicenter and goal of Jesus' ministry (Sheldrake 2014:17-18). It is hard to argue against the relationship between Jesus and the cities. The triumphant arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem before his death, which culminates in his crucifixion in Jerusalem, marking the end of his mission is highlighted by Sheldrake. Additionally, Matthew's Gospel compares Jesus' followers to "a city on a hill" (Matt 5:14). Furthermore, according to biblical scholars, Luke's Gospel was written in Syria, Antioch, or one of the cities of Asia Minor, Matthew's Gospel was written in Syrian Antioch or one of the Phoenician towns of southern Syria, and Mark's Gospel was written in Rome (18).

Moreover, Jesus' sympathy for the towns is seen in a number of the New Testament stories. Onongha (2019) mentions a few of these, including the fact that Jesus wept over Jerusalem because he wanted to save a city that had rejected his love (Matt 23:37; Luke 19:41), the fact that Jesus gave his followers the mission to spread the gospel to Jerusalem and Samaria (Acts 1:8), and the fact that Jesus said in John 3:16 that "God loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" to save it. The Greek word translated as "world" in this phrase is cosmos, which encompasses cities and the inhabitants of those cities (26).

Sheldrake admits that the focus of Christian outreach shifted to the cities of the Roman Empire because of the Apostle Paul's strategy, as it is

recounted in the Book of Acts. Christianity rapidly became a religion of the city (2014:18). Paul's missionary excursions to places like Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, and Corinth are listed by Bakke, as repeated by Onongha (2019), before concluding in the largest city of his day, Rome (26). Roland Allen's categorization of these cities as Roman administrative capitals, Greek cultural epicenters, Jewish influence centers, or locations of substantial economic importance is shared by Johnson (2020:42).

Luke never emphasizes Antioch's reputation for depravity, perversion, vileness, idolatry, or debauchery; instead, he focuses on the spiritual activities for which it became known, ultimately surpassing "Jerusalem to become the missionary headquarters of that age," according to Greenway as noted by Onongha (2019:26).

Johnson (2020) agrees with Eckhard Schnabel that Paul had a simple goal of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with Jews and Gentiles in line with the Great Commission, particularly in locations where it had never been shared before (Gal 2:7; Rom 15:14-21). This goal's implementation was similarly straightforward: he traveled from city to city on major Roman thoroughfares and smaller local roads, preaching the message of Jesus as the Messiah and Savior and baptizing new believers in small-scale Christian congregations (43).

Greenway also emphasizes the apostolic church's best strategies "in first-century urban outreach." These included apostolic teaching, discipleship, spending time with families, changing homes and communities, lay preachers' testimonies, devoted time with families, and communion with the Holy Spirit. These initiatives, carried out in the first-century towns empowered by the Holy Spirit, were responsible for the spread of the gospel across the Roman Empire (Johnson 2020:43-44).

Young Urbanites of Metro Manila
and Their Needs

The majority of Metro Manila's young urban population consists of Millennials and late Gen Xers. The Pew Research Center's research found that generations had personalities and that "Millennials have started to form theirs: confident, self-expressive, liberal, optimistic and open to change" (Taylor and Keeter 2010:1). Compared to their parent's generation, they have more complex lives in terms of education, career, family, values, and leisure. The manner of life that young people see as "normal" does not determine who they are. They like a unique and intimate encounter (Kinnaman and Lyons 2007:22).

This section explores the characteristics of these young professionals, who are mostly Millennials and some of the Late Gen Xers. After listing these characteristics, their needs will be identified, and opportunities to reach out to them will be recognized.

Community and Relationships

The types of communities that Millennials live in are a consequence of the country's shifting landscape, which has been "less rural and more sub-urban-metropolitan in recent decades," in contrast to prior generations. Millennials are far less likely to live in rural areas than older people their age. Additionally, 32% of Millennials live in central cities, compared to 23% of the Silent generation. This is a higher percentage than that of prior generations (Taylor and Keeter 2010:12).

These young people are motivated by relationships. Loyalty to friends is one of their main tenets. They have a great desire to become a part of a group of people who share their views and embrace them. In spite of this, deep independence resides underneath these connections (Kinnaman and Lyons 2007:22). Thus, these young professionals prefer to live in cities and value friends who think, act, and live like them.

Use of Technology

This generation is the first in history to be "always connected." Almost like a body part, they utilize their multi-tasking handheld gadgets because they are so ingrained in digital technology and social media. More than 80% of individuals say they keep a phone by their bedside while they are asleep, ready to receive and send texts, calls, emails, music, news, movies, games, and wake-up jingles. However, convenience sometimes gives way to temptation (Taylor and Keeter 2010:1). Technology, like computers and smartphones, is used for their primary business interactions. Since they spend more money than an ordinary person and have a diverse group of contacts on their cell phones, they make up a class of young professionals (Di Clemente and Gonzales 2018).

The most often mentioned reason why Millennials feel their generation is unique is how they use technology. Twenty-four percent of those under 30 say technology is what makes their generation special (Taylor and Keeter 2010:13). Generational change and technological development often coincide. In recent years, the internet and smartphones have gained widespread acceptance, and Millennials have been among the most ardent proponents of the technology.

Marriage and Family

Although getting married and having a family may have formerly been the norm, many current young people do not plan to get married or have a family until much later in life, if at all (Kinnaman and Lyons 2007:22). At a comparable age with older generations, millennials are far less likely to be married or have families (Barroso, Parker, and Bennet 2020:7).

Three out of ten Millennials claim that one of their major life objectives is to have a good marriage, "family comes first, and fame and riches are considerably less important." Even though just around a third of Millennials (34%) are parents, they are equally as likely as their parents to place a high value on good parenting. Being a good parent is one of their top objectives, according to around half (52%) of the respondents (Taylor and Keeter 2010:12, 17-19).

According to Taylor and Keeter, Millennials are more likely (47%) than their immediate two previous generations (Gen Xers, 43% and Boomers, 39%), to live with other family members, such as their parents (2010:12, 17-19). Only 9% of Millennials live alone, according to a poll by Barroso, Parker, and Bennet. In addition, they discovered that 14% of Millennials live with their parents, and another 14% do so with other relatives (2020:6).

View on Homosexuality

Gay marriage has been a divisive political and civil rights issue for the better part of a decade, and Millennials have a distinctive set of views on the matter. Only 36% oppose legalizing gay marriage, making the majority either strongly supportive (21%) or preferring it (29%). Millennials are the only current generation that leans in that direction. According to the 2007 Religious Landscape Survey, 63% of young people think society should be tolerant of homosexuality (Taylor and Keete, 2010:55, 102).

The Millennial generation's particular experience with and exposure to LGBT persons accounts for these differences from other generations. Fifty-four percent of Millennials claim to have close LGBT friends or family members. Millennials are thus more likely than earlier generations to embrace gay marriage. Support for the legalization of homosexual marriage among Millennials is significantly correlated with having a close friend or family member who identifies as LGBT (Taylor and Keeter 2010:61).

Economic Outlook, Financial Literacy, and Other Priorities

Job success is one of the main priorities for Millennials. Professional success is ranked as one of the most significant elements of life by 15% of

respondents. Furthermore, while not one of the essential items, 47 percent of respondents think this is vital (Taylor and Keeter 2010:18-19). The recent prolonged economic crisis has had a negative effect on millennials. The Great Recession has significantly impacted their entry into careers and their first jobs, yet they are more upbeat about their financial futures than their elders. They are unhappy with the state of the economy right now, but they are nevertheless optimistic about their financial future (1, 20).

Only 31% of young people who are employed feel that they make enough money to live the life they desire and are generally dissatisfied with their wages. As expected, younger workers are less satisfied with their current pay than older workers. In contrast, older employees have higher expectations for their prospective earnings in the future. Among Millennials who say they do not make enough money, 89% are optimistic about their ability to do so in the future (Taylor and Keeter 2010:20).

Their financial knowledge is likely a factor in this. Researchers Neschelle De Castro, Lia Andrea Salamat, and Malou Tabor (2020) examined the level of financial literacy among young professionals in Quezon City, Philippines, between the ages of 20 and 35. According to their findings, "only 35% of respondents are aware of financial wellness that results in poor financial management practices that strongly affect them." Furthermore, it has been shown that financial attitudes balance the impact of financial information on behavior, suggesting that young professionals need to have the right attitude in order to take advantage of financial knowledge. Young working professionals were shown to have poor financial behavior (219).

Other priorities include giving to those in need, which is seen as one of the most important parts of life by 21% of Millennials. Owning a home is also significant. Twenty percent of Millennials prioritize owning a home above anything else. Only 9% of young people believe that "having lots of free time to relax and do things they want to do" is one of the most important parts of their life (Taylor and Keeter 2010:18-19).

Trusting Others

Millennials have a cynical view of human nature, whether as a consequence of their protective parents, widespread terrorism, or a media culture that is preoccupied with risk. Two-thirds think that while engaging with others, "you can't be too cautious." Nevertheless, they harbor less mistrust than their superiors in the government. They believe that the government should take greater action to solve concerns than earlier generations. The sentiments of young people are similar to those of older

age groups in this regard: 28% of those between the ages of 18 and 29 and 32% of those between the ages of 30 and over feel that most people can be trusted (Taylor and Keeter 2010:2, 23).

Exercise and Leisure

An additional aspect of typical Millennials' life is exercise. More than half state that they engaged in strenuous activity on the day before their survey interview, such as running, bicycling, or working out at a gym. Because of life-cycle impacts, Millennials are more likely to be younger and healthier than their older counterparts. Because many of them are not married or have children, they have more time to exercise (Taylor and Keeter 2010:60).

Social, Cultural, and Racial Issues

Younger people are more accepting of evolution and homosexuality than older people. Additionally, they are more at ease with a bigger government and are less concerned by Hollywood tarnishing their values. However, when asked about morality and religion in general, young people think that absolute rules of good and evil apply to everyone. Additionally, young people are a little more sympathetic to efforts by the government to uphold morality as well as campaigns launched by religious organizations to advance their social and political viewpoints. Almost half of the young people believe that abortion should be legal in all or the majority of circumstances (52 percent) (Taylor and Keeter 2010:102, 104).

Racial tolerance is one area in which youth excell. Younger generations are seen as being more accepting of races and groups different than their own by a margin of more than two to one compared to previous generations (47 percent vs. 19 percent) (Taylor and Keeter 2010:15).

The Young Urbanites and Religion

Young people place a heavy emphasis on spirituality, yet many consider religion to be merely one aspect of a fulfilling, varied existence. Approximately one in ten young people believe religion is their top priority, even though the vast majority of them attended a Christian church during their high school years. Many congregations suffer from a lack of young talent, energy, and leadership as a result of the majority of young people who were engaged in church as adolescents withdrawing from church life and, in many instances, quitting Christianity at some point during their early adulthood (Kinnaman and Lyons 2007:23).

Young people nowadays "report attending religious services less often than their elders," according to the 2007 Religious Landscape Survey by the Pew Forum. Worship attendance at least once a week is reported by one-third of adults under the age of 30, compared to 41 percent of people over the age of 30 (including more than half of people 65 and older) (Taylor and Keeter 2010:90).

Compared to their elders, young people engage in a range of religious practices less often. For instance, the 2007 Religious Landscape Survey indicated that just 25% of those under the age of 30 claim to routinely meditate, and only 27% of young adults read Scripture regularly. Furthermore, just 48% of those under the age of 30 claim to pray every day (92).

Less than half (45%) of those under 30 think religion is extremely important in their lives. According to this statistic, young people nowadays exhibit less religious fervor than their parents. In a similar vein, young people today are less convinced of God's existence than their elders are, with just roughly 64% of young adults believing in him. Younger generations are also considerably less inclined to see the Bible as God's inspired message in its entirety. Young people nowadays differ from their elders very little on several measures of religious belief (94, 96, 98, 100).

Challenges of Urban Mission

The early 21st century's increasing urbanization is a topic for more than just scholarly research and debate. From a missiological standpoint, the intersection of urbanization, globalization, and secularization presents a whole mountain range of spiritual heights that need constant prayer and fresh commitment on the part of missiologists and missionaries (Vine 2019:72). The population of cities all around the world has been quietly expanding while missiologists have concentrated on how to reach the unreached people groups of the world (Onongha 2019:23).

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the same stands true. The Church has, at best, had a conflicted relationship with the missional demands of the city during the course of its first 150 years. The church, for the most part, was unable to meet the huge challenge posed by the expanding cities because of internal and external socioeconomic issues. Instead, Adventists largely withdrew from urban areas, at least in practice if not explicitly, as urban population development intensified, and more than half of the world's population now lives in metropolitan areas (Chase 2020:130). Adventism was brought to the Philippines in the early 20th century, and the missionaries to the Philippines brought with them an anti-urban mindset.

The Adventist Church and Urban Missions

A long-standing obstacle to the mission to the cities appears to be secularization, while the emergence of the Nones produces an unprecedented problem for Christians. The Ellen White compilation *Country Living*, which highlights the advantages of rural living, was released in 1946, and according to Allan Novaes and Wendel Lima (2019:16), "this material helped to shape the ethos of the movement and its missionary strategies. Ironically, for a long time in Adventism, speaking about an urban mission meant speaking against cities."

According to Onongha, early Adventism usually emphasized the need to evacuate the city for simple country living since cities were considered Babylon (Jer 50:1-3; Rev 18:2-3; 2019:31). Novaes and Lima add that Adventism acquired both a positive perspective of the advantages of the countryside and a negative view of the problems of living in urban areas from their Protestant heritage (2019:16).

Seventh-day Adventist missionary work in the Philippines has also been impacted by this perception of the city. The church has made more of an effort to reach out to rural communities while making less of an attempt to do so in urban ones. An Adventist theology of the city, according to Gary Krause, "must acknowledge the church's historic lack of attention to the city, address its current engagements and non-engagements with the city, and position the city in a central part of the church's locus of care and concern" (2019:3).

Ellen White writing about the state of the cities in 1909, said, "The world over cities are becoming the hotbeds of vice. On every hand are the sights and sounds of evil" (42). Even if the Adventist Church wants its urban mission to be successful, history and statistics show that there is still much to be done and that there may even be internal hurdles that need to be removed if Adventists are to achieve their goal of taking the gospel to the city.

I have had a lot of difficulties managing city missions as a church planter in an urban area. Most of these concern church members who are vitally important for mission work. I have seen how many professing Christians have neglected to evangelize the city due to their lack of understanding and weak theological background. Our practice and theology of mission are impacted by our strong practices of exclusion, legalism, racism, judgmentalism, and conservatism.

Church Planting in the Central Luzon
Conference and Metro Manila

Founded as a church planting movement, the Seventh-day Adventist Church received an eschatological mission to spread the gospel across the globe in the current time of the end. The establishment of new churches was one way to do this. The church was officially founded in 1863 with around 3,500 members, and in a little over 150 years, its membership increased to almost 15 million (W. Krause 2011:2).

It is crucial to remember that there were no pastors appointed to individual congregations in the early years of Adventism (George Knight, p. 37) or a Russell Burrill reports, the Adventist Church did not have "settled pastors" in charge of any congregations throughout the first fifty or sixty years of its existence (1999:52). A pastor's duties included church planting and evangelism. Pastoral candidates understood that their duty was to evangelize and establish churches. Large tents were originally used by Adventists to conduct gatherings in the summer of 1854. Crowds of people came since it was unusual to see tents utilized for this purpose back then (127).

For individuals wishing to join the ministry, tent evangelism offered evangelistic training. After these gatherings were over, a church was often established, and elders and deacons were chosen to lead it. Then, pastors would be transferred to another place, conduct another tent meeting, and establish a new church (W. Krause 2011:10-11). As a result, the young Adventist Church experiences a church planting drive alongside growth in membership and the number of congregations.

This is no longer true in the Central Luzon Conference (CLC) after more than a century of existence. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists' Annual Statistical Report (ASTR) records that the CLC had 363 organized churches, 97 companies with 102,730 members at the end of 2006 (2006:32). After ten years, there were 398 organized churches, 106 companies, 164,123 members (ASTR 2017:26) and with an average of 6,155 baptisms per year (ASTR 2006:32, 2007:32, 2008:32, 2009:32, 2010:32, 2013:36, 2013:14, 2014:23, 2015:25, 2016:26, 2017:26).

According to the figures provided above, the number of organized churches in the CLC increased by 35 and 61,313 members were added between 2006 and 2016, which averages four churches, seven companies, and two new church plants per year. Many new members are being baptized each year, so it is clear that the conference is thriving in terms of its members. However, only a handful of new churches are being established. The same is true in Metro Manila, the metropolis located inside the CLC

area. From 2006 to 2016, an average of one organized church, two new companies, and 0.5 church plants were established every year. The CLC started its urban church planting campaign during those years, particularly in 2013 and is still continuing; although it has not yet had a significant influence on the number of churches started in urban areas.

Resistance to Change

The pastors who are in charge of this new emphasis are one of the most important aspects of ministering to the cities. As a result, rather than serving as the means of sharing Christ and panting new churches in the cities, they also have the potential to impede it. According to Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im (2016), despite the fact that a new music genre or congregational method is able to attract a whole different demographic group, many pastors are reluctant to start another church in the same area. According to their conclusion, the new church might end up competing with the existing one, and, worse still, it "could make the older church look worn and out of date by contrast" (10).

If pastors have this type of attitude, they do not keep their thoughts to themselves; instead, they discuss them with their congregation. This attitude quickly spreads across the whole church due to their influence. This can cause church members who have a heart for reaching the lost, to reconsider the importance of planting new churches and begin to say things like, "Well, they don't even gather in a proper church with an organ or a building and [it] has loud music" (Stetzer and Im 2016:10).

City, Not a Mission Field

J. Scott Holste who was cited by Kevin Thomas Baggett, said that missionaries who grew up in a city often choose to leave home and spread the gospel outside their hometown rather than working in areas "with the largest concentrations of lost people and focus strategically on reaching those urban centers" (2013:131).

Many lay people, who sincerely want to spread the gospel, focus on the concept of moving abroad or going to a remote location, while overlooking the needs of local cities and urban areas. Stetzer and Im further explain that:

> ironically, they're completely on board with sharing the gospel in the language of a tribe in a faraway land, but they don't realize that same missionary approach would be useful right there in Anytown. And they certainly don't drop in that new church just to see what's go-

ing on—like you might try that new restaurant your brother-in-law recommended—because that could be seen as disloyal to the church where they've invested so much of themselves. So the more they circle the wagons, the less they learn about much church planting. And the cycle continues." (2015:10)

Unfamiliarity with Cities

The Christian message "must constantly be translated into every new language and situation," according to Timothy Keller. Sadly, the Christian church has not been successful in doing this (2016:143). As a result, often when missionaries arrive in metropolitan areas, they are overburdened and lose their effectiveness.

This is true for American missionary organizations that dispatched missionaries to live and preach in the emerging cities. They often lacked life experience and often did not know how to effectively minister in large urban areas (143). Keller describes his interaction with American missionaries sent to Chinese megacities. In relation to the Chinese language and culture, they thought they were completely prepared:

> but after a while, they realized they knew nothing about living in cities. Each member of their team had grown up in small towns in southern and Midwestern areas of the United States. They struggled more with urban life than with life in China per se. And they also came to see that the people they were trying to reach were more like people living in Los Angeles and Manhattan than like those in the Chinese countryside. The leader of the team told me, "only the language training we received was helpful. We were given no training on how to live in cities and how to reach urban people, and as a result, we've been ineffective." (143-144)

Prevailing Worldviews in Cities

The worldviews that are distinct from and sometimes opposed to Christianity make it exceedingly difficult for Christians to approach many urban populations. Relativism and postmodernism, which undermine any definite and fundamental truth for people to stand on and the most basic facts of life and morality that have been historically recognized, are additional philosophical perspectives that are popular in cities. As a result, adherents are effectively left in a condition of intellectual ambiguity in almost every sphere of life (Brooks 2014:58).

Cities also tolerate and often encourage pluralism, which is marked by an increase in alternatives due to the fact that no one religion or philosophy has the whole truth (J. White 2014:50). Due to the privatization of religion, individuals are now able to adopt beliefs from other faiths in order to construct a personal religion that matches their own preferences, with Christianity being one of the choices. A religion that asserts it is the only one that is correct is viewed as bigoted and false in a pluralistic society. Orthodox Christianity is easily dismissed for asserting that there is universal and unchanging ultimate truth (51).

This has the effect of causing many unchurched people to appear as opposed to Christian beliefs and for church members to have a hard time understanding them. In addition, many unchurched people feel more comfortable outside of an organized spiritual community (31). When added to the lack of training and experience urban missionaries often have in reaching out to this new demographic, these factors make urban missions particularly difficult.

Online Technology

The development of technology is ongoing in Metro Manila, just as it is in other progressive cities. People are thus more prone than ever to feel too occupied. They have engagements and other activities, online and physical, that eat up vital time. It has progressed to new media (e-readers, websites) and social media (blogs, Facebook, Twitter) from traditional reading forms like newspapers and books. Many individuals believe they no longer have time for the church as a result of growing apathy toward religion and society's short attention span (Barna and Kinnaman 2014:18).

According to DataReportal, social media users increased by 521 million between January and April 2021, bringing the total to 4.33 billion, or nearly 55% of the world's population. This is equivalent to a growth rate of 13.7% on a yearly basis, or "an average of 16½ new users every single second." In addition to Facebook (2.797 billion monthly active users), other social media platforms have gained popularity, including TikTok (732 million monthly active users), WhatsApp (2 billion monthly active users), Facebook Messenger (1.3 billion monthly active users), Instagram (1.287 billion potential advertising reach), and YouTube (2.291 billion) (https://datareportal.com/social-media-users).

Additionally, Barna and Kinnaman note that consumers "have access to more material and knowledge than anybody could expect to acquire and digest because of DVRs, digital season passes, large multiplayer online games, and tablet PCs" (2014:18). Online streaming services for movies are now growing in popularity, including Netflix, Amazon Prime

Video, Apple TV+, HBO Go, and others. The same can be said about mobile gaming, which is popular among younger age groups. How are urban missionaries going to minister to these segments of the population when they are busy with all of these activities that take up their time?

If that obstacle was not difficult enough, modern technology allows every connected individual to add his or her picture, thought, or opinion to the digital mix, which alters people's expectations of what they should be doing in society beyond just consuming to contributing. This is a challenge since it is easy to understand how the church and particularly a church worker may get in the way of shifting cultural expectations when they deliver a biblical message that follows traditional ways of designating one person as the authority and urging everyone else to sit and consume silently while he or she talks (Barna and Kinnaman 2014:19).

Despite making progress in reaching out digitally via websites, podcasts, and social media, the church only finds success with teenage churchgoers, seldom establishing traction with churchless adults. The majority of "young unchurched professionals don't seek much spiritual substance" (19).

Opportunities of Urban Mission

A large percentage of young urbanites are secular and, thus, are not engaged in any type of religious activities. Most of them have had an experience with the church and spirituality but have chosen to distance themselves from it and its practices. That is why traditional methods of sharing the gospel almost always do not work for this group. As more of these young urbanites flock to Metro Manila, the Adventist Church has a window of opportunity for this new mission field waiting to be reached out to.

With the challenges that they bring, missionaries to these people must adapt their strategies according to the needs of these young professionals. With the urbanites focused more on relationships than mere information and knowledge, ministries should be developed that are more incarnational in nature. Urban young people are interested in relationships with people who do not judge them and respect them for who they are. This group is diverse in their ideas about family, marriage, homosexuality, politics, finances, love, and religion. These can be conversation topics that urban missionaries can utilize to genuinely show that Christians want to engage in conversations with them. It needs to be demonstrated that followers of Jesus take time to listen without judgment and respect others' opinions even if it is different from what they believe.

Another avenue to reach them is through the internet and social media. There is almost no boundary to the connectivity today's society is experiencing. With just a few clicks on a smartphone, one can send a message and talk to somebody in just a few seconds. As this generation is spending a lot of time on the use of social media, this is a great avenue for urban missionaries to utilize and continuously connect with the young urbanites of Metro Manila.

Discipling Metro Manila Young Urbanites

Based on the above information, a discipleship structure is suggested specifically for these young urbanites. This will ensure that these secular young people living in Metro Manila will have an opportunity to experience the gospel as they move along the discipleship path.

Belong ⟶ Believe ⟶ Become

Belong: The young urbanites of Metro Manila value friendships and conversations. This is crucial to building connections with them since this is where the discipleship process begins. It is a must that urban missionaries establish genuine relationships with young urbanites that will demonstrate how the gospel is lived. This is achieved by engaging them in missional communities like life coaching sessions (CAFÉ Life), community building projects (Project Lingap), lifestyle improvement programs (Better Lifestyle Movement), and a community for the young entrepreneur (Simply Ventures).

Believe: After feeling comfortable by belonging to welcoming groups, young urbanites who start to ask about faith and what the urban missionaries believe. They are now ready to progress to the next stage of the discipleship journey. This is where the missionaries are to read, study, and share God's word with them. CARE groups continue to be proven to be effective in the development of these secular young people.

An example of this is Grow Groups where a coordinator facilitates faith discussions giving each member the opportunity to learn and experience the presence of God. All maturity levels of faith are accepted in this group; whether a person is a seeker or a long-time believer, they are encouraged to pursue God and grow in their spiritual walk through conversations with others, prayer, worship, and Bible study.

For those who want to study the Bible deeper, they are encouraged to join the Growth Group. This group is assisted by the pastor to guide the young professionals to commit their lives to being Christ's disciples

and to continue to take steps towards life transformation. Weekly worship gatherings (called Grow Gathering) are also one of the ways to strengthen community and relationship as they join in praise, prayer, lunch fellowship, and small group discussion.

Become: Becoming is the stage where the young urbanites accept Jesus as their personal Savior and commit to being a disciple of Jesus. At this stage they will be nurtured and guided by a spiritual guardian, their CARE Group, and the urban missionaries to engage in the Great Commission and become involved in discipling others. Their spiritual gifts will be evaluated to determine what ministry they can flourish in. They can now replicate the discipleship path they have experienced by becoming involved with those who are at the beginning stages of discipleship.

Conclusion

The techniques for sharing the gospel have evolved as a result of the changes brought by secularization and urbanization in Metro Manila. Approaches shifted from a "straight-out, in-your-face, confront-the-sinner" assertion of salvation toward an emphasis on interpersonal connections. Today, wherever a Christian goes, particularly in cities, this has evolved into evangelism in everyday life. A Christian's emphasis is on how to help people experience that they are loved by Jesus rather than merely saying it, whether at work, among friends, or at home.

Many young urbanites are secular and uninterested in religion, yet they have not completely shunned Christianity. Some of them continue to engage in some Christian practices, such as prayer, Bible study, and church attendance. Though they are not antagonistic toward Christianity, the majority of them have had personal experiences with Christians or the church, which can be part of their reason for breaking away from religion. Others still recognize positive aspects of Christianity and the church.

In order to develop and reinvent approaches that make the gospel accessible to young urbanites, Christians should spend more time trying to understand them. The findings of this study provide hope that Christians can share the gospel with young urbanites in ways that are meaningful to them. The positive ideals that young urbanites continue to associate with Christianity, Christians, and the church are evident. They may be reached most successfully through authentic relationships. Conversations and their common interest can be a good starting point to connect with them, like advocating for the needs of the poor, promoting a healthy lifestyle, and encouraging dialogue about marriage and family. Additionally, Christians may change a number of things to make the church more relevant for young urbanites by listening to them.

The Adventist Church in Metro Manila is working to create a community that would serve the influential and secular population of its city. Significant efforts have been made in the last 20 years to reach this demographic with the gospel message. These people groups are undoubtedly challenging to approach and much more so when trying to plant churches among them due to their skepticism of organized religion. Several have made an effort to address the significant challenge of reaching this people group; some have failed, while others are succeeding. While there have been substantial improvements in this seemingly impenetrable missional task, much more must be learned in order to develop viable approaches for this specific population in Metro Manila.

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DANIE POTGIETER

Examining Christ's Method of Ministering to People Using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: A Theoretical Analysis

This article seeks to view *Christ's Method* through the lens of Maslow's theory of *Hierarchy of Needs*. The ensuing theoretical discourse adheres to a structured framework, encompassing the following components: Introduction, Christ's Methods as Found in Scripture, Christ's Method as Articulated by Ellen G. White, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, Christ's Method and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Application and Implications, and a Concluding Section.

Introduction

The confluence of educational theories and psychological frameworks remains a subject of investigation in ecclesiastical and practical domains. This article seeks to establish connections between two ostensibly distinct paradigms: "Christ's Method," a missiological approach attributed to Jesus Christ and elucidated by Ellen G. White, and Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs," a psychological theory attempting to explain human motivations. The objective is to cultivate a meaningful synergy between these frameworks, promoting a more practical approach to missions and discipleship by addressing the intricate array of individual needs.

As articulated in the teachings of Jesus Christ and elaborated upon by Ellen White, Christ's method accentuates personal connection, empathy, and meeting individuals at their points of need. This approach underscores the significance of spiritual nurturing, authentic care, and a holistic view of humanity. Conversely, Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

delves into the psychological underpinnings of human behavior, asserting that individuals are driven by a hierarchy of needs ranging from basic physiological requirements to higher-order desires for self-actualization and transcendence (Maslow 1943b:370; Swatos 1998).

The convergence of Christ's method and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs presents an innovative avenue for optimizing both mission and the discipleship process. By blending the empathetic and holistic approach of Christ's method with the psychological insights of Maslow's theory, practitioners can offer a more comprehensive and tailored experience that resonates with individuals on multiple levels. This integration emphasizes the interconnectedness of spiritual and psychological aspects, ultimately fostering a more impactful and transformative faith journey.

Christ's Methods as Found in Scripture

The discipleship method advocated by Jesus Christ in the New Testament is a lasting framework resonating with compassionate leadership and authentic connection. Rooted in discipleship principles, it embodies the original meaning of success by stressing the importance of engaging with individuals in diverse contexts. The method involves Christ actively engaging with people, understanding their struggles, and unwaveringly caring for their well-being.

Examining Christ's discipleship approach as recorded in Matthew 9:35-36 (Jesus' compassion for the crowd), Matthew 14:13-21 (feeding the five thousand), Matthew 15:32–35 (feeding the four thousand), Matthew 20:29-34 (two blind men receive their sight), Mark 1:40-42 (Jesus heals a leper), Luke 7:11-15 (Jesus raises the son of the widow of Nain), John 2:1-12 (miracle at Cana), John 4:7-38 (the woman of Samaria), and John 8:1-11 (the adulterous woman), reveals a methodology characterized by profound sympathy, where Jesus ministered to the immediate needs of those around him. His strategy transcended transactions, aiming to cultivate confidence through genuine care and empathy. The New Testament narratives abound with instances where Christ, embodying the principles of his method, demonstrated an intimate understanding of various individuals' circumstances and a sincere and active commitment to their welfare.

In applying this approach, Christ went where people would be found and sought their well-being, exhibiting genuine interest in their spiritual and personal growth. His interactions surpassed superficial engagement, reflecting a holistic commitment to the comprehensive development of individuals. Christ displayed sympathy by ministering to the immediate needs of those he encountered, creating a profound impact beyond surface-level interactions. Examples of Jesus ministering to the immediate

needs of those he met can be found in Matthew 14:13-21 (feeding the five thousand), Matthew 15:32-35 (feeding the four thousand), Matthew 20:29-34 (two blind men receive their sight), Mark 1:40-42 (Jesus heals a leper), Luke 7:11-15 (Jesus raises the son of the widow of Nain), John 2:1-12 (miracle at Cana), John 4:7-38 (the woman of Samaria), John 4:46-53 (healing a nobleman's son), John 5:1-10 (the healing at Bethesda), John 9:1-10 (healing the man born blind), and John 11:1-45 (the death and resurrection of Lazarus).

Central to Christ's method was winning trust through compassion and understanding. By authentically connecting with people and addressing their immediate concerns, Christ laid the foundation for discipleship beyond transactional relationships. His discipleship blueprint, outlined in various New Testament narratives, underscores the transformative power of genuine care and empathy in establishing meaningful connections with others.

Ultimately, the culmination of Christ's method was an invitation, a winsome call to follow him, as detailed in Matthew 4:19, Matthew 8:22, Matthew 9:9, Matthew 19:21, Mark 1:17, 20, Mark 2:14, Mark 10:21, Luke 5:27, Luke 5:59 Luke 18:22, John 1:43, and John 21:22. This marked the initiation of an evolutionary journey for those willing to embrace his teachings and example. In exploring the facets of true success, this approach unveils a discipleship blueprint that transcends shallow interactions. The resonance of Christ's method within New Testament narratives is a timeless guide for leaders and disciples seeking to emulate a compassionate and impactful approach in their respective journeys of influence and service.

Christ's Method as Articulated by Ellen White

In *The Ministry of Healing*, chapter 9 (Teaching and Healing), Ellen White discusses discipleship by starting with the sending of the twelve disciples and later the seventy disciples. She continues her account of discipleship under the following headings, namely the "Work of the Disciples," "Teaching Health Principles," "A Broader Life," "Little Opportunities," and "Self-Supporting Missionaries." (1905:143) Under the heading "Work of the Disciples," she aptly formulates the method of making disciples, called Christ's Method: "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me'" (143).

Christ's Method Alone

The term "alone" in "Christ's method alone" surpasses mere linguistic usage, conveying nuanced significance. Amid diverse approaches, only Christ's method produces the intended results envisioned by the Divine Sender, emphasizing its exclusivity and effectiveness while implicitly acknowledging the potential shortcomings of other methods.

This phrase encapsulates Christ's method as an unparalleled paradigm for addressing an individual holistically (physical, spiritual, emotional, and moral) or, as Ellen White stated:

> True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come. (1903:13)

Despite existing alternatives, other approaches lack the transformative power and divine insight embodied by Christ's method, highlighting its exceptional nature as a blueprint for compassion, empathy, and understanding, fostering genuine and lasting change in individuals and communities.

The word "alone" accentuates the Divine authority of Christ's method, suggesting it is not only one among various options, but the singular method sanctioned by a higher authority—God himself. This perspective asserts that the inherent wisdom and spiritual depth of Christ's teachings set it apart from other well-intentioned methods lacking divine backing.

True Success

Employing the qualifier "true" before success illuminates a nuanced understanding of accomplishment, emphasizing that the route to success often involves methods and strategies that may initially yield apparent triumphs but prove transient upon closer examination.

Over time and in evolving circumstances, ostensibly appealing methods gradually unveil limitations, rendering surface-level victories inadequate. A more comprehensive understanding emerges, indicating that lasting, substantial success necessitates an approach impervious to trends and passing fads.

The assertion that only Christ's method can lead to genuine success reflects a profound perspective on life's purpose and the pursuit of meaningful goals. It implies that principles such as compassion, selflessness, empathy, and a focus on serving others, as embodied in Christ's teachings, are ethically sound and remarkably effective in yielding lasting, transformative outcomes. Emphasizing a holistic approach, the reference to Christ's method underscores the importance of prioritizing the well-being of individuals and communities, surpassing mere personal gain.

This perspective takes on a spiritual dimension in realizing God's missionary goals, suggesting that aligning actions with Christ's teachings is both a moral imperative and a strategic choice for achieving larger divine purposes (Cepat 2023). By following Christ's example, individuals become agents of positive change, spreading love, understanding, and healing. This approach emphasizes a broader perspective that extends beyond immediate successes, focusing instead on contributing to a higher and enduring purpose transcending the temporal.

Using "true" before "success" emphasizes the distinction between transient achievements and enduring, meaningful outcomes. Advocating for "Christ's method" implies that adhering to values of compassion, selflessness, and service can lead to personal growth and helping individuals realize larger spiritual goals. This perspective encourages individuals to contemplate the impact of their actions and the significance of aligning their endeavors with a purpose beyond themselves.

Reaching The People

Reaching the people conveys a profound significance extending beyond surface-level interactions. It implies that Christ's methods are unparalleled in their efficacy, connecting with individuals, profoundly influencing, touching, and fundamentally transforming their lives. Implicit in this phrase is the recognition that Christ's approach, characterized by compassion, empathy, and selflessness, is critical to resonating with the human experience beyond mere rhetoric or fleeting engagement. Christ's methods encompass genuine care for individuals, meeting them at their points of need, and addressing their spiritual and emotional yearnings, aligning with the intrinsic human desire for connection and significance, resulting in life-changing experiences.

Reaching the people inherently signifies establishing meaningful relationships, emphasizing the relational nature of the *missio Dei* (Bosch 1991:398-401), the mission of God, which involves restoring and healing broken relationships. Christ's mission focused not on disseminating theological doctrines or institutionalizing rituals but on healing the estrangement

between humanity and divinity, stressing reconciliation and renewal. Through authentic relationships, Christ's method facilitated a bridge between people and their Creator, mending fractures caused by sin and fostering a sense of belonging and purpose.

In light of this, the phrase *reaching the people* subtly cautions against reducing the *missio Dei* to architectural structures, organizational programs, or the numerical goals of the church. While these elements play a role in facilitating mission, they should not overshadow the central importance of authentic human connection and transformation. Mission's core lies in embodying Christ's love, grace, compassion, and nurturing relationships that lead to spiritual and emotional healing. A sole focus on external achievements risks losing sight of the impact of personal connections and spiritual growth on individuals and communities. Therefore, a holistic understanding of *reaching the people* emphasizes the need for a Christ-like approach grounded in genuine relationships and transformational encounters.

Mingled With Men

The expression *mingled with men* denotes Christ's initial stride in establishing a connection with humanity, signifying a relational aspect. Christ's transformative approach can be analyzed on various levels of significance. Initially, it illustrates how Christ intentionally immersed himself in society, integrating into the lives of ordinary people. This genuine and profound immersion caused him to be an integral part of their existence, devoid of participation in their transgressions but driven by a purpose to comprehend, empathize, and uplift.

Christ's approach attests to his exceptional empathy as he ventured into the realms where people toiled, celebrated, and communed, transcending barriers often isolating other religious figures. His physical presence among individuals from diverse walks of life granted him a vantage point to keenly observe the human experience. By actively participating in their daily lives, Christ witnessed their elations and sorrows, obtaining a holistic understanding of their innermost struggles and aspirations. This proximity enabled him to penetrate beyond surface emotions and perceive the multifaceted layers of human experiences.

In his mingling, Christ not only comprehended external aspects but also delved into the intricate depths of the human psyche, uncovering the driving forces behind actions, motivations, and fears. This knowledge was not utilized for judgment but as tool allowing him to make genuine connections. Christ's awareness of the human condition nurtured his ability to resonate with people's experiences, providing solace and guidance rooted in understanding.

A distinctive characteristic of Christ's approach was his respect for individuality, recognizing and honoring the diversity of customs, practices, and traditions among those with whom he engaged. This respect did not imply an endorsement of every practice but rather acknowledged the intrinsic worth of every human being. This exemplifies a powerful lesson in effective communication and rapport-building—recognizing and accommodating differences while remaining anchored in one's values.

The expression *mingled with men* embodies Christ's transformative methodology, symbolizing the initial step wherein his selfless immersion into the lives of humanity laid the foundation for deeper connections. This approach, characterized by empathy, observation, understanding, and respect, continues to serve as a timeless model for fostering meaningful relationships and prompting positive change.

Desired Their Good

In the demonstration of *desiring their good*, Christ epitomized agape love and the principles of the kingdom of heaven. Agape love, characterized by its selfless and unconditional nature, constitutes the core of Christ's teachings and actions, transcending personal desires to seek the well-being and flourishing of others. In embodying agape love, Christ's focus was not self-centric but directed towards the genuine welfare of those around him, reflecting the essence of the kingdom of heaven's principles, where humility, compassion, and service take precedence.

By desiring the good of others, Christ exhibited a profound understanding of human interconnectedness and the unity foundational to spiritual growth. His teachings underscored the importance of treating others with kindness, forgiveness, and empathy, surpassing mere philanthropy or acts of kindness to encompass a genuine concern for each individual's spiritual and emotional prosperity. Christ's consistent actions demonstrated his dedication to uplifting the lives of others, illustrating the metamorphic power of agape love.

Prioritizing the well-being of others, Christ also accentuated the contrast between earthly values and those of the kingdom of heaven. He conveyed that true fulfillment arises not from material possessions or self-serving ambitions but from aligning one's heart and actions with the divine principles of love and compassion. By focusing on the good of others, Christ established a precedent for his followers to embrace humility and sacrificial love, fostering an environment of mutual support and communal growth. In this manner, Christ's example serves as a timeless guide for living a purposeful life aligned with the higher ideals of the kingdom of heaven.

Showed Sympathy for Them

The etymology of the term *sympathy* reveals its foundational connection to understanding and shared experiences. Derived from the Latin *sympathia* and the Greek *sympatheia*, the word conveys common feelings. The Greek root "*sympathēs*" embodies sharing emotions and experiences, indicating a connection formed through shared perspectives (Definition of Sympathy n.d.). This linguistic journey underscores the concept of "placing oneself in another person's shoes," a sentiment reflected in the actions and teachings of Jesus.

Within the framework of Jesus' teachings and actions, sympathy assumes profound significance. Jesus consistently demonstrated the ability to perceive situations from others' perspectives, emphasizing the importance of understanding their feelings and circumstances. By embracing their viewpoints, Jesus embodied the essence of sympathy—the capacity to see the world through another's eyes. His approach involved cognitive understanding and emotional resonance, incorporating the broader concept of walking in someone else's shoes.

It is crucial to differentiate between sympathy, empathy, and compassion. While sympathy involves comprehending and respecting another person's situation or context, empathy and compassion delve into emotions. Empathy entails sharing the feelings of another, often described as feeling *with* them, while compassion involves a heartfelt response to alleviate their suffering. This distinction underscores the multifaceted nature of human connections, encompassing both cognitive and emotional aspects.

In essence, the concept of sympathy, as understood through its linguistic roots and exemplified by the teachings of Jesus, encapsulates the significance of shared understanding and perspective-taking. It encourages individuals to transcend their own experiences and immerse themselves in the world of others, fostering empathy, compassion, and a deeper connection with fellow human beings. As Jesus demonstrated, genuine sympathy involves feeling for others and understanding and respecting their unique journeys.

Ministered to Their Needs

Upon acquiring a profound contextual understanding and familiarity with the individuals engaged, Christ progressed to a pivotal phase in his methodology. This step encompassed an observational process intertwined with heartfelt communication directed toward God and the Holy Spirit. Through this divine dialogue, Christ endeavored to ascertain the

genuine needs of those in his presence. This discernment transcended superficial assessments, constituting a spiritually attuned analysis penetrating beneath the surface.

During this stage, Christ's acute sensitivity to the human condition facilitated the identification of the true essence of the individual's requirements. His divine connection enabled him to perceive the underlying struggles, desires, and yearnings typically concealed from casual observation. Recognizing that faithful ministry extended beyond visible symptoms, Christ delved into the depths of the soul.

What distinguished Christ's approach was his unwavering commitment to addressing these authentic needs. Instead of reacting to perceived requirements or yielding to external pressures, he ministered with divine precision. This distinction underscores his divine wisdom, as his interventions were not mere solutions to apparent issues, but actions aligned with the core of human longing.

The profound lesson from Christ's methodology underscores the significance of comprehending the context and individuals involved, emphasizing spiritual connection for guidance from a higher source. It advocates for recognizing the evolutionary power of addressing authentic needs rather than superficial wants. Christ's example encourages a deeper exploration, prompting individuals to look beyond the surface in their interactions and efforts to assist others, ministering in ways that resonate with the essence of the human experience.

Won Their Confidence

In the narrative of Christ's ministry, a discernible transformation unfolds through his interactions with individuals and attentive addressing of their needs. This transformation is characterized by the gradual dissolution of prejudice and the simultaneous bolstering of confidence in him. Initial preconceived notions or biases, shaped by societal norms or personal experiences, likely colored many perceptions.

However, as Christ extended compassion, understanding, and practical solutions to their challenges, these walls of prejudice began to crumble. Trust took root with each successful instance of ministering to their needs. Christ's consistent demonstration of genuine care and competence in addressing their foremost concerns deepened their faith. This evolutionary process, not instantaneous, showcased Christ's authenticity and unwavering commitment to their well-being.

What solidified their confidence was the recognition that Christ's miracles were not mere spectacles or attempts to prove a point. His actions stemmed from a sincere desire to enhance their lives and alleviate their

struggles. This shift in perspective marked a turning point, revealing that Christ prioritized their best interests and actively addressed their tangible needs, dispelling any lingering doubts and winning them over.

Christ's ministry emerged as a journey of dismantling barriers and constructing bridges of trust. It exemplifies how authentic compassion, empathy, and dedicated service can erode prejudice and nurture unshakeable confidence. The transformation in the hearts of those encountering Christ underscores the potent influence of selfless service on fostering meaningful connections.

Bade Them, "Follow Me"

Relationship dynamics are pivotal in disseminating ideas, beliefs, and values, particularly in religious history, where leaders from diverging cultural backgrounds have sought to spread messages by connecting with various communities. Christ's interactions with individuals from various backgrounds exemplify this principle. His ability to bridge gaps and build relationships was a potent tool for sharing teachings and the gospel message.

Christ's approach was not limited to distant preaching but involved actively immersing himself through the leading and presence of the Holy Spirit within targeted communities. Mingling with diverse groups showcased an authentic interest in their lives, concerns, and aspirations. This genuine engagement facilitated a better understanding of their perspectives, allowing him to tailor his message to resonate with their circumstances. This approach transcended mere proselytization, demonstrating empathy, compassion, and a willingness to connect on a human level.

By establishing relationships, Christ gained the confidence of those with whom he interacted. Becoming one of them dismantled barriers of distrust and skepticism surrounding novel ideas. This earned trust created a receptive environment for proclaiming the gospel. The bridges built through interactions facilitated effective communication of core tenets—love, forgiveness, and salvation—within the context of nurtured relationships.

The extension of the gospel invitation naturally followed Christ's relational approach. This invitation was not forced but emerged organically from his fostered connections. Individuals who had experienced Christ's genuine companionship and understood the transformative power of his teachings were more inclined to accept the gospel invitation. Faith seeds were sown in the fertile ground of trust and understanding, ensuring the message took root and flourished.

Christ's ministry approach underscores the timeless significance of relationships in conveying profound messages. His willingness to mingle,

empathize, and connect with people from all walks of life laid the foundation for the spread of Christianity. The bridges built through interactions became conduits for the gospel, and extending the invitation was a natural outcome of earned trust. This relational engagement paradigm resonates as a model for effectively communicating beliefs and ideas within a diverse and interconnected world.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs*, proposed in the mid-20th century, stands as a seminal framework in psychology, providing a comprehensive understanding of human motivation and behavior. This theory postulates that human needs are arranged hierarchically, fulfilling lower-level needs as a prerequisite for pursuing higher-level needs. Maslow's original conceptualization outlined five levels: physiological, safety, belongingness and love, esteem, and self-actualization. The theory has garnered substantial attention and acclaim within the psychological community, with scholars such as Uriel Abulof (2017), Don Gorman (2010), and Or Oved (2017) contributing to its continuing relevance.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs remains an influential theory in psychology, offering a comprehensive framework for understanding the intricacies of human motivation, behavior, and personal development. The theory's relevance is evident in its widespread application in various disciplines, contributing significantly to our understanding of the complex interplay of human needs and aspirations.

"A Theory of Human Motivation" by Abraham Maslow (1943b) was originally published in *Psychological Review* in which he quotes from his earlier article "A Preface to Motivation Theory" (1943a), stating:

> Human needs arrange themselves in hierarchies of pre-potency. That is to say, the appearance of one need usually rests on the prior satisfaction of another, more pre-potent need. Man is a perpetually wanting animal. Also, no need or drive can be treated as if it were isolated or discrete; every drive is related to the state of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of other drives. (1943b:370)

As articulated by Maslow (1943b), human needs exhibit a hierarchical structure, with the satisfaction of one need relying on the prior fulfillment of another, more fundamental need. This perpetual nature of human wanting underscores the interrelatedness of needs, emphasizing that no drive or need can be isolated or treated as alone. The hierarchy encompasses basic needs, including physiological and safety needs, followed by

psychological needs for belongingness, love, and esteem, culminating in the pursuit of self-actualization (Maslow 1954).

The basic needs encompass physiological and safety requirements, forming the foundation of Maslow's hierarchy. Physiological needs involve the fundamental necessities for survival, such as food, water, and shelter. Safety needs encompass the desire for security, stability, and protection from harm. The subsequent levels involve psychological and self-fulfillment needs, encompassing the desire for social connections, self-esteem, and personal growth.

Further exploration of the characteristics of basic needs reveals their degree of fixity within the hierarchy, the degree of relative satisfaction, the unconscious nature of these needs, and their cultural specificity and generality. Maslow highlights the intricacies of human motivation, acknowledging the presence of multiple determinants and motivations that influence behavior. The theory also emphasizes the role of goals as a central principle in understanding motivation in animals and humans. It discusses the implications of gratified needs on individual well-being.

Maslow introduces the concept of the *instinctoid* nature of basic needs, suggesting an innate and instinctive aspect to human motivation. Maslow used the term *instinctoid* to highlight that these hypothesized needs have a vital intrinsic component but are also subject to individual and cultural variations. Instincts are typically fixed, automatic behaviors essential for survival, while *instinctoid* needs are more flexible and influenced by personal experiences, culture, and socialization.

The *instinctoid* needs promoted in Maslow's hierarchy include belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. Belongingness and love nNeeds involve the desire for interpersonal relationships, love, and a sense of belonging. While social connections have a biological basis, the specific ways they are fulfilled vary widely among individuals and cultures. Maslow identified the need for self-esteem and the esteem of others. This includes the desire for recognition, status, and accomplishment. These needs are not as directly tied to survival as physiological needs but play a crucial role in psychological well-being. At the peak of Maslow's hierarchy are the self-actualization needs, which involve pursuing personal growth, creativity, and realizing one's potential. These needs are highly individualized and may vary significantly from person to person.

Instinctoid emphasizes the blend of innate and learned components in these needs. While there is a biological basis for the desire for social connection, recognition, and personal growth, the specific ways these needs are expressed and satisfied can be shaped by individual experiences, cultural influences, and personal values.

Additionally, he proposes *metaneeds*, which emerge once lower-level needs are satisfied, leading individuals to pursue higher-order needs. The evolving nature of needs is captured in a dynamic hierarchy, where new needs arise as existing ones are satisfied.

Metaneeds are sometimes referred to as "Being Needs" or "B-needs." These needs go beyond the basic requirements for survival and personal growth addressed in the lower levels of the hierarchy. Metaneeds are associated with fulfilling individual potential and the desire for a deeper meaning and purpose in life. They are considered higher-order needs that come into play once the lower-level needs have been satisfied.

Other metaneeds are the need for knowledge, understanding, and exploration. This involves a desire for intellectual stimulation and the search for meaning. Additional metaneeds include the need for beauty, balance, and harmony, which express an appreciation for art, music, and other forms of creative expression. Transcendence, the highest level in Maslow's hierarchy, involves going beyond the self and experiencing a sense of unity with something greater than oneself. It may include spiritual experiences, altruism, and a connection to a higher purpose.

> At once other (and higher) needs emerge and these, rather than physiological hungers, dominate the organism. And when these in turn are satisfied, again new (and still higher) needs emerge, and so on. This is what we mean by saying that the basic human needs are organized into a hierarchy of relative prepotency. (Maslow 1970:38, 1954:38)

In considering the development and expansion of Maslow's theory, it is crucial to emphasize that Maslow's five-stage model (1943b, 1954) has undergone expansion to encompass cognitive and aesthetic needs, as indicated by Maslow (1970). Subsequently, transcendent needs were introduced in his later work (Maslow 1970).

It is notable that while Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a well-known and influential psychological theory, it has been critiqued and debated within psychology. Some argue that the hierarchy is too rigid and does not account for human motivation and behavior's complexity and individual variability. Not everyone agrees on the existence or significance of "metaneeds" (Abulof 2017; Bouzenita et al. 2016; Gorman 2010; Oved 2017; Rojas, Méndez, and Watkins-Fassler 2023).

Christ's Method and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Integrating Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs with Christ's method can enhance the efficacy of teaching and discipleship. Addressing learners' most pressing needs, such as physiological and safety needs, establishes

a foundation for effective learning. By acknowledging and attending to these fundamental requirements, educators and pastors can build rapport, trust, and emotional safety—vital components of Christ's method. Addressing basic needs creates an environment conducive to deeper engagement with educational content and spiritual growth.

Furthermore, Maslow's framework emphasizes the interconnectedness of needs, aligning with the holistic approach of Christ's method. By recognizing that individuals possess diverse needs, educators and pastors can adopt a comprehensive strategy that considers physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. This approach resonates with Jesus' multifaceted care for individuals and facilitates their holistic development.

Application and Implications

In contemporary educational and evangelistic contexts, the fusion of Christ's method and Maslow's hierarchy of needs offers a potent strategy. Ministers and evangelists can design outreach efforts prioritizing well-being and incorporating a broad spectrum of needs.

When ministered to people's needs according to Christ's method, it is also imperative to consider Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the following principles articulated by Maslow: "At once other (and higher) needs emerge and these, rather than physiological hungers, dominate the organism. And when these in turn are satisfied, again new (and still higher) needs emerge, and so on. This is what we mean by saying that the basic human needs are organized into a hierarchy of relative prepotency" (1970:38; 1954:38).

Applying Christ's method is not enough to address people's needs. When the people whose needs are being addressed experience a *higher* need that is more urgent to them than the need being addressed, the less urgent need will be overshadowed and absorbed by the *higher* and more urgent need, and it will not result in the people feeling satisfied. Consequently, it will not break down their prejudice.

On the other hand, if the identified need addressed through Christ's method is a survival need and the most pressing and urgent need of the people targeted for discipleship, this will result in the target group being satisfied, their confidence in their disciple makers will grow, and their prejudice will be broken down. Hence, it is imperative to address survival needs when ministering to people's needs according to Christ's method.

Integrating Maslow's hierarchy of needs with Christ's method will transcend the limitations of conventional evangelistic outreach methods, fostering meaningful connections and personal growth. As a result, prospective disciples will be better equipped to integrate knowledge and principles into their daily lives, fostering enduring discipleship.

Conclusion

The marriage of Christ's method and Maslow's hierarchy of needs aligns teaching and discipleship with fundamental human motivations. Ministers and evangelists can create transformative discipleship experiences by embracing empathy, care, and holistic understanding. This synergy underscores the timeless relevance of Christ's method and the enduring wisdom of Maslow's psychological frameworks. Ultimately, this theoretical analysis calls for an outreach approach recognizing the intricate interplay between meeting diverse needs and nurturing spiritual growth, echoing Christ's profound impact on his disciples and followers.

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