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ABSTRACT

**DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACTION PLAN TO TRANSFORM THE
ERWIN HILLS SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH INTO
A FAMILY-FRIENDLY CHURCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF
WINNING FAMILIES WITH YOUTH AND CHILDREN**

by

Eli Rojas

Adviser: Douglas Tilstra

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACTION PLAN TO TRANSFORM THE ERWIN HILLS SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH INTO A FAMILY-FRIENDLY CHURCH FOR THE PURPOSE OF WINNING FAMILIES WITH YOUTH AND CHILDREN

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Date completed: December 2010

Problem

Through a period of a few years the Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church went from a thriving congregation with members of all ages to a small group of faithful members who desired to see the return of the days when their church was thriving. As the new pastor took office a desire to change came upon the leadership, one that led them to think of ways to attract and retain families to their ranks. There was a lack in ministry that was inclusive of all the members of a household and thus unattractive to new members with young adults and children.

Method

The process to lead the Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist congregation started with the formulation of vision and mission statements. The leadership took ownership of this process and in a short series of meetings they put those statements together. That was followed by a sermon series on the characteristics of a "Family Friendly" church.

There was an evangelistic effort during the following year that opened the eyes of the leaders to realize that this congregation needed to find ways to reach out to the household rather than the individuals. That created enthusiasm and the leaders brainstormed on ways of reaching out to the families around the church. Then the pastor presented a four-part seminar dealing with the focus of this dissertation. This seminar was well attended and brought about immediate results.

Results

The process of this dissertation has taken three years, from the time when the leadership started with the mission vision statements to the end of the seminars. This entire process has invigorated the congregation. Attendance has increased threefold from the time that the pastor started in this district, many lay-led initiatives have been carried through, new ministries have also been started, there is greater awareness of the role that all members play in outreach, and the leadership is willing to try new things for the purpose of soul-winning.

The church building has also been improved for the purpose of connecting and or ministering better to visitors and their families. The leadership realized that this improvement was necessary in order for families to feel welcome and wanted. Also, in an

effort to better connect with visitors a multi-media package has been installed for a more professional presentation to attendees.

Conclusions

The presentation of this dissertation has proved beneficial: it has increased the participation of leaders and members of the Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church. More often now people approach the pastor with ministry ideas and the desire of leading out with them. There is also a greater awareness of making this church one that connects with the needs of the family, and that is evangelistically minded in the way they see the ministry possibilities for the families in the community. This process could be used as a sample for other churches to awaken to ministry opportunities for families within the community where their church is located, for evangelism that is mindful of the households of those in attendance, thus more effective in soul winning.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
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To my Lord Jesus Christ, Loida, Eli Jr., and Eileen

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFM	Evangelistic Family Ministry
EHSDAC	Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church
FFC	Family Friendly Church
URF	Upper Room Fellowship

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One of the greatest challenges in the process of writing this dissertation was finding an adviser to work with me. Two years went by and about twenty people were asked to help in the adviser capacity. When all hope was lost and I was ready to give up a friend suggested that I talk to Dr. Douglas Tilstra.

I truly believe that it was God who had held back so many other individuals from helping me. Dr. Tilstra not only helped me but also inspired me, motivated me, and prayed for my project.

I have a great deal of gratitude to Dr. Douglas Tilstra.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Dissertation

Statement of the Problem

Over the past few years the Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church (EHSDAC) has seen a decline in the number of families attending the church who have young children and youth. The current general atmosphere of the church family is not one that purposely welcomes families with youth and children, consequently these families do not feel attracted to the church. As children grow older they often feel disconnected from the church family. These feelings grow into an overall feeling that church is not longer relevant to them, and some even start attending non-Seventh-day Adventist churches which have more of an appeal because of a greater number of youth.

Statement of the Task

The task of this project dissertation is to create an action plan that will intentionally seek to transform the Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church's culture to be one where family ministry is purposeful and discipleship to families with youth and young children becomes second nature. This action plan will work to form a church culture that naturally attracts families with youth and children to its ranks consequently making family ministry an active form of evangelism. This concept will be discussed as

Evangelistic Family Ministry (EFM). EFM is not a “family ministry” program. Family ministry is only a small part of it. EFM is about thinking of the families of those that come to church, it is about considering our own circle of influence as a tool for evangelism, it is about the church being family friendly, it is about brainstorming about the possibilities in reaching out through ministries that connect with the needs of the households in the community that the church services, it is about thinking beyond the needs of the adults to consider what will be a blessing to the young ones and supplying ministry tailored for them.

Justification for the Dissertation

The Lord brought this pastor to work with the EHSDAC in October 2007. From the first meeting together there was an assurance that God had brought him to this church for the purpose of working to create a family-friendly church.

The justification for this dissertation is as follows:

Children and young people are the future of the Church. We cannot neglect to reach out to families with young children and youth and nurture them so that these young people grow up spiritually strong. Jesus exemplified this in His attitude towards children and their parents (Luke 18:15-17).

Very often church members do not understand what a “family-friendly” church should be like. The idea that “children should be seen but not heard” still prevails in the minds of older members.

The Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church family has grown used to the lack of young ones in their midst. Currently there are about four teenage members of the church that attend another Seventh-day Adventist church. The children that attend

EHSDAC regularly consist of three early teens, two primary-age children, and two young children who belong to the cradleroll department. In a recent meeting when the challenge was presented concerning our teens one of the parents explained that we did not need a youth program since our neighboring Seventh-day Adventist church already had one.

It is necessary to lead the church family in a paradigm shift that includes a physical transformation of the facilities as well as a new approach to evangelistic family ministry.

Description of the Dissertation Process

1. Engage in theological reflection for the purpose of discovering and forming the basis for outreach that is focused on families with youth and children. We will need to consider: (1) the importance of youth and children in the church; (2) understand the role of the church in relation to the family; and (3) the responsibility the church has to minister to families.

2. Read current literature on the connection between church and family, transforming the culture of the church, and equipping members for family ministry.

3. Interview the leaders of the local congregation to understand the thinking of the members of the EHSDAC in regard to their role in attracting families with young children and to identify their views on soul winning and outreach.

4. Visit local non-Seventh-day Adventist congregations that are attracting young families to understand their methodology for outreach.

5. Develop a strategy to involve our local congregation in ministry for the purpose of winning young families.

6. Implement the strategy and evaluate the results.

Expectation from this Dissertation

1. To have more families with youth and children regularly attending EHSDAC.
2. To see a maturation process in the spirituality of the church family at large should also be expected. As Paul told Timothy referring to the study and preaching of the Word of God, "Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Tim 4:16).¹
3. The formulation of a process by which I will be able to study, evaluate, and train future congregations under my leadership in the art of winning families with young children and youth. This process could also be published for the benefit of other church leaders whom may be struggling with the same issues.
4. To train leadership in the local congregation who have a consciousness of the priority that needs to be given to embrace and support young families as a function of the church family.

¹Unless otherwise indicated all Bible references in this paper are taken from the Thompson Chain-Reference Bible, fourth ed., King James Version (KJV).

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR FAMILY MINISTRY IN RELATION TO SOUL WINNING AND OUTREACH

Introduction

A survey of Christian literature on the subject of family ministry shows that most of the material published has to do with ministering to those families that already belong to the church. The theme of many of these books is to create an “in-reach” ministry for current members. While it is important to minister to families whose members already know the Gospel, it is equally important to minister to the families that belong to the church’s immediate community. Family ministry is a vital venue to connect, serve, and lead community members to Christ.

The acceptance of the Gospel is not merely individualistic but it is an action that affects those in the household of each person that embraces God’s plan of salvation. In the New Testament (NT), Acts 16:31 provides a springboard for evangelism that purposely includes the household of the new convert. Additional support for family evangelism is seen in the lives of many of the patriarchs of the Old Testament (OT) era.

It is imperative for the Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church to design an evangelistic process that reaches out not only to individuals, but also to the households of those joining the church. Often, when a person joins the church without the support of their household, this person makes few connections with the people in the church.

Because of the pull of the new member's household the person soon stops attending church. There is a disconnect with the church family being the new person in the group and also disconnect with their family over their new-found faith. Russell Burrill appeals to the church: "It is time to take a fresh look at how we 'do church' in Adventism. . . . It would be far better for us to examine the Scriptures, our Adventist heritage, and the writings of Ellen White to discover God's plan for how we should 'do church.'"¹

It is time for the church to come up with ideas, projects, or ministries that go beyond what the church has been doing. The Seventh-day Adventist church has typically used prophecy seminars as its main approach for outreach. If, in addition to this method, we were to have programs that ministered to the needs of the households that surround the church we might see greater results in soul winning.

The points presented in this chapter will examine the biblical mandate and priority for the household. First, we will explore the creation of the first family in the Garden of Eden. Second, we will look at Acts 16:31 and focus on the study and application of two key words from this passage. Third, we will look at OT examples of the application of the household and the circle of influence with support from the writings of Ellen G. White. Finally, we will outline the principles that will guide in the process of formulating an Evangelistic Family Ministry.

When Paul addressed the jailer, he said that his household would be saved. The word "household" includes more than the word "family." In this paper, the different scopes of these words will be discussed. God created the first family in the Garden of

¹Russell Burrill, *The Revolutionized Church of the 21st Century: The Explosive Power of a Church Built on Relationships* (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research, 1997), 14.

Eden; however, as a direct result of the entrance of sin, the home was the first negatively affected. Due to the brokenness of today's families the word 'household' may be more fitting because it goes beyond the traditional meaning of the word "family." Furthermore, the concept of "the circle of influence" will be presented as a parallel concept of "household."

Discovering the Biblical Mandate for Evangelistic Family Ministry

God placed Adam and Eve in the midst of the Garden of Eden, blessed their union by making them one, and then told them to procreate. Thus God set in motion the first family empowering them to have children, to fill the earth with their descendants, and to spread the joy and blessings God had intended for them to enjoy (Gen 1-2).

God brought Eve to Adam and he exclaimed: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh" (Gen 2:23-24). "Upon awakening, Adam instantly recognized the close and intimate relationship that this specific act of creation made possible."²

The first home was intentional. "In forming the first family, He established the basic social unity for humanity, giving them a sense of belonging and providing them with an opportunity to develop as well-rounded persons in service to God and others."³ The family was God's way to bring His love and salvation to the world; it would later

²*Seventh-day Adventists Believe: A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines*, 2nd ed. (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 2005), 331.

³*Ibid.*, 330.

become the gateway for divinity to enter humanity, and will always remain the smallest unit where His presence would be manifested. The family is thus very important for God.

Genesis 2 and 3 indicate that the home is God's strategic place for humanity to learn about God's love and His plan of redemption. Likewise, Satan regards the home as a strategic place where he can create soul-deteriorating experiences, a source for deep disappointments, and a place where ill feelings fester and destruction of the soul takes place.

Household of Salvation in Acts 16:31

An individual's acceptance of the Gospel directly affects his/her family. Acts 16 narrates the time when Paul and Silas were thrown in jail after they were severely flogged and the jailer was commanded to "keep them safely" (Acts 16:23). The jailer made sure that they would not get away by securing them to the wall and "made their feet fast in the stocks" (Acts 16:24).

Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises aloud. The Bible is not clear as to how much the jailer was able to hear their praying and singing, but suddenly the worship session was interrupted by an earthquake. As a result, the prison's doors opened, the shackles fell off and the prisoners were freed (Acts 16:26). This context is important to understand two key words in Acts 16:31.

The jailer awoke up and saw the prison doors opened. His reaction was to prepare to take his own life as he considered the possible punishment of such an error would merit. As he prepared to commit suicide Paul shouted, "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here" (Acts 16:28). The jailer's response was to set Paul and Silas free and to plead with them, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). The apostles' response is: "Believe on

the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:31). Two key words are used in this text: first, the word interpreted here in this verse as “saved” is the Greek word σωζω; secondly, the word for “house” is οἶκος and is also translated as household.

Understanding the Use of σωζω

The specific conjugation used is σωθήσῃ from the Greek word σωζω meaning to save, rescue, deliver, and keep safe. It is used in the indicative-future-passive second person singular, meaning “you will be saved.” The context does not clarify if he was to be saved from physical or spiritual danger. Given the circumstances of the event narrated in the context of Acts 16 where the jailer is responsible for a group of inmates wakes up to think that they have all escaped, it is possible that the salvation here promised had to do with physical safety. When Peter escaped from prison Herod ordered the execution of the guards on duty at the prison (Acts 12:19). When Paul, as a prisoner, is shipwrecked, the soldiers planned to kill the prisoners so that they would not escape (Acts 27:42). These passages indicate the punishment for guards who lost their prisoners was severe.

In the Greek just like in English the verb “to save” has a variety of applications as different as saving money, spiritual salvation, or saving a life from mortal danger. Friedrich explains how to understand the application of this word in the book of Acts. He writes that unless a religious meaning is implied this word is generally used to reflect salvation from danger or healing of the sick.⁴ However, he later explains that Luke has a different use for the derivations of σωζω from that of the other Synoptic writers.

⁴Gerhard Friedrich, “σωζω,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans) 7:989-990.

Five times Luke uses different words derived from σωζω by which spiritual salvation is implied. These occur in Luke 8:12; 13:23; in chap. 15, the implication of the stories is spiritual salvation, "To be lost means death; to be saved means life in the comprehensive sense"⁵; and in Luke 19:9: "And Jesus said to him, this day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." Ceslas Spicq explains this further: "The secular meaning occurs often, but the specifically religious meaning is dominant, in contrast to perdition and consists first of all of deliverance from sins (Matt 1:21; Luke 1:68, 69, 71, 77) and the 'wrath to come' (Rom 5:9; cf. 1 Cor 3:15; 5:5; 1 Thess 5:9), and hence 'reconciliation' (Rom 5:10-11). It has to do with the salvation of the soul."⁶

Luke wrote the book of Acts but the story in Acts 16 is about Paul. Friedrich adds, "In Paul σωζω and σωτηρία are limited quite intentionally to the relation between man and God."⁷ The word σωθήση is used in other passages and the meaning implied by the apostle has to do with spiritual salvation. It is used only two other times: Rom 10:9 and Acts 11:14.

The Application of σωθήση

The word σωθήση is used only three times in the NT. One is Acts 16:31 "and thou shalt be saved." The second time is found in Rom 10:9 where Paul explains: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath

⁵Friedrich, 991.

⁶Celas Spicq, "σωζω'" *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, 3 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 349.

⁷Friedrich, 992.

raise him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” There is no confusion here; σωθήσῃ is used in the context of spiritual salvation. In addition to this there is also the connection that both passages (Acts 16:31 and Rom 10:9, 10) make with the act of believing in Christ, a “believe” that goes beyond a simple mental acceptance.

In John 3:16 Christ said to Nicodemus “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” It is evident that neither Jesus nor Paul were considering safety from physical harm, but rather were focused on spiritual salvation. Romans 10:10 says: “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary’s* interpretation of Acts 16:31 is that “they impressed on the suppliant the truth that salvation depends on personal belief in the redeeming life and work of Jesus.”⁸

The third passage is Acts 11:14. Here Peter is giving reason for his visit to a Gentile’s home. An angel from the Lord explained to Cornelius that when Peter would come he “shall tell thee words, whereby thou and thy house shall be saved (σωθήσῃ).” This is a story of divine intervention for the salvation of a man and his household. A sincere man, Cornelius, was seeking the true God and leading his household in this search. At one point God intervened directly and instructed him on how to hear His message. Peter explained that the point of this salvation is a new spiritual life. Acts 10:34, 35 says: “Of a truth I perceive that God is not respecter of persons. But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” With the sentence

8. “Acts,” *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed. F. D. Nichol, 7 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1953-57), 6:334.

“whereby thou and thy house shall be saved” Acts 11:14 also uses the second key word of Acts 16:31, namely “household.” Household is not limited to a family structure such as a traditional father, mother, and children; “household” goes beyond those borders. We will now look at the development and application of the word “household” within the context of these two verses (Acts 11:14 and 16:31).

Understanding the Use of οἶκος

The Greek οἶκος translated as household is used in fifteen other verses throughout the NT. It is used twelve times for house and three times for household. It is used with several connotations like in 1 Pet 2:5 where it refers to “spiritual house” or in Matt 21:13 where Jesus uses that word in reference to the Temple, “My House shall be called the House of Prayer.” However, in all instances it is inclusive of those that dwell in or are part of this house/household.

A key distinction is that where the word is connected to a person the closest translation or meaning of this word is “household.” Because of the connection with salvation it is understandable that household is not referring to things in the house but that it is implying the people that make up the household. Because of this, some translators may use the word family rather than household in order to be clear. However, the word represents more than a modern traditional family that consists of a mother, father, and children. By definition, it means a group “consisting of those related by blood and marriage, as well as slaves and servants, living in the same house.”⁹

⁹Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), s.v. “household.”

There are other forms of οἶκος used in the NT that also imply house or household and are at times used interchangeably, like οἰκία which normally means house. "The expression 'the House of David' appears only in Luke 1:27, 69; 2:4. Here house indicates blood relatives descended through the paternal line from the founder of the lineage."¹⁰ But in Acts Luke uses οἶκος mainly to represent the idea of household.¹¹

The jailer was a channel of salvation to his family. "Primitive Christianity structured its congregations in families, groups and 'houses.' The house was both a place of fellowship and a place of meeting."¹² This was the case with Cornelius in Acts 10-11; Lydia in Acts 16:15; and many others.

Another story narrated by Luke is the story of Crispus recorded in Acts 18:8, "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." Friedrich argues that "it is explicitly emphasized that the conversion of a man leads his whole family to the faith; this would include wife, children, servants and relatives living in the house. The use for 'house,' 'family,' is found elsewhere in primitive Christianity. This is especially evident in the fact that Christian life is lived in this kind of 'house.'"¹³

Acts 16:31 indicates that through the faith and transformation of one man, head of the household, many more people will be influenced. In this text the reference is to a male head of household, but it extends also to women who lead their households. This

¹⁰Peter Weigandt, "οἰκία," *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, 3 vols., ed. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 2:502.

¹¹Ibid., 502.

¹²Friedrich, 5:130.

¹³Ibid.

influence is not exclusively to the spouse and children, but includes all who are touched by the individual who surrenders his/her heart to the Lord.

Contextualizing οἶκος for Today

Some Bible translations use the word “family” for οἶκος such as *The Bible in Basic English*¹⁴ and the *New International Readers’ Version*.¹⁵ However, the challenge with these translations is the different worldviews. In cultures where “family” is an inclusive word that connects people outside the immediate family (father, mother, and children) then translating “family” may very well apply, but in cultures that have an exclusive understanding of the word to include only immediate blood relatives the concept set forth in Acts 16:31 will not be captured.

Today we deal with many forms of family configuration. The following list, while not exhaustive, illustrates this point: the nuclear family, foster family, extended family, blended family, same-sex family (referring to the parents being of the same sex), single parent family, complex family, fictive kin family,¹⁶ plural marriage family, etc. Diane R. Garland explains: “The definition of *family* shapes social and institutional responses to those called ‘families’ and those deemed ‘not-families.’”¹⁷

Garland goes on to explain that there are two ways of defining family and its members: structural and functional. The structural definition actually looks at the

¹⁴Hooke, S. H. *The Bible in Basic English* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1949).

¹⁵*New International Reader’s Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999).

¹⁶Diana R. Garland, *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 35.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 22.

members of the family and the roles/functions they play in the family. These roles are never obsolete (an aunt does not stop being an aunt after an absence of twenty years). The functional way of looking at families is broader in its scope. It looks at the relationships within the family. A friend of the family may become an adopted uncle/aunt. If this person is older he/she may assume a role of grandparent. Functions rather than structures make the family broader. The following paragraph is pivotal: "The functional definition seems to better fit Jesus' teaching about family. For followers of Christ are not to be bound by the structures of legally recognized or biological based relationships. Rather, family relationships are defined by relationship processes – loving one another, being faithful to the same Lord, and adopting one another as brothers and sisters in the household of faith."¹⁸

Paul encouraged Timothy to treat the church members as family. "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers; the younger as sister, with all purity" (1 Tim 5:1-2). This is a powerful relationship model for church members. Ideally family is where the utmost love and tender care are manifested. In this text Paul exhorts Timothy to relate to the church as family. Jesus told His disciples "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

Considering the previous points, it would make sense to translate οἶκος not as "family" but rather as the circle of influence that each of us have. All those close to us should be influenced by the power of the Gospel working in our lives. "Household," in

¹⁸Garland, 50.

the sense of a circle of influence, is thus the best translation for the previous verses.

“Family” can be perceived as the exclusive group of the nuclear family; thus the word “household” encompasses a broader perspective.

Often, family ministry programs miss the broad range of definitions of the word family and may become so specialized that it ignores a myriad of individuals who are in non-conventional family situations. Family ministry usually focuses on a few aspects of family life: marriage relations, seminars on relating to children/teens, blended families and single parenting. It is the goal of this project dissertation to provoke thought, to challenge its readers to think more broadly, to realize that there is much that the term “household” encompasses, and to understand that it is vital that salvation reaches the household. As today’s Christian church makes a special effort to minister to the household of new converts (new members of the congregation) more kingdom growth is expected. Reaching out to the circle of influence of new believers will also make a tremendous difference for the new member because they will join in bringing their loved ones into their newly discovered faith.

Circle of Influence

Paul talked about the household, which could be translated οἶκος to our modern setting as the circle of influence. Today οἶκος may be understood as roommates, a close circle of friends, co-workers, the friends made at the AA group, or family units that represent the brokenness of our society like a man raising his stepchildren, grandparents that are raising their grandchildren, an aunt raising her nephew as if he were her own son, or a village orphan adopted by the community. The *SDA Bible Dictionary* says, “The

household included not only the family but all inmates of the house—servants, slaves, and retainers (Gen 14:14; 17:27).”¹⁹

Acts 16:31 implies that when a person accepts Jesus Christ as Savior those under the person’s circle of influence will greatly benefit from his/her decision. In fact those in the circle of influence may be inclined to accept Jesus as their Savior. It is like a domino effect. If we are going to attempt a translation that reflects this idea we would say, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved and those that you interact with on a daily basis, those that you are close to will be saved as well.”

Principles for Evangelistic Family Ministry from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy

In addition to the biblical support previously mentioned there is much more evidence in the Bible that supports the concept of EFM. This section samples some of these texts and comments from Ellen G. White that lend their support to developing an effective EFM.

Every individual matters to the Lord. In Luke 15 there are three parables dealing with the salvation of a single person and portraying how valuable this salvation is to God and heaven. The shepherd searches intensely for one sheep of a hundred that gets lost; the woman looks everywhere for the one lost coin; a father is overjoyed at the return of his prodigal son. In these stories the theme of rejoicing for the one that has been found is pivotal. However, the point of an EFM model goes beyond that of the stories of Luke 15. It is the idea of a saved individual extending his/her salvation to the individual’s circle of influence.

¹⁹*SDA Bible Dictionary* (1960), s.v. “household.”

In 1 Cor 7:10-16 Paul seems to make an appeal contrary to the one made by Peter in Acts 16:31. Basically he exhorts believers to remain married to their unbelieving spouses hoping that their Christian influence will eventually bring their spouses to the faith. This passage indicates that EFM is an important part of the process. Paul continues his exhortation by saying: "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God has called us to peace" (1 Cor 7:15). What Paul is saying in this seemingly conflicting statement is that God has given to us individuality, and that people will make choices regarding their own salvation. People are not saved automatically by a head of the household's decision to accept Christ. However, this decision will be a tremendous influence, "for the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband . . . for what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save they husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" (1 Cor 7:14, 16). The faith of a man or a woman consecrated to God can have great influence in his/her household or circle of influence or household. Concerning the faithful spouse Ellen G. White explains: "He may suffer opposition and be oppressed and annoyed in many ways; he will find his comfort and his strength and support from God, who is able to give grace for every emergency."²⁰ In a church with a comprehensive EFM members married to non-believers will have the tools to support them as they deal with this specific challenge.

The Influence of the Spiritual Leader of the Household

The Bible reveals a theme of the spiritual influence of the head of the house on

²⁰Ellen G. White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery and Divorce* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1989), 158.

their household whether of good for righteousness or evil for wickedness. In the years after the fall of humanity people gathered into two camps, those who continued to follow God and look for the promised Messiah, and those who chose to follow their own inclinations to wickedness and sin. In the early chapters of civilizations, the results of spiritual choices are clearly seen.

Cain killed his own brother (Gen 4:3-15) and as result of this action he separated himself from his family by moving to the land of Nod, east of Eden. Genesis 4:16-24 narrates the beginning of a group of people who did not follow God. Genesis 4:25-26 mentions some type of revival brought about by the birth of Seth, Adam's son. Cain's separation from his family also increased his separation from God, whereas Seth's connection with his family gave him the benefit of Adam's instruction. White says: "He [Seth] was born in sin, but by the grace of God, in receiving the faithful instructions of his father Adam, he honored God in doing His will."²¹

Two groups are identified in Gen 6:1-2, where they are called "sons of God" and "daughters of men." At this juncture the Bible does not give a chronology to know how long the descendants of Seth were faithful, or when was it that these men started to "look at" the "daughters of men." However, the influence of both fathers is clearly seen. Seth led men back to God, for the Bible says that after Seth's first son "men began to call on the name of the Lord" (Gen 4:26). Cain established a community that rejected God. It was in the city of Enoch, which was established by Cain and named after his son, that bigamy was first practiced and homicide went unpunished (Gen 4:19 and 4:23-24 respectively). White says: "To the crime of murder, in which Cain had led the way,

²¹Ellen G. White, *The Story of Redemption* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1947), 57.

Lamech, the fifth in descent, added polygamy, and, boastfully defiant, he acknowledged God, only to draw from the avenging of Cain an assurance of his own safety.”²²

Abraham's Influence on His Household a Model for Today

Parents continued to pass their faith and the stories of God from one generation to another. Genesis 11:10-32 accounts for nine generations from Shem to Abram. It is here that the first promise is found concerning the power of influence of one man over his family and thus over humanity. God decided to channel the blessings of a life in covenant with Him through one man and his family, Abram. “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen 12:1-3).

“In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” In this statement God promised that Abram's faith, his covenant with God, would be a blessing to the entire planet. In this family, the nation of Israel finds its beginning, and by faith all modern followers of Jesus Christ become part of this spiritual family. In Rom 4:13-25 Paul explains that by faith we all become part of the seed of Abraham. The faith of this one man must have been immeasurable in order to affect the entire planet. The biblical narration of the life of Abraham details the powerful influence that this man had on his entire household. White adds detail to the story of Abram and Sarah: “During their stay in Haran, both Abraham

²²Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), 81.

and Sarah had led others to the worship and service of the true God. These attached themselves to the patriarch's household, and accompanied him to the land of promise."²³

According to White, Abraham's household comprised more than a thousand souls.²⁴ As far as blood relatives there was Abraham, Sarah, and their son Isaac, Hagar, and Ishmael. However, this statement by White detailing that the household numbered more than a thousand individuals truly reflects the OT understanding of the word household.

Abraham had a relationship with his workers as that of Master and servants. This is clearly reflected in Gen 14:14; 17:23-27; and 24:34-35. In chapter 14 it says that the male members of his household who were ready for battle numbered 318 men. In chapter 17, God commanded him to circumcise all the males in his household as a sign of His covenant. In chapter 24, Abraham's servant prayed to God and asked for God's intervention in his mission. Abraham had successfully transferred his faith to those in his household.

Abraham's life and household influence is a model to be imitated by today's Christian homes. White explains: "The greatest evidence of the power of Christianity that can be presented to the world is a well-ordered, well-disciplined family. This will recommend the truth as nothing else can, for it is a living witness of its practical power upon the heart."²⁵ People wanted to follow Abraham, they adopted his beliefs and

²³White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 127.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 141.

²⁵Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 32.

followed his instructions. Abraham was a powerful influence to his household and a blessing to humanity.

Israel's Model God Ordained

God instructed Israel about the importance of transferring their faith within their families. God was aware of the powerful influence of the Canaanites and their spiritual practices. His intention was that Israel would remain faithful and would continue to be a great nation, if they would follow his directive.

In Deut 11, Moses communicates to the Israelite nation on God's instruction as to how to transfer their faith to the upcoming generations. These are instructions that we would do well to study carefully, for in them God has delineated a process that cannot fail. Not only will these help in transferring faith but help will also help to increase communication between the members of the household. By spending time together, by teaching and talking about the commandments of the Lord, by learning the stories from the Bible that tell of God's power and intervention in the lives of His children, and by helping us understand that God wants what is best for us, the following passage is a goldmine of instruction.

Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth (Deut 11:18-21).

This is the principle God intended for His children to follow, the principle of a faith that is transferred from one generation to the next one. "Rashi, the Jewish

Commentator, interprets these words to mean that a parent, from the time that a child can speak, shall instruct him in the Hebrew language and in the Torah.”²⁶ White explains: “The Hebrews were taught how to train their children so that they might avoid the idolatry and wickedness of the heathen nations.”²⁷ In following the practice of transferring their faith other benefits would be realized: closer relationships, the transfer of occupational vocations, family wealth, and family traditions, to name a few. Today’s modern family often feels the void created by the lack of close relationships between the members of the family.

Today’s Family Is Under Attack

It is important to understand, for the purpose of this chapter, that the family or household is the target of Satan’s attack; it has been and will continue to be the center of his attention. This is because when Satan knows that if he can cause the fall of one person in the household, he can work through them to bring harm to the rest. Satan works hard at destroying the home. White explains: “His work (Satan’s) is to bring into every family the cruel elements of self-will, harshness, selfishness. Thus he seeks to destroy the happiness of the family.”²⁸ The breakup of the family leads up to the breakup of society and the restructuring of individuals into diverse groups or family types mentioned earlier in this chapter.

White explains the result of the lack of the spiritual leaders in the home: “Religious parents, failing to walk in His statutes, do not command their household to

²⁶“Teach them,” *SDABC*, 1:991.

²⁷Ellen G. White, *Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Southern, 1923), 178.

keep the way of the Lord.”²⁹ If this is happening in the home of Christians, then much greater pain and conflict will be found in homes where God is not even present.

Commenting on homes without religious instruction White says: “The law of God is not made the rule of life. The children, as they make homes of their own, feel under no obligation to teach their children what they themselves have never been taught.”³⁰

Today’s Christian church has a solemn duty to share the light of the Gospel with families/family groups all around in their communities so that these can escape the depravity of the age in which we live and can experience wholeness. White adds: “And this is why there are so many godless families; this is why depravity is so deep and widespread.”³¹

Today’s broken-up family is our mission field. Commenting on the incident with the jailer found in Acts 16:31, White says: “Missionary work is to be done in the home. Here those who have received Christ are to show what grace has done for them.”³² By reaching out to them we will reap a tremendous reward because these families will extend the message of salvation to their household. Friends, relatives, coworkers, neighbors, and others in their circle of influence will be reached by the Gospel. White encourages “You have neighbors. Will you give them the message? You may never have had the hands of ordination laid upon you, but you can humbly carry the message. You can testify that . . .

²⁸Ellen G. White, *The Upward Look* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1982), 163.

²⁹White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 143.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ellen G. White, *God’s Amazing Grace* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1973), 226.

all for whom Christ died shall have everlasting life if they believe on Him.”³³ Not only does White encourage us to reach out to our neighbors, she helps us to understand that anyone can share Christ.

In order to reach households in the area surrounding a home or church, it is important to mix with families in the community. White says: “Wherever you can gain access to the people by the fireside, improve your opportunity.”³⁴ People connect in non-threatening territory easier. Often the church is seen as a place where there is an agenda, “people there want to shove the Gospel down my throat” is a common thought for non-church-goers. In the informal setting of a social gathering, walls of prejudice can be broken down. White explains: “Your success will not depend so much upon your knowledge and accomplishments as upon your ability to find your way to the heart. By being social and coming close to the people, you may turn the current of their thoughts more readily than by the most able discourse.”³⁵

When the families in the church realize that they are the best tool to reach out to other families, the result will be more quantity of growth in the church. Instead of a single conversion and baptism entire families may join the church, from a family of two individuals to five, six, or seven people all at once. The younger the converts (the children of these families) the greater the possibility of long-term member-retention. White continues to explain: “The presentation of Christ in the family, by the fireside, and in small gatherings in private houses is often more successful in winning souls to Jesus

³³Ellen G. White, *In Heavenly Places* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1967), 323.

³⁴Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1948), 193.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 193.

than are sermons delivered in the open air, to the moving throng, or even in halls or churches.”³⁶ As important as evangelistic meetings are, there is greater need for one on one outreach. The church’s families are best equipped for the task of families reaching out to families. It is time for the church to be intentional about winning entire families to Christ.

Principles for Evangelistic Family Ministry

Dennis Rainey appeals to the Christian community with strong words: “If the soul of America is to be restored, it will be done one home, one family at a time, and in the church we assist that by proclaiming God’s truth for the family. We need family ministry reformation.”³⁷ Whether we define the concept of family as the close cluster of blood relatives, or use the broad biblical understanding of the household and the circle of influence, the church is ultimately the best instrument in reaching out to the family because it has with it the most power on its side. God will empower any church or group of Christians wanting to make a difference in the household.

Purposeful Ministry

Warren shares: “Nothing precedes purpose. The starting point for every church could be the question, ‘Why do we exist?’ Until you know what your church exists for, you have no foundation, no motivation, and no direction for ministry.”³⁸ Most churches will indicate that their purpose is evangelism. However, generally within the Seventh-day

³⁶White, *Gospel Ministry*, 193.

³⁷Dennis Rainey, ed., *Building Strong Families* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 15.

³⁸Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 81.

Adventist Church, evangelism has often been narrowed down to a series of prophecy lectures. The failure of this system happens when we miss the whole reason and idea for evangelism. Russell explains: "The purpose of evangelism is to bring people into community, if all we do is to bring people to a knowledge of salvation and truth but fail to bring them into community, we have failed in our Christian mission."³⁹ In the previous section, it was stated that church families are the best tools to winning other families to Christ. This encompasses the idea of community, relationship, and fellowship.

EFM has to be purposely planned in order for it to reap the benefits of soul winning. The church has to purposely choose to be driven in pursuit of this mission. When planning for evangelism, if the church simply has a program for the children, it will be missing the point. EFM cannot happen as a byproduct of other church programs or activities. White advises, "Let every worker in the Master's vineyard, study, plan, devise methods, to reach the people where they are."⁴⁰ Many of the outreach programs that our churches are currently offering are generic. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has downlinks, packaged "Share Him" events, and a conference evangelist who has a program that can be presented over and over again when going from church to church in the conference. Without stopping what we are already doing, the local church needs to also consider household-tailored programs that will reach their community more effectively. EFM should be a part of the planning and should be customized to a church's own community. White continues by saying, "We must do something out of the common course of things. We must arrest the attention. We must be deadly in earnest. We are on

³⁹Burrill, *Revolution*, 82.

⁴⁰Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946), 122.

the very verge of times of trouble and perplexities that are scarcely dreamed of.”⁴¹

Principles for Evangelistic Family Ministry

Considering the thoughts mentioned in previous pages, from Scripture and from the writings of Ellen G White, there are several principles that must be considered for an effective EFM:

1. We need to be effective in reaching all we can for Christ.
2. Families are God’s channel to bless humanity. Satan makes the family his favorite target.
3. Acts 16:31 demonstrates that EFM is the result of the proclamation of the Gospel.
4. As a result of the family embracing the Gospel, they become a blessing to the community where they reside.
5. In today’s plural context for the meaning of household the church needs to be aware of the many forms that family ministry may take or involve.
6. Effective EFM needs to be equipped to deal with families whose members do not embrace the Gospel all together at the same time, helping the believing family member to reach the non-believing spouse or members of the household.
7. Abraham’s interaction with his own household and his effectiveness in ministry should be a model for us to follow.
8. Following Ellen G White’s advice on EFM will result in training and utilizing the church’s families to reach out to families for the presentation of the Gospel.

⁴¹White, *Evangelism*, 127.

9. Through purposeful planning churches should make goals for effective EFM, not as a byproduct of other soul-winning events, but as the result of efforts to reach families with the Gospel.

Following these principles, churches will be able to: be purposeful in their soul winning, have a family ministry that is not only for the church family but also for the evangelism of households surrounding the church community, and be better able to minister to the families in their communities.

Conclusion

The points presented in this chapter have shown the clear biblical mandate and priority for the church family to purposely reach out to the households in its community. First, it is clear that the creation of the first family in the Garden of Eden demonstrates God's plan for the family/household as a place where God's grace is to be manifested and shared. God created the first family in the Garden of Eden; however, as a direct result of the entrance of sin, the home was the first negatively affected. Second, Acts 16:31 makes a strong case for EFM. "Thou shalt be saved, and thy house," composes a statement that provokes thought concerning soul winning. The relevance and application of the Greek words "sozo" and "oikos" to today's church and its members make a strong case for EFM. Third, the OT examples presented support the application of household and the circle of influence. Ellen G. White makes strong statements pointing out the influence that a Christian household can have in its community. It is also important to highlight the nine principles that guide in the process of formulating an EFM as listed in the previous section.

It is time for the church to set its focus on household evangelism. God created the household with a noble purpose: to have a place where His image could be best represented and taught to the next generations. However, churches are not going to be able to reach families effectively as long as they continue to have EFM as a by-product of their other efforts in soul winning. Churches need to be purposely driven to minister to the families in their communities in order to effectively reach out to them.

There is great reward in following the principles demonstrated in the Bible in Acts 16:13-15 a short story is told that can be dismissed as unimportant. Lydia hears the Gospel and notice what happens: "Lydia . . . heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household" (Acts 16:14-15). The influence of the head-of-household, whether male or female, cannot be underestimated by the church in today's society.

God told Israel in Jer 31:1, "I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people." God deeply desires to restore today's families with His love. It is the purpose of this paper to train the EHSDAC for an EFM that reaches to the households of new believers, and to help the church become an influence in the community to help households and bring them to Christ. In the following chapters this process will be presented and developed.

CHAPTER 3

REVIEW OF CURRENT LITERATURE DEALING WITH OUTREACH TO MODERN FAMILIES

Introduction

Family ministry is a subject that has been studied abundantly, and from either a secular or a religious perspective there is an abundance of literature regarding family issues. Family issues deeply affect the society in which we live, no matter where we are in the world. The television industry is aware of this, and from year to year they produce programming that deal with family issues, from the portrayal of the perfect nuclear family to the dysfunctional nuclear family; from the good-looking blended family to the modern portrayal of a fictive kin family, television is full of family issues.

Trouble in the Household

Anyone who provides help and support to modern households will face many varied issues. Diverse group-types, dysfunctional households, the numerous religious/philosophical beliefs influencing family groups, racial issues, and social status, are just a few of the challenges one who provides family support will face. Steven M. Tipton and John Witte Jr. expand on this issue:

Although it is clear that the family lies at the heart of the modern Western society, it is equally clear that traditional norms and forms of the family are in trouble today. All too familiar statistics tell a striking story. From 1975 to 2000, roughly one-quarter of all pregnancies ended in abortion in the United States. One-third of all children were

born to single mothers. One-half of all marriages ended in divorce. Three-quarters of all African American children were raised without fathers regularly present. Children from broken homes proved two to three times more likely to have behavioral and learning problems as teenagers than children from two-parent homes. More than two-thirds of juveniles and young adults convicted of major felonies from 1970 to 1995 came from single- or no- parent homes.¹

In their book *Parents Under Siege*, James Garbarino and Claire Bedard list four causes for the trouble in dealing with the modern household: "1- Adult authority is weaker and more fragmented; 2- Young people are spending more time with peers; 3- Teenagers have more freedom in their own life than previous generations of young people. They have greater freedom of choice regarding friends, school commitments, sexual activity, and career paths; 4- The mass media expose adolescent to a much broader range of experiences, influencing young people in ways that are still under study."²

Ron Deal presents a different perspective as he lists the symptoms and then points to the cause: "Depression, anxiety, drugs, and other unhealthy attachments (to food, work, etc.) become temporary coping mechanisms for adults and adolescents who suffer from unhealthy family circumstances."³ Early in his book Deal talks about the important role the church plays in helping broken families and how most churches chose to reject such families⁴ [troubled families] because of the stigma and complications of ministry these bring into the equation. He clearly states "the church is perfectly positioned"⁵ to

¹Steven M. Tipton and John Witte Jr., *Family Transformed: Religion, Values and Society in American Life* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University, 2005), 2.

²James Garbarino and Claire Bedard, *Parents Under Siege: Why You Are the Solution, Not the Problem, in Your Child's Life* (New York: Free Press, 2005), 206.

³Ron L. Deal, *The Smart Step-Family: Seven Steps to a Healthy Family* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2002), 252.

⁴Ibid., 52-53.

provide help for broken families. The church is “perfectly positioned” because of its spiritual influence, and its ability to provide tools, education, guidance, and support to all families. The statistics presented by Deal are compelling: “Forty-six percent of marriages today are remarriages for one or both partners. The rate of divorce for remarriages with stepchildren is 50 percent higher than in those without.”⁶

A large majority of the material written on the subject of family ministry relates to ministering to Christian families within the congregation. George Barna comments on the overwhelming number of books written on the subject of family: “Did you know that if you took all of the books available today on parenting and divided them by the number of days in a year, you’d discover that there has been an average of ten new parenting books produced every day of the year for each of the past twenty-one years? That is more than 75,000 different parenting books currently at your disposal.”⁷ While this dissertation does not focus on “parenting,” the number of books on the subject gives a snapshot of the complexity of family issues, and our stated goal of providing an EFM.

Literature’s Theme of Change in the Family

In the process of leading the EHSDAC to a change of perspective in ministry, priorities in ministry, and understand the EFM mentality several books have been helpful and influential. One book that has been very helpful in the process of leading the congregation to shift their perspective and be willing to accept and work necessary

⁵Deal, 252.

⁶Ibid., 253.

⁷George Barna, *Revolutionary Parenting: What the Research Shows Really Works* (Carol Stream, IL: Barna Books, 2007), xi.

changes, is the book *How to Change Your Church Without Killing It*, by Alan Nelson and Gene Appel.⁸ This book shares the experience of the writers as they led their own congregations through change. As they share their story, the writers highlight practical principles which guided their choice to change.

What I appreciated most about this book was the practical presentation of material and ideas that had already been tested in a church setting. In the preface of the book there is a strong statement about change: "We uncover a great paradoxical truth. Change is hell. Yet not to change, to stay on the path of slow death, is also hell. The difference is that the hell of deep change is the hero's journey. The journey put us on a path of exhilaration, growth, and progress."⁹ As I led the EHSDAC through the process of creating vision and mission statements most of the ideas for the process came from this book.

Change is difficult, and often progresses slowly in a church setting. In their ministry Nelson and Appel list some of the reasons why change is difficult. They explain that churches see themselves as tradition keepers; ecclesiastical culture plays a large role in how churches operate; churches are not usually in touch with the bottom line; people see the church as a "bastion of relief;" and churches tend not to be leader-led.¹⁰

However, the church has a great potential for change and growth. Ideally the church is to be led by the Holy Spirit. As the pastor opens his/her heart to be led, church members can see the benefits of following his example. Thus, the church is empowered

⁸Alan E. Nelson and Gene Appel, *How to Change Your Church without Killing It* (Nashville, TN: Word, 2000).

⁹Ibid., xiii.

¹⁰Ibid., 44-45.

to change its outreach as the Holy Spirit guides.

Another book that was valuable during the process of change was *Leading Change*, by John P. Kotter.¹¹ In this book Kotter presents a well-thought process for change in leadership in the business world. The second section of the book presents "The Eight-Stage Process" for change. The process of change, Kotter indicates, is clearly not the result of luck. There is a dialogue on page 124 where the author speaks with a member of a guiding coalition group. The second person is trusting on a "little luck" for success and using words like "might" and "possible." Kotter explains that "in highly successful change efforts, you do not hear much dialogue like this . . . they plan for short-term wins, organize accordingly, and implement the plan to make things happen."¹² While in the paradigm of church work we depend on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, careful planning is a very important ingredient of church growth. Growth will not happen by simply wishing, hoping, or wanting it to happen. The principles presented by Kotter are effective for church growth planning and strategy.

Kotter also talks about the need for a sense of urgency. "Visible crises can be enormously helpful in catching people's attention and pushing up urgency levels."¹³ There is an urgent problem at EHSDAC; we need more families with youth and young children to join. In fact, having so many churches in "death-row" it is imperative for church leaders to awaken the laity to the urgency of the preaching of the Gospel and to service within the ranks of their dying congregations, providing ministry for the families

¹¹John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996). 124.

¹²*Ibid.*, 125.

¹³*Ibid.*, 45.

surrounding them. Using this principle I presented the reality before the church board explaining to them the number of families that had visited our church and did not stay for the lack of ministry focusing on children and youth. The board members' reaction was to mention their own experiences and of other families and started to brainstorm for ministry ideas to help resolve these issues.

As agents of change today's Christian churches have a tremendous advantage because of the treasure they hold in their message and because of their main mission. Each Christian has been given the Gospel Commission. Perhaps the lack of initiative in many congregations for the planning and carrying out of an EFM stem from the enormity of the challenges that face modern households.

In the remainder of this chapter, the review of literature will follow this sequence: First, we will examine the challenges faced by today's complex households. Second, literature dealing with EFM will be discussed. Finally, current resources for EFM will be presented and evaluated. One of the challenges of this subject is that few books have been written that fall within the specific scope of this dissertation.

The Challenges Faced by Today's Complex Family

To the average Christian congregation the challenges faced by today's households are perplexing. As complex as they may be, there are many ministry and support activities that churches can do to connect and reach out to today's households. However, there will always be cases that simply need to be referred to expert counselors and professionals. The problems of the home affect all for the home is the basis of society.

Dennis Rainey explains, "No church, community, or nation will rise higher than the spiritual condition of its families."¹⁴

Referring to the current spiritual situation in the United States, George Barna says: "The unfortunate truth is that most citizens of 'the greatest nation on earth' are mired in an agonizing revolving door of trial-and-error efforts in a disheartening and unfulfilling search for truth, integrity, meaning, wholeness, connection, passion, and inner peace."¹⁵ The Christian church is better equipped to provide help and guidance in this unending search of the human heart and of today's family.

In his book *Revolution*, Barna expands on the idea that all human beings have a spiritual core and most are seeking to satisfy this need for spirituality. "Because your core spiritual convictions dramatically influence your life choices, your major spiritual beliefs shape your self-image and behavior."¹⁶ He proposes that this seeking process has created a spiritual revolution. Churches will do well to understand the spiritual need of today's individuals and families, and work to meet those needs. He continues "The Revolution, because it is based on applying biblical principles, constantly elevates and clarifies the central beliefs that facilitate sinners being transformed into forgiven, satisfying servants of the Living God."¹⁷

In his book on parenting, he continues the theme of revolution and expands on its meaning and purpose: "Understanding that people's lives are shaped primarily when they

¹⁴Rainey, *Building Strong Families*, 15.

¹⁵George Barna, *Revolution* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2006), 13.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 89.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

are very young, making ministry to children the single most influential ministry any church engages in.”¹⁸ EFM must consider having ministries that provide the necessary nurturing for the families of those they wish to reach out to. Many parents feel insecure in their parenting skills. Because of that, “they are all too happy to pass off their kids to paid professionals-teachers, pastors, baby sitters, and coaches.”¹⁹

Barna adds: “Parenting occurs on the front lines of the spiritual battle that defines our daily existence and purpose.”²⁰ These statements and the previous one help the church understand that ministries that focus on providing resources for the family are greatly needed in the households surrounding our churches. I believe that the EHSDAC will greatly benefit from implementing seminars that help families learn skills to deal with their challenges.

More Than Family Ministry

Even though the purpose of this dissertation is not to recommend using family ministry as the only means for evangelism, understanding that EFM includes providing support with family related issues is important. EFM means developing ministries that help to deal with family-related issues as well as considering family needs when developing other evangelistic venues. Notice what Charles Sell says on this subject. “Viewed in this way, seminars on marriage and parenting are not nice, optional programs

¹⁸Barna, *Revolutionary Parenting*, xvi.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., xxi.

intended to make people selfishly happy, they are necessary to keep people morally and spiritually healthy.”²¹

One of the best descriptions of the struggles that the modern family faces is portrayed by Dana Mack in her book *The Assault on Parenthood, How Our Culture Undermines the Family*.²² In it she clearly uncovers the many forms of attack which are bombarding the family. From the media to the public school, government agencies to health systems, it seems that parents are automatically on the losing side no matter what.

In her introduction Mack states: “Families are under insurmountable pressures from a culture that undermines child-rearing efforts.”²³ She continues to explain the parents’ predicament: they say “there is no respect.” “By this, they do not only mean that children no longer have enough respect for parents. They mean also that the larger culture no longer supports the family as an inviolate unit engaged in a crucial and worthy task—the task of child-rearing.”²⁴

In the first three chapters of her book Mack makes a case for a culture that is set against the family and its values. In the next four chapters, she expands on issues that today’s parent faces: schooling, sex education, day care, and peer pressure, to name a few. The last three chapters offer alternative solutions to these challenges, including

²¹Charles M. Sell, *Family Ministry*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 16.

²²Dana Mack, *The Assault on Parenthood: How Our Culture Undermines the Family* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997).

²³*Ibid.*, 16.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 17.

proposed changes in family law as well as political and social action.²⁵ This book was so powerful I was tempted to quote from every page.

Even though Mack does not address nor offer a Christian perspective for solutions to the challenges faced by modern households, it is clear that the church has an overwhelming challenge in reaching out to the families in its community. The church must help to break the cycle of abuse practice by previous generations, including abuse coming from individuals who claim Christian values. (Mack cites the case of a minister who sexually abused his step-daughter.)²⁶ Most importantly, the church must help non-Christian households find in Christ the solution for the challenges they face.

Rejection of the Troubled Family

The problem is that the average church often rejects the "troubled" family embracing only those who seem to be whole and without issues. Because we live in a sinful world, the reality is that very few families are truly "trouble-free." At one time a family with young children started attending one of my congregations; they had one troubled young boy who was very disruptive. One deaconess told me how much better it would be if that family never came back. It is tempting for churches to close their doors to families who are in trouble, families who would benefit most from what the church has to offer. Marriage as an institution is in crisis. The family is in crisis. That is why EFM makes so much sense as an evangelistic tool in today's culture.

Charles Sell has a whole chapter on the issue of trouble in the family. Sell lists

²⁵Mack, 287. Chapter ten starts on this page and offers solutions through law changes and political action.

²⁶Ibid., 46.

four things that are the cause of this trouble. First, he lists family instability, due to the acceptance of divorce as a normal part of the process. Second, the breakdown of traditional roles leads to trouble in the family because the concept of egalitarian roles is in opposition to the biblical mandate, the financial dependence on the two-income households exacerbates the level of stress and conflict, and the struggle for significance destroys intimacy. Third, family trouble comes because parents are powerless as the result of peer pressure, governmental intrusion, and educational systems. Fourth, dysfunctional family units which end up reproducing themselves through their children continuing the vicious cycle.²⁷

The books previously mentioned not only list the causes of trouble in the family, but they also contain resources and materials for the church family so that they can reach out to these families in a helpful way. Understanding that not all families are troubled church leaders need to also consider those families that are strong, and help them to become mentors, helpers in the process of reaching out to families who are troubled. Reaching out to help other families will strengthen the stronger families.

Literature That Supports the Need for Evangelistic Family Ministry

The plethora of literature documenting the troubles of the modern family shows that EFM is desperately needed. The challenge is that ministries for the family and ministries for evangelism have been divorced for a long time. We seldom think of using family ministry as a tool for evangelism; and if it happens, it is more accidental than purposely planned. In fact, there is a surprising lack of thought about bringing people into

²⁷Sell, *Family Ministry*, 42-51.

the church family by reaching out to families and households.

Charles Sell has seen this need and has put together some excellent material on the subject. In his book *Helping Trouble Families*,²⁸ Sell makes a compelling case for the circumstances that most families are facing today. Sell says, "How is pastoral ministry carried out in an increasingly dysfunctional society? Issues such as family life and human sexuality are fractured in ways we couldn't imagine just a few years ago."²⁹ In the next paragraph he adds, "Dealing with their dysfunctional background has become an essential part of the process of their growing in Christ."³⁰ Years ago, when the majority of the church's families were more stable, dysfunctional families were not dealt with at the church level, but rather passed on to professionals. Today, we must realize that it is a priority for the church to help these dysfunctional families, both the ones in the congregation as well as those in the community. The church should be a place of refuge, a place for troubled families to feel safe and accepted.

In chapter 11, Charles Sell makes an appeal to the church. The chapter's title is "Recovery in the Church." One of the first barriers that dysfunctional families face is the stigma of their problems, usually known and talked about in the community. Because of these dysfunctional families the church needs to be a place where people experience "an accepting atmosphere."³¹ The church needs to "intentionally consider how to provide a

²⁸Charles M. Sell, *Helping Trouble Families: A Guide for Pastors, Counselors, and Supporters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002).

²⁹*Ibid.*, 12.

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹*Ibid.*, 173.

place in its ministry for them.”³² It does not happen by accident or by careless preparation. It has to be intentional. As a result of careful planning the church can connect families who have various needs with organized support groups, provide counseling centers where the church family can get involved as a ministry, and present seminars to help families grow.³³ Sell’s book provides details on specific issues families deal with, and advice on resources and ministry ideas.

Another book by Sell that deals with the church being a channel for EFM is entitled, *Family Ministry*. Sell clearly points out the obligation the church has to the families in its community: “There is no question that evangelism is one of the church’s highest priorities. This fact, than, makes family ministry essential because it, too, is evangelistic. Family ministry aims to train people how to fulfill parenthood as Christians, which includes nurturing their children in the faith, a task assigned to them in Ephesians 6:4.”³⁴

Sell clearly sees the church as the best channel to help the households in our community. When asked, “Why the church?” he answers, “The church is in the best position to do something.”³⁵ This is understandable because the church has the power of God behind us and God is the one that started the household. It is encouraging to note that there is evidence that families with spiritual values do better and last longer.

³²Sell, *Helping Trouble Families*, 173.

³³*Ibid.*, 175-188.

³⁴Sell, *Family Ministry*, 17.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 20.

Spirituality and the Family

Ron L. Deal and David H. Olson³⁶ affirm the role of spirituality in the marriage relationship. They say:

A recent examination of studies of religion and the family found that couples who perceive God to be active or reflected in their marital relationship had better marital adjustment, less conflict, more verbal collaboration and less verbal aggression, and fewer stalemates in discussing disagreements. Furthermore, in 2004, Peter Larson and David Olson examined data from a study of 24,671 couples and found that couples with high agreement on spiritual beliefs were more happily married, had significantly better communication, and greater ability to resolve conflict, and felt closer in their relationship than other couples.³⁷

They continued to say that “shared spirituality in remarrying couples is able to predict with 76 percent accuracy whether they have strong, happy relationships or fragile, unhappy ones. Without question, shared spirituality is a significant contributor to overall marital satisfaction.”³⁸ The family must be in agreement on what these spiritual values should be. “Spirituality,” adds Deal and Olson, “is the great unifier for couples, but it also is the great divider.”³⁹ When a couple agrees on their spiritual values “spirituality provides direction for life and orients them to that which really matters. It unifies them in vision and purpose.”⁴⁰

The conclusions of Deal and Olson are about spirituality in general, however, when we understand their research within the context of the spiritual influence of the

³⁶Ron L. Deal and David H. Olson, *The Remarriage Checkup: Tools to Help Your Marriage Last a Lifetime* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany, 2010).

³⁷*Ibid.*, 224.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 226.

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 227.

Christian church and its message, there is all the more reason to make a special effort to bring families into the knowledge of Jesus Christ and to share God's concern for the family. As a Christian church, we have invaluable resources to offer to the modern family/household.

Dennis Rainey agrees with this thought. He quotes Ben Freudenburg saying "I think people in the church are asking desperately for help . . . and when they find churches that are doing [family ministry], they tend to move to those churches."⁴¹ In this book Rainey makes eight powerful suggestions for church leaders concerning family ministry, how greatly needed it is, and the impact that it can have in the community.

One of these suggestions, Big Idea 4,⁴² addresses the importance of making family ministry available to the community by going beyond what the average church does. Usually churches go around putting out "family-fires," or fixing their problems without giving families the tools to resolve their problems. But Rainey's suggestion is that the church should become a "marriage and family equipping center."⁴³ Rainey quotes Barna saying: "The churches that have the most effective ministries to families are the ones that help families become efficient, independent problem-solvers."⁴⁴

Rainey capitalizes on the cycles of life to minister to the family. He recommends not only reaching out to the family during these cycles, but also exploring how families

⁴¹Dennis Rainey, *Ministering to Twenty-First Century Families* (Nashville, TN: Publishing Group, 2001), 61.

⁴²Ibid., 57-62.

⁴³Ibid., 60.

⁴⁴George Barna, "Churches May Be Hindering—Not Helping—Family Growth," EP News Release, September 1998, quoted in Rainey, 60.

going through these cycles can serve in the church family by mentoring. From the couple's "dating days," to the family's "empty nest" years there are ministry opportunities. Rainey also tackles difficult subjects like ministry to "unique families."⁴⁵ the adoptive family, singles and single parents, and the step-family.

Resources for Evangelistic Family Ministry

Books specifically written for the purpose of EFM are few, but the ones that have been written on this subject are clear in the message they convey. These books need to be studied by church leaders, the principles learned need to be carefully applied to each church within its context, and new initiatives need to be started in the church in order to better connect congregations in order to better connect with the communities in which these churches minister.

The Family Friendly Church

Ben Freudenburg and Rick Lawrence have written a book titled *The Family Friendly Church*⁴⁶ (FFC). Right at the start of the book Freudenburg and Lawrence confront the reader with some pertinent points: First, "the life values of Christian teenagers and adults are often indistinguishable from the world's life values."⁴⁷ There is no surprise here because children (or the young ones in the household) typically reflect the values of their home environment. When you compare the values and activities of those who label themselves as Christians with those that do not make those claims, you

⁴⁵Rainey, *Ministering to Twenty-First Century Families*, 195-236.

⁴⁶Ben Freudenburg and Rick Lawrence, *The Family Friendly Church* (Loveland, CO: Vital, 1998).

⁴⁷Ibid., 11.

will find little difference in their attitude or behavior.

Second, "American families do not realize their power and influence"⁴⁸ on the children and youth growing up within their household. We live in a country that highly values individuality and young people are often pushed out of the guidance and nurture of their adult guardians, and are put in places and situations that they are not ready to handle. If families would exercise their influence over their young ones for a little longer these would be less likely to make the wrong choices so early in life. "According to Search Institute's landmark report, "Youth in Protestant Churches," a parent's positive influence on a child's faith development dwarfs all other influences."⁴⁹ How much headache and suffering would be avoided if parents and guardians were to use their influence to guide their youth through the challenging years of becoming adults.

The third point is a harsh reality for church leaders: "The Christian church has less and less impact in the lives of its members and in the culture itself."⁵⁰ As much as preachers may want to deny this fact, more and more people attend church, listen to the message, and then go on with their lives without considering the church's guidelines or the preachers' admonitions.

The church battles against strong forces today. Freudenburg and Lawrence tell us that "the unseen enemy of stable homes is a culture of disunity that can not agree on what's right and wrong for kids."⁵¹ In the 1950s "the schools, the media, the neighbors-

⁴⁸Freudenburg and Lawrence, 12.

⁴⁹Ibid., 9.

⁵⁰Ibid., 12.

⁵¹Ibid., 27.

all worked together to ensure the success of their offspring.”⁵² That is no longer the case. Today, it seems these all fight each other over the control and influence of the children.

Freudenburg and Lawrence suggest six imperatives for a family-friendly church. The first three have to do with the administration and focus of the church leaders and staff. They explain, “If the church is serious about nurturing the faith of children and youth through families, it must be more concerned and responsive as needs arise among church families. On a day-to-day basis, we must spend more time being listeners and caregivers than developers of programs.”⁵³ Ministry to the family must be integral in a church that wants to reach out to households in their area. This is best accomplished by addressing the needs of these families. The authors explain to their readers that “the church needs to be less like a corporation and more like a family in its feel and its structure.”⁵⁴

Another point made in FFC is a fact that is supported by Ellen G. White concerning family outreach made by families. FFC says, “The church’s vision must shift from a consumer-driven focus to a partner-driven focus.”⁵⁵ There is a tendency to make ministries to minister to our own families, in-reach that is thought to make us stronger, and there is a place for that. But the result of training our members to be more focused on out-reach is that our members become stronger. FFC continues to say, “The congregation

⁵²Freudenburg and Lawrence, 27.

⁵³Ibid., 60.

⁵⁴Ibid., 82.

⁵⁵Ibid., 106.

supports homes as it equips them to pass on the faith and mobilizes for ministry those living there.”⁵⁶

Understanding the importance of families reaching out to families, Sister White says that “the presentation of Christ in the family, by the fireside, and in small gatherings in private houses is often more successful in winning souls to Jesus than are sermons delivered in the open air, to the moving throng, or even in halls or churches.”⁵⁷ Our church’s families are living in the neighborhoods that we are trying to reach therefore they are our greatest tool to reach out to the community. White explains that we need to go to where the family is: “Come close to the people; get into the families when you can; do not wait for the people to hunt up the shepherd.”⁵⁸

Keep the Youth, Keep the Family

There is a compilation of material that was put together by Myrna Tetz and Gary L. Hopkins.⁵⁹ Even though this material focuses on keeping young people in the church I think it makes great points concerning the transformation that is necessary for churches to become focused on EFM. The equation is simple: keep the youth = keep the families.

In the first section of the book, the articles deal with the church’s role in keeping the youth, and focuses on specific ministries for children and youth. Doug Kilcher⁶⁰

⁵⁶Freudenburg and Lawrence, 108.

⁵⁷White, *Gospel Workers*, 193.

⁵⁸White, *Evangelism*, 158.

⁵⁹Myrna Tetz and Gary L. Hopkins, comp., *We Can Keep Them in the Church: Success Stories and Ideas That Really Work: How to Love Our Children so They Won’t Leave* (Oshawa, Ontario, Canada: Pacific Press, 2004).

presents the difference between growing and declining congregations. Four key characteristics of growing churches are: vision, vitality, values, and validation.⁶¹ All these characteristics connect the church with its mission and with a focus on family values, training, and empowerment.

Gary Hopkins working with Joyce W. Hopp⁶² wrote a book that deals with keeping the young in the church and details material worth considering within the context of EFM. This book, like the previous, is a one that church leaders need to examine for it has valuable advice for making a family friendly church that purposely plans evangelistic outreach to families. Here Hopkins and Hopp wrote this book from the point of view of a mother who has to deal with her son's struggles of faith, growth, peer pressure, and the course the mother-son relationship took during the process. Hopp shares from her personal experience with her son, Matt.

The closing chapter shares the point of the importance of religious faith for the young individual. They present Lampmann's report on the influence of prayer and religion on the individual. This report lists many benefits, ranging from health related issues to social concern issues such as drug abuse and premarital sex, all indicating that children who grow up with a strong faith have less of a desire to engage in harmful behaviors.⁶³ Considering the wealth of literature and inspiration on the subject, there is

⁶⁰Doug Kilcher, "Growing Effective Churches That Meet Needs," in *We Can Keep Them in the Church: Success Stories and Ideas That Really Work: How to Love Our Children so They Won't Leave*, comp. Myrna Tetz and Gary L. Hopkins (Oshawa, Ontario, Canada: Pacific Press, 2004).

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 50-51.

⁶²Gary L. Hopkins and Joyce W. Hopp, *It Takes a Church: Every Member's Guide to Keeping Young People Safe and Saved* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2002).

⁶³*Ibid.*, 78-85.

truth in the argument that it “takes a church” to preserve our next generations, to influence the home for good, and to bring people to Christ.

Specific Evangelistic Family Ministry

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a few individuals who have approached the subject of family ministry from an evangelistic perspective. The materials we have are specific to our theological background and contain the principles of our faith. Family issues are also addressed.

Gordon O. Martinborough, who for many years was a pastor-evangelist from Guyana and served as the Director of Family Ministries for the Inter-American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, has put together an evangelistic series that presented the Seventh-day Adventist family life with an emphasis on our doctrines.

This evangelistic series is titled: *Family Life, Bible Course, How To Do It*,⁶⁴ and has eight units: philosophy, campaign preparation, sermon components, crusade master-sheet, twenty-five sermon outlines, decision visitation, new believer consolidation, and benefits of family life evangelism. I used this series in 1994 and had success with it. The only drawback is that it was put together and used as an event and not as a new form of ministry. The unit dedicated to the philosophy of this series is only two pages long. In it Martinborough makes a powerful point: “Family life, like Sabbath keeping, should be an indispensable component of Adventist preaching both in pastoral care and in Evangelism.

⁶⁴Gordon O. Martinborough, *Family Life, Bible Course: How to Do It* (Siloan Springs, AK: Creation Enterprises International, 1991).

As such, family presentations in evangelistic campaigns should not be primarily for entertainment but for education.”⁶⁵

Martinborough methodology for the sermons and topics in the crusade is unusual. For instance, one of the sermons is titled “Did Adam Have a Wedding in the Garden of Eden?”⁶⁶ Martinborough introduces three subjects: Creation, Marriage, and the Sabbath. This sermon encompasses the doctrine of the Sabbath, while sharing important principles of family life. The next sermon is titled: “How to Chose the Right Girl from So Many in This World.”⁶⁷ In this sermon he addresses the idea of choosing the right mate for life, based on biblical principles, but does not present a particular doctrine.

Martinborough’s material is purposely instructional and not philosophical in the sense of teaching a new type of ministry. It was put together as an evangelistic event, very well organized, and once it was done you could move to the next event. It was published both in English and Spanish.

The Directors for the Department of Family Ministries for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ron and Karen Flowers, are certified family life educators. They have presented seminars on Christian family living throughout the world and have published countless family life education resources. One of these books is entitled, *Family Evangelism*.⁶⁸ In this book they outline several avenues of family ministry organized under the following headings: Sermons, Mini-seminars, Children’s

⁶⁵Martinborough, 2.

⁶⁶Ibid., Sermon outline from pages 48 to 52.

⁶⁷Ibid., Sermon outline from pages 53 to 55.

⁶⁸Karen and Ron Flowers, *Family Evangelism: Bringing Jesus to the Family Circle* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2003).

stories, Resources for family ministries, Reprinted articles, Book reviews, and More resources.

This book is valuable because it addresses the need for EFM from an Adventist theological perspective. One of the seminars is titled "Everybody's Welcome, Helping Your Church to be Family Friendly," and it was written by Karen Holford and Paul Godfrey. In this seminar Holford and Godfrey provide a practical list of things that any church should consider in order to become family friendly. Their list includes being mindful of the many household types that are in our modern society, considering the importance of regularly involving people of all ages in the church service, and looking at the church's infrastructure in order to provide for both the needs of the families attending church, and those who are in the local community.⁶⁹ They address the fact that church size is not an excuse for ignoring the needs of the families in the community. Often churches will look at their resources and decide that they cannot afford a family ministry. The authors share the importance of small churches being involved in ministry to win families for Christ.⁷⁰

An article written by David Yeagley makes the case for the importance of the family: "Throughout salvation history, God has turned to the family to be an agent of change in a dying world."⁷¹ In the previous chapter I called the family an "agent of

⁶⁹Karen Holford and Paul Godfrey, "Everybody's Welcome, Helping Your Church to be Family Friendly," in *Family Evangelism: Bringing Jesus to the Family Circle*, ed. Karen and Ron Flowers (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2003), 38-39.

⁷⁰Ibid., 39-40.

⁷¹David Yeagley, "Bringing the Church Home: Rediscovering Family as a Catalyst for Evangelism," in *Family Evangelism, Bringing Jesus to the Family Circle*, ed. Karen and Ron Flowers (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2003), 84.

salvation.” There is a place of prominence for the family in reaching out to the community around our churches. Yeagley continues by saying: “The bottom line is this: the catalyst of the family is crucial to the accomplishment of evangelism today.”⁷²

Quoting James Dobson, Yeagley writes: “Here is the most important implication of family disintegration. It will represent a virtual end of evangelism, as has occurred in Western Europe. . . . The family is absolutely critical to the propagation of faith.”⁷³

The material, articles, and seminars presented in the book, *Family Evangelism* are a must for EFM. This book is filled with ideas and materials that are ready for presentation, and are easy to use. Pastors and church leaders should consider this book a valuable source of reading material for ministry ideas.

Conclusion

Together the household and the church can revolutionize society. We have examined this fact in many different ways throughout this chapter. The greatest influence should be coming from the church with its message and influence, directed towards the home, the family, or household, so that the healing balm of the Gospel of Jesus Christ can transform lives and help them to reflect His love in their relationships. Whether we talk about the families within the congregation or those that as a church we reach out to engage with the Gospel message the results are the same and that is why EFM is so important today.

Karen and Ron Flowers explain it this way:

⁷²Yeagley, 84.

⁷³James Dobson, *Complete Marriage and Family Home Reference Guide* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2000), quoted in Yeagley, 84.

As the experience of being family on earth takes on new dimensions for Christian families, the Holy Spirit binds these 'household churches' together into a new fellowship. . . . The power of the Gospel that brings unity out of diversity in the church also infuses individual family circles with a new love not of human origin, a love that transforms family relationships, enriching and strengthening all within its reach.⁷⁴

It is this unity, joy, fellowship, and love that members of households need to experience with one another. Because of Satan's attack on the family, there is plenty of hurt, damaged individuals who have forgotten how to truly love. The church has the one authentic source of love that humanity needs: God's love. EFM is not an alternative or another program for the church. EFM is a necessity that communities around our churches are crying out for, it is what will truly make the difference in the effectiveness of the church outreach.

As I wrote this chapter, I was challenged by the small number of individuals who have tackled this subject. As I explained there is plenty of family ministry material but material specifically targeted to EFM is scarce. Perhaps this is because our persistent approach to evangelism is through prophecy seminars, Daniel and Revelation seminars, or similar doctrine-oriented outreaches. However, EFM does not take away from this approach: it enhances the approach because it not only considers an individual, but also targets the whole household.

Furthermore I believe that many congregations already have principles of EFM mixed in with their outreach strategy. However, it is not purposeful but rather accidental. My goal is to develop purposely planned approaches to evangelism that are family

⁷⁴Karen and Ron Flowers, *Family Faith: Experiencing Love, Contagious Joy, and Jesus at Home* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2005), 17.

minded. These approaches will guide churches to consider the households in the vicinity of the church's location and in the surrounding neighborhoods, and provide EFM that meets their needs.

CHAPTER 4

BACKGROUND OF THE ERWIN HILLS SDA CHURCH AND TRANSITION TO A CENTER FOR EVANGELISTIC FAMILY MINISTRY

Background of the Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church

In 1987, just in time for the organization of the group as a church, a brief account of the story of the Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church was written. In this account the story starts with these words: "It is wise and proper, when taking a step into the future, to look back and recount your beginnings."¹

The congregation was first known as the Leicester Seventh-day Adventist Church. This congregation, just as many others, was started with sacrifice and with the vision of someday having an Adventist presence in the area. It has had three beginnings; twice before the efforts to establish a presence died out before a permanent church was organized. However, the third time, having the support of a larger congregation in the area made a difference and today the church is growing strong.

Sandy Mush is a road in Leicester, NC, and it was on this road that the first attempt to start a congregation was made. Prior to 1952, there were a few Sabbath keepers in the area of Sandy Mush Rd. Even though there is no record of these individuals meeting together, they must have done so because in 1952 Mr. Wiley King, a

¹Unknown author, Special Occasion Book: The Organization of the Leicester Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1987.

prominent local businessman of the Leicester community, donated a piece of land to them. These un-named Sabbath keepers, together with members of the community, built the first Seventh-day Adventist church in this area.

Following the completion of the project this group of Adventists invited the community to come and hear Elder Obeit Kline present a series on the Adventist message. According to their records, Elder Kline was so inspired by the large gathering that he decided to make the best of the occasion by sharing all the points of the Adventist message ending with the question, "Is that clear enough?"² Not one person returned the following evening leaving the small group of Adventists on their own. The already small group struggled to remain open, but eventually the building's doors closed.

In 1978, Ron Holloway tried again to start a group meeting in the same building. He was able to gain the support of six other individuals, and this small group worked hard to clean up the facilities, to invite friends and family, and to share the Adventist message. The group grew slowly and seemed to have the reputation of being different, rather than making a difference. In 1981, Elder Oliver Lange and his wife Sylvia retired from the mission field and took over the leadership of this group. However, a year later, Elder Lange had to cease serving due to illness. In 1982 there was a split in the group and by 1983, the doors of the church were closed again.

The hope of a permanent church in Leicester was never forgotten, it never died. In December 1985, with the encouragement of the Mount Pisgah Academy Church a small group was started and began meeting at the Dix Creek United Methodist Church, in

²Special Occasion Book.

Leicester. Retired Pastor Howard Rampton and his wife agreed to share their time and resources to assist the Leicester group.

This time the church remained strong and to this day continues to be a redemptive Adventist presence in what is known as Erwin Hills, a suburb of West Asheville, North Carolina, about three miles south of the city limits of Leicester. It was officially organized as the Leicester Seventh-day Adventist Church on March 28, 1987. Soon after, an individual donated five acres of land and immediately a building program started.

One of the things that the older members take pride in is that this church building was built by the church family. Some of the church's dimensions are off, and a couple of things could have been done differently, but it is their building because their lives are intertwined with the wood, nails, mortar, plumbing, and sheetrock of this structure.

The current church building was finished and dedicated in 1992. It sits on a small hill a block from the main road, highly visible to the traffic using New Leicester Highway. It is a block from the Erwin High School and five blocks from the Erwin Elementary School. Because of the name of the surrounding community the church family changed the church's name to Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church. A few of the current members were part of the group that met with Ron Holloway in 1978 and have personally experienced the history of this congregation.

By the end of 1999 the church was strong in numbers. Their Pathfinder Club was also strong as were the children's division of the Sabbath School. There was great unity among the church family and there was enthusiasm for the growth of the church. However, during the years of 2000 to 2007, the church family was severely attacked. Conflictive theological issues surfaced causing division and ill feelings. Individuals had

to be dropped from membership causing more division and pain. Some families moved away for personal reasons, and by 2007 attendance had dropped to less than twenty people on an average Sabbath.

Changes Since 2007

During my first Sabbath at this church there were fifteen people in attendance. For Wednesday evening prayer meeting there were between one and four people were in attendance. Thankfully the few who remained in the church family were (and continue to be) strong, willing, and committed to the progress of this congregation.

Currently church attendance has increased to an average of sixty individuals each Sabbath. For a recent Home Coming Event we had over 150 people in attendance. For prayer meeting the numbers vary from season to season, but there are always at least twenty individuals in attendance.

More importantly, willing members have taken up their responsibilities for ministry. Several initiatives have been started by the members and leaders themselves. Some of these initiatives include: a children's club that meets on Wednesday evening, a weekly soup kitchen for the community, a lay-led evangelistic effort where two of our members will be preaching a short reaping crusade, and youth involvement with mission and church activities.

There is also a desire for EFM on the part of the church family and leadership. Several people have expressed desire for us to have family ministry events for the community, and they are willing to be involved with whatever is done. That is a positive response to ministry and to EFM, and a change from the old ways.

Testimonies of Active Members and Their Personal Experience in Relation to Family Ministry

Often in small congregations the challenge to ministry is resources; financial resources as well as the resource of members' time and talents. Small churches may have very talented members, but because there are so few members they get over-involved and soon experience burnout. Because of this some ministries get tossed by the wayside. Family ministry is often one of the ministries that is not even attempted in a small church.

Even during the last few years of the 1990s, when the church was stronger, there was not a purposeful and effective family ministry in the church, much less one that was evangelistically minded. The Carolina Conference has ongoing family ministry programs and events, but this congregation had not supported or participated in the Conference's ministry events.

As I have talked to several of the "long term members," they all have expressed concern over both the lack of and a want for family oriented church support and evangelistic programming. Because of the absence of EFM, the church family would like to implement the following strategies: more family ministry that targets the needs of the current church membership and those of the community, family ministry events that are evangelistic at heart, to make their church "family-friendly" in order that visiting families will find a church that will embrace them and their family members; and they want to let the surrounding community know that this church is here for them.

Transition to a Center for Evangelistic Family Ministry

The process of change in any organization is lengthy and painful unless people are ready for it, and have come to a point where they actually desire it. The Erwin Hills

Seventh-day Adventist Church had been without a pastor for awhile and under the previous leadership the church had experienced a split and several families had moved away. These two factors made the church family a small group. The day they interviewed me for the pastoral position several of the attendees remarked that they were ready for a new direction.

The reasons for changes in leadership can also influence the willingness of the group to embrace change. In the case of EHSDAC, they did not have problems with the previous pastor. No one felt the need to protect the church from an erring pastor, nor was there a strong lay leader holding on to the power of his/her position. As I started working with this congregation I found in them to be a group of people who deeply love the Lord, and who desire to share His love with their community. These were people ready to do their best for God's honor and glory, and they were willing to be led. That was refreshing.

It is important for churches everywhere to embrace change in a positive way. Many church leaders confuse change with apostasy but this is not necessarily the case. Lyle Schaller recognizes the need for change in methodology for the church in North America. He says: "The number-one issue facing Christian organizations on the North American continent today is the need to initiate and implement planned change."³ Culture changes and Paul clearly said in 1 Cor 9:22: "I am made all things to all men, that

³Lyle E Shaller, *Strategies for Change* (Nashville, TN: Abington Press, 1993), 10, quoted in Carl F. George with Warren Bird, *The Coming Church Revolution: Empowering Leaders for the Future* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revel, 1994), 257.

I might by all means save some." As long as we are careful to guard principles, other methods of ministry may prove a blessing.

Concerning Paul's desire to reach his culture, Rick Richardson says the following: "First, Paul connected to and affirmed the Athenians' culture. . . . Second, Paul discerned and affirmed their spiritual interest. . . . Third, Paul confronted their foolish way of trying to fulfill their search and satisfy the hunger of their souls."⁴ Paul then presented the truth to them in the best possible way, and since they were searching they listened. At the end of his paragraph Richardson exhorts, "Go for it! Imitate Paul in using the culture and its forms to reach people. Imitate Jesus in meeting felt needs and then challenging people to follow the way of the cross."⁵

The Journey of Change

One of the first challenges in facilitating change was the creation of a mission and vision statement for the EHSDAC. Hans Finzel makes the case for vision that belongs to the organization and not just to the visionary leader. "Vision inspires followers,"⁶ he explains, but if this vision is only in the leader then organization is simply following the values of the leader. Finzel also has added: "The importance of vision lies in the organization, not necessarily in the leader. God is blessing organizations and churches

⁴Rick Richardson, *Evangelism Outside the Box: New Ways to Help People Experience the Good News* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 98.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Hans Finzel, *Empowered Leaders: The Ten Principles of Christian Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Word, 1998), 86.

today that have 'big hairy audacious goals' for ministry."⁷

The EHSDAC board caught this idea and was very dedicated to working hard to come up with statements that would reflect the purpose of their church family. A second challenge was to help the leaders realize the need for a mentality that is focused on evangelism for each church office and every church activity.

Looking back it is easy to see the journey taken so far: The first year was one of awakening, conversation, and challenge. The second year was one of creating momentum through special events. The third year was one of evangelism which actually resulted in a greater desire for evangelistic minded events.

This chapter will first present the communication tools used to introduce a new initiative for EFM, and second, how this process came about, and the development and application of seminars and teaching instruments used to reach out to the church family.

Communication Tools and Instruments to Convey a New Initiative and to Awaken the Church Family to Evangelistic Family Ministry

In the process of leading the EHSDAC into a new perspective concerning outreach three instruments were used: first, the drawing of a mission and vision statements; second, a three part sermon series titled "Becoming a Family Friendly Church;" and third, a four-part seminar titled "Evangelistic Family Ministry." Following is the report on the first two.

Mission and Vision Statements

Having mission and vision statements helps a church come together. This first

⁷Ibid., 87.

step was important because this congregation had plenty of desire for outreach, but they lacked unity. They were thinking of different activities but there was no oneness in their thinking. By putting together a mission and vision statement they could come together in purpose, activities, and goals.

The process took four meetings. The first meeting was to present the challenge and give them guidelines as to the importance of and the process needed to put together a mission/vision statement. During the second and third meetings everyone worked to make lists of priorities, brainstorm on ideas, phrases, and core beliefs of this congregation. The fourth meeting was to finalize the mission/vision statements. See appendix A for the instruments used during this process.

Following is what the church decided would be its statement of mission, vision and goals:

Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church

Our Mission:

To KNOW the love of God as shown in the life, death, heavenly ministry, and soon return of Jesus;

To GROW in faith, love, and service through the power of prayer and of the Holy Spirit;

To SHOW the love of Christ by our service to others, and by our commitment to share His love and truth, and to make disciples for Him.

Our Vision:

We are committed to serving our mission by:

Sharing God's love and saving grace through our worship together and through outreach to our community;

Providing a safe community for growth, and improving our mental, physical, and spiritual health through prayer, Bible study, and Christian discipleship and training;

Reaching out and connecting with families and individuals of all ages in our community through evangelism and service opportunities.

Our Goals:

To provide vibrant and growing Sabbath School and worship opportunities for those of all ages and learning styles;

To maintain a consistent, intercessory prayer ministry for our church and surrounding community;

To provide a Lifestyle and Family Resource Center to allow and encourage opportunities for Christian lifestyle training and service;
To provide regular programs, meeting the needs of our community.

Throughout this process the morale of the group was high. The meetings were held on Saturday afternoons. They participated enthusiastically and everyone showed up. Unity was clearly manifested as they were finalizing the project, not one person claiming ideas, but all together showing the fruit of their labor. When they were done they felt accomplished and empowered.

Following the formation of the vision/mission statements the pastor sent a letter to the church family sharing these statements and encouraging the church family to embrace these concepts through actions and not just as a mental process. The document was also included in the bulletin and the pastor preached a sermon that expanded on these new statements. These statements continue to be presented to the church family and are often read during planning sessions with the board.

Sermon Series

The sermon series was put together to create momentum following the elaboration of the mission/vision statements. These sermons aimed at creating a desire for EFM, to awaken the church family to their responsibility in the process, and make them aware of the need for kingdom growth.

A prevalent thought in this congregation has to do with the rationale of letting professionals deal with the youth. Located fifteen minutes from Mount Pisgah Academy the teens were naturally drawn to the activities of the academy. The challenge started when unconsciously the leaders at the church simply let the youth go to the other church because of the programs they have for the youth. One parent explained to me that we did

not need to worry about doing things for the youth because “the academy has that covered.” The problem with this kind of thinking is that the young people get the message “we do not care” for you or “this is not a church for youth.”

The desire to change this prevailing idea led to the creation of a three-part series on the “Family-Friendly Church.” The first sermon dealt with the need for retaining the youth, having ministry that aims at the youth and children, and thus provides tools for EFM. We will never attract families with children and youth to our church if we do not offer ministry to the young.

The second sermon focused on the importance of our homes being places of worship. The home can then serve to build the outreach of our church, to be a witness to the community, and to connect people with the church. The third sermon focused on the need for loving relationships. The idea is that loving relationships within the family produces loving relationships within the church family and thus an atmosphere of love and acceptance is felt by those visiting the church. Rick Richardson explains: “Most people today will come to faith in the context of a community. Belonging comes before believing. Evangelism today is about helping people belong so that they can come to believe.”⁸ Richardson goes on to share what we need to do to create entry points:

How do we involve people in community where they can belong before they have to believe? First, we can invite unchurched people to activities and events that are designed to be entry points into the community. Alpha, seeker small groups, vacation Bible school, movie and book discussion groups, Christmas teas and parties, special services aimed at seekers, and marriage enrichment and divorce and addiction recovery seminars all help unchurched people enter into the community and belong before they have to believe.⁹

⁸Hans Finzel, *Reimagining Evangelism: Inviting Friends on a Spiritual Journey* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006), 50.

⁹*Ibid.*, 53.

Creating community, a desire for evangelism, and a desire for retention of young people and ministry to the young is at the core of EFM. EFM is not simply the process of doing evangelism but the process of helping the church family to understand the necessity of providing for the needs of the family.

Appendixes B, C, and D include the sermon outlines mentioned above. This series created excitement in the congregation and a desire for activities and ministries that would help to retain the young and reach out to the community in an EFM manner. The next part of this process was the presentation of the seminars and will be explained in the following section.

Development and Application of Seminars and Teaching Instruments That Reach Out to the Church Family

Russell Burrill is an advocate for evangelism and for the involvement of the laity. He says: "We must move beyond the concept that the only place ministry occurs is in the church. The biblical concept of ministry sees the believer's entire life as ministry. . . . It is in that sense that the church must be seen as a training center for Christian ministry."¹⁰ EFM is about the involvement of the church's families in the process of evangelism as well as the church being a place that is mindful of the implications of EFM.

There were four seminars presented to the church family. Three were presented consecutively one weekend (Friday evening, Saturday morning, and following potluck), and the fourth one was presented two weeks later (I work with two congregations and needed to visit the other church in between presentations). The two events that concerned

¹⁰Russell Burrill, *Revolution in the Church: Unleashing the Awesome Power of Lay Ministry* (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research, 1993), 29.

me the most in terms of attendance was the Friday evening and Saturday afternoon meetings. To my surprise attendance was thirty-five on Friday evening and forty-five on Saturday afternoon. The fourth seminar was also well attended, with over seventy in attendance. The following paragraphs describe the content of the four seminars.

Seminar One: Biblical Foundation for Evangelistic Family Ministry

This seminar, as the title explains, presents the biblical foundation for churches to be more mindful of evangelism that includes the family or household. See Appendix C for a comprehensive outline of this seminar.

At the core of the seminar is the principle presented in the second chapter of this dissertation: the concept of "salvation to the household;" based on Acts 16:31. It was presented with support from many biblical passages, current literature, and the Spirit of Prophecy. Without careful consideration it is easy to assume that we are simply to make disciples, as indicated by the departing words which Jesus spoke to His disciples. But there is a bigger perspective to consider.

In this seminar God's concern for the family is highlighted. The household is the moral and spiritual basis of society; and whatever is the experience of the households in a community is reflected in the character of this community, expanding to the city, state, and country. This is clearly explained in page two of this seminar. As the seminar continues a clear case is made for the biblical mandate to not only reach out to individuals but also to their households. It was interesting to the presenter that people enjoyed the presentation of Greek words and the analysis and application of these words. Afterwards the members of the audience were asking and expanding on these words.

At the conclusion of this seminar the appeal was made for families to understand

that the spiritual condition of the church's families affects the spiritual condition of the church, and the "outreach" mentality of the church's families is reflected in the church's attitude towards new believers and their households.

Seminar Two: Transforming Evangelistic Family Ministry

This seminar was prepared to help the church family to embrace change as part of the process of becoming a church that values EFM. It was based on Acts 10 and uses the changes in the minds of the Jews (Peter and company) as well as the changes produced by the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Cornelius and his family and friends.

First, the challenges of change within the church family were presented, followed by the potential results of having an EFM approach to all we do. This approach would transform ministry in all aspects, from having more initiatives to having more member participation. During this seminar, possible changes to the physical building of the church that would facilitate greater mission opportunities were also presented. Currently the church has limited space for family outreach activities.

Confronting this new perspective in ministry requires the congregation and its leaders to be aware of the many changes that need to take place. It is no longer "church as usual." In looking at our limited space, study the physical challenges of our church building, an architect in the congregation took the challenge and began to draw plans for the expansion and development of the current church's facilities. This church sits on five acres of land. There is room for expansion.

The challenge to the church through this seminar was fourfold: Seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit; evaluate our current ministries; find ways to get all of the church

family involved; and move forward with plans for expansion and development trusting God's provision.

Seminar Three: Ministry to the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Many congregations tremble at the thought of having new people in their midst. They believe in evangelism as long as their old ways are not disrupted and the new believers know not to disturb the peace and order that the congregation has held for so long. Ministry to the good, the bad, and the ugly involves awakening to the realization that if a church is going to engage in EFM, we must reach out and embrace not only "good" families, but also the "bad" and "ugly."

For many years the church ministered to and had in its ranks "good" families, or at least families that kept the appearance of being good. In the beginning of the seminar, this myth of this thought was uncovered, and the many household types that now make up the church and surrounding community were explored. The seminar then presented a biblical model for relationships within the church family: the functional family type. In three separate passages this relational type is supported by the Bible; like in 1 Tim 5:1-2; John 13:35; and 1 John 3:1.

The next part of the seminar discussed how to reach and minister to the three family types: good, bad, and ugly. In reality, there are no "good" families; and it is a false belief because all families and households have conflict. We label families "good" when they conform to a traditional social mold. Unfortunately, when a family sees itself as "good," it also has less of a sense of its need of a relationship with God.

The "bad" family is one that has conflict. Often, this family may be more drawn to church because it recognizes its needs. In reality, most families fit this description: we

find that in the biblical narratives most families belonged to this group. Ministry opportunities that reach out to this group are family-relations seminars, facilitation of resources, and ministries that connect with the members of these families. It is important that the church family welcomes each individual belonging to this group and that they seek to mentor such families.

The “ugly” family in this seminar does not refer to appearance but to households that are dysfunctional, households with abuse and break-ups, families that desperately need help. These families and/or individuals normally do not connect with the church because they feel rejected by the church. Unfortunately, the church often rejects these individuals for several reasons: they do not fit the mold, they bring their troubles to the church, the church does not have the tools to help these families, and they may demand more resources than the rest of the church family. The rejection is mutual.

For Jesus the “ugly” were not an inconvenience. In Matt 9:10-13; 11:19 it can be seen that Jesus reached out to them and made them important to His ministry. Looking at Jesus’ ministry the thing that the church needs to be is a “sanctuary,” a place of protection, help, and encouragement for families, households, and individuals in need. The pure concept of family with its relationships and comfort for its members is a concept under attack in this society.

The challenge extended in this seminar asked the EHSDAC to become aware of the many family/household types with the purpose of reaching out to them, loving them into the church, realizing that everyone needs Jesus and, as a church, becoming a sanctuary for them.

Seminar Four: The Power of the Household and the Circle of Influence

The purpose of this seminar was to help the individual church members see that their households are key locations for the sharing of the Gospel message. Whether living alone or with family, all have a circle of influence to which they can reach out and testify. First is the biblical passage in Deut 11:18 where Moses instructs the Israelites to make their homes a discipleship center for their children and members of their households, and teach them God's ways. The power of the Christian household lies in the evidence of God's transforming grace.

The Circle of Influence includes those under our household who are not believers, as well as co-workers, friends, and acquaintances with whom we can share the Gospel. In the seminar the point is made that we each need to list names in our circle of influence, pray for them, and ask God for provision of an opportunity for us to share with them.

The challenge extended to the EHSDAC family was: to develop Bible-based evangelism that is family oriented and inclusive, to empower our families to be beacons in their communities, and for our members to think of people within their circle of influence and prayerfully work to engage them for Christ. At the end of this seminar church members commented on the many ideas they would love to see taking place in our midst and their willingness to be involved.

Conclusion

A congregation that has faced several "failures" may have a tendency to think inadequately of it. This congregation had three starts, which implies that it had two previous failures. In addition to that this congregation has had to deal with divisions and people leaving for other local churches. But there is also the other side of the coin: they

have not given up. In spite of the conflict they remain at their post willing to continue to fight for a spot in this community with the purpose of making a difference, share the Gospel, and show God's love through their presence there. This is the Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church and this congregation is willing to embrace an EFM approach in their efforts to influence their community.

The greatest benefit of EFM is that it reaches beyond individuals. It presents a demur to focusing on one person at a time, and points the focus to the entire household of the convert. Burrill says: "Evangelism in the twentieth century has become a solo affair, with individuals working alone to win souls one by one."¹¹ Jesus called Peter and John to be fishers of men. The technique they used for fishing was casting in a large net and catching many fish at once. They did not use a fishing cane, were not confined to only catching one fish at the time.

The instruments used in the development of the theory of this dissertation has invigorated the EHSDAC and caused a revival. We cannot fail to mention the powerful and role that prayer has had in this journey. There has been a great and purposeful development of prayer activities and initiatives to promote unity and to focus on the presentation of the EFM program to the church.

A couple of the church's families have committed to serving together, realizing the power of unity within the family, and the benefits of serving God as a family. They are actively planning evangelism that involves their entire family.

¹¹Russell C. Burrill, *Recovering an Adventist Approach to the Life and Mission of the Local Church* (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center, 1998), 118.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE EVANGELISTIC FAMILY MINISTRY APPROACH, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

God values good relationships between His children. The relationships manifested within the church family, where the power of the Gospel is best revealed, and where God brings the lost sheep back into His fold, must be an example and encouragement to struggling families and households. In the book of Psalms God explains what He does with the individual: "God setteth the solitary in families" Ps 68:66. Loneliness is a sad result of sin. In Scripture we find God over and over inviting us to join the celestial family. In 1 John 3:1 God says: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

Healthy family relationships within the household and the church family demonstrate God's plan for His children. Unhealthy family relationships reflect Satan's acts, and the consequences of living in a sinful world. Unhealthy family relationships are a fulfillment of God's word to Adam and Eve concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: "The day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen 2:17). The breakup of marriage, the disruption of parent-child relationships with its consequences is part of that death.

EFM aims to bring individuals and their households into the church's family, into

the fellowship of God's children. No matter what the individual's background may be God's love manifested through His people should embrace all. Of Jesus it was said, "The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners" (Matt 11:19). We know that once the sinners came in contact with Christ they did not remain the same. Our goal is to help people meet Jesus.

For some individuals the core idea of EFM was confusing at first. It is not a "family ministry" program. Family ministry is only a small part of it. EFM is about thinking of the families of those that come to the church, it is about considering our own circle of influence as a tool for evangelism, it is about the church being family friendly, it is about brainstorming about the possibilities in reaching out through ministries that connect with the needs of the households in the community that the church services, it is about thinking beyond the needs of the adults to consider what will be a blessing to the young ones and supplying ministry tailored for them.

EFM has two perspectives: it first examines what must take place within the church in order to become to a place that truly ministers to its families, and second, considers outreach that thinks beyond the individual. EFM has the ability of addressing both perspectives at the same time because of the simple fact that as the church leadership considers improving the current conditions, and as the church leadership works to make the church "family friendly" for the sake of visitors, it also works on making the church a place for their own families.

Sue Mallory testifies of the importance of realizing the need of the local congregation to awaken as she shares her testimony. She explains:

My first awareness of helplessness came to me when as a young mother I felt the weight of responsibility for my children's faith. It grew as I wondered about bringing my kids up in the neighborhood's church we had attended for several years. There seemed so little there that I could enthusiastically pass on to my children. It never occurred to me that the church might change of that I might have a role in that change. All I knew was that some kind of change needed to happen. I wanted my children exposed to faith that would challenge and sustain them.¹

Mallory makes a powerful point that church leaders must become aware of the needs that families have concerning availability of ministries that serve these families, as well as working to empower members to realize that they have a part in the ministries of the church. Mallory's personal experience was the reason she wrote her book *The Equipping Church*. Later in this book she says: "The church by definition is the greatest gathering of potential servants in the world."²

The results of the teaching elements of this dissertation have become evident both within the leadership and church family of the EHSDAC. It also has helped shape the understanding of the members in regard to evangelism. Following is an account of the outcome of these seminars.

Study of the Impact That the Seminars Had in the Church Family

Bits and pieces of the transformation of this congregation have already been shared in previous chapters. The EHSDAC is a loving congregation, with members and leaders who are dedicated to God's cause and to the spreading of the Gospel. The attendance numbers were low at the end of 2007 when this preacher started serving this

¹Sue Mallory, *The Equipping Church: Serving Together to Transform Lives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 18.

²Ibid., 37.

district. It has already been mentioned that lack of vision and theological splits had reduced the church family to a small group. The first Sabbath that I attended there were fifteen individuals. This small attendance had been the case for quite some time. For the mid-week prayer meetings there were usually five individuals who attended.

The church leaders wanted change. This desire was very helpful in the process of renewal and in the process of creating an EFM mindset. Prior to the presentation of the seminars two events had already provoked a spiritual revival and a desire for EFM: A series of meetings in which the church worked together to create a vision/mission statement, and a series of sermons. This process was presented in chapter five of this dissertation. The seminars were the culmination of this process so the account that follows is the narration of observations made prior to, during, and following these events mentioned above.

In the mindset of the presenter the expectations of attendance for the seminars was low. Not that the church family had shown any negativity to it, but they knew that it was the result of his studies and thus he thought that people would not be interested in attending such presentations. Five minutes before the first presentation, Friday evening, May 7, 2010, there were only five people present. However, once the presentation started people continued coming and thirty-five people showed up to support the event, including three individuals whom are non-members.

Sabbath morning church attendance was normal. We had about sixty individuals mostly members and a few visitors. The attendance for the seminar following the fellowship meal also surprised the presenter because about forty-five people stayed, including the ones that had attended the Friday evening presentation. Two weeks later, on

May 22, 2010, when the fourth seminar was presented during the morning program the attendance was over eighty. In the congregation were several visitors from other Adventist congregations and these indicated their desire for the presenter to visit their churches with this seminar. Since then there have been several opportunities to present the seminar in other congregations.

The mission/vision statement meetings, sermons, and seminars led to several changes initiated by the leaders and members of the church. The areas of change could be listed as follows: an initiative for renewal of the physical building and the improvement of the appearance of the church's facilities, the upgrading of the media equipment, a look at the ministries currently serving the church family and the start-up of missing ministries, and a desire for lay-led evangelism that includes the entire family of the preacher.

Renewal of the Building

It had been a few years since the building has had maintenance. The building was not neglected, but a series of minor things had not been fixed. The desire for a better presentation to visitors began to be generated. The meetings presented by the speaker utilized multimedia technology, but it was difficult due to the lack of necessary equipment. Each time that presentations were made with multimedia a projector and a portable screen had to be set up and cables were all over the floor.

Plans were made to renovate the church facility. This included repairs in different places throughout the building, painting, renovating the platform area to include a multimedia system, a new sound desk and mixing board, a computer/video room, and a large retractable screen. This project represented nearly \$30,000.00. However, the

leadership was not concerned with the price tag of this project. Unanimously, the board and church family supported this initiative because of their desire to connect with young people and young adults, and in order to present a more attractive church building and have the facilities to reach out to families.

Most of the project has been done by church family, not only for the purpose of saving money but also because they want to be involved in the process and to make sure things are done the best way possible. One evening one of the individuals doing the multimedia upgrade (this person wishes to remain anonymous) called me because he was concerned that the equipment to which we were upgrading was not the best available. This person offered to pay the difference so that we could upgrade the equipment with the best quality. The heart of the leadership has been in this renovation as well as their hands and feet. Not only have they been agreeable during the board meetings but they have also given money out of their own pockets in order to see the projects to move forward.

While this is very encouraging, the member's involvement with the work of the church is not something new to this church family. While I was visiting with Bill and Betty Osteen³ they recounted the story of the church building having been built by the church family. Everyone was involved; children did small tasks, men and women worked side by side. Bill said, "If you take a measuring tape you'll find discrepancies in the layout of these walls, but what matters is that we did it with our own hands." Member

³Bill and Betty Osteen have been active members since the late 1980s when the church body still met at the Dix Creek United Methodist Church in Leicester. Bill has been head elder for more years that he can remember and Betty was treasurer for almost twenty years.

involvement with church-building projects is a tradition at EHSDAC.

When a church family is willing to look at the building, the one they are used to seeing week after week, and are willing to see problems and to change them, then they are ready for other types of changes. The metamorphosis at EHSDAC did not stop with the building. The church also took a good look at the ministries and evaluated what was and was not being done.

Changes in Ministry

Chronologically the first ministry action initiated by the Board followed the setting of the mission/vision statements. The leadership of the church considered it important to reach out to the absent/inactive members of the church. They felt that these individuals needed to know about the new direction the church was taking. The board came up with a yearly "Home-Coming" event.

The first Sabbath in August has been reserved for the Home-Coming and is now a permanent part of the yearly calendar. The attendance by former and inactive members has increased each year and the last home coming had over 150 people in attendance. As a direct result of this initiative several people have returned to our fellowship. The most exciting thing is to see the sparkle in the eyes of those that have remained in this church and are seeing the change.

Following the presentation of the seminars the pastor asked the board to evaluate the ministries that were currently functioning at the EHSDAC. The second presentation had to do with that particular subject. Sometimes it is not what you are doing but rather what you are not doing that tells your story.

In a previous chapter it was mentioned that ministry to the young was voluntarily

delegated to the local Adventist academy. That was one of the things that the Board discussed and took up as a challenge. One of the places where this neglect was most obvious was during the Upper Room Fellowship (URF). The URF was started in the Fall of 2009 with specific targets: to provide a meal for the community around our church building, to provide fellowship for members and visitors, and to introduce visitors to our mid-week Bible study.

During Sabbath morning services, including Sabbath School, the church has programs for the young. However, the Wednesday night meeting did not include children or the youth but mainly focused on the adults. The board discussed the fact that families who liked our church's fellowship had decided not to attend because of the lack of ministry for the children and youth. A commitment to EFM includes providing programming that ministers to all the members of the household.

From that discussion several initiatives were started. First, a baptismal class was started for the children who were old enough to be baptized. This class, prior to the activities of the URF, was organized. Second, a Kid's Club that met during the adult program of the URF was organized. Third, a teen's class was started because the youth were not connecting with the program presented to the adults. For all these activities invitations were given to the community around the church building and to friends of the church family. What was most impressive was to see the excitement that all these ideas created in the leadership, and their willingness to add to the loads that they were already carrying with other ministries in the church.

The Kid's Club did not last long: it quickly evolved into a Pathfinders Club. Around the middle of September a couple in our church felt impressed to take the

children's ministry to the next level by starting a Pathfinder's Club. They chose to keep the idea evangelistic by extending the invitation to join to children in the community, thus making it a tool for outreach.

The change that EFM has created in the dynamics of the leaders and members is clearly visible. The view of evangelism and their involvement with it in reaching out to the community and in retaining members has also evolved.

The Family Evangelistic Team

Late in 2009, two individuals manifested a desire to preach an evangelistic series for our church. That desire was cultivated, the conversation continued, and these two men started to plan and prepare for the event. When the seminars were presented, they took this desire to the next level. The seminars helped to create a desire in the members for family-oriented programs that would focus on the people in the community and not just for the church family. These individuals not only suggested such programs but volunteered and helped with these events. Other members focused on the need for health-related family events and plans were made for member-led programs. The pastor saw the greatest initiative demonstrated by these two men who had volunteered for the evangelistic effort.

Part of the material presented in the seminars mentioned that Christian families also need to be evangelistically minded, that each family is an extension of the church itself, and that families that work together are blessed by the effort. These two men decided to involve their families in their evangelistic effort. The wife of one of them took care of the preparation of the church and the snacks for after the meeting. The other preacher involved his son in using the computer for the presentation. The church family

also supported the effort with their attendance and volunteered for ushering and greeting. As a pastor I rejoiced to see that all I had to do was the announcements and opening prayer. The rest of the work was done by a willing group of members of the church family.

The months following the seminars were filled with many events, all working to connect with the needs of the households that surround our church building, all with the purpose of evangelism. The evangelistic effort was followed by a marriage enrichment seminar. There was a yard sale that was evangelistic, a health seminar, a concert, and an activity called "Come Grow With Us," where plants were distributed in the neighborhood and at local events. All of it initiated and done by the church family.

The church leadership has not grown tired by these evangelistic efforts, but has planned even more activities for the following year. These events include the following: more lay-led evangelistic series, family health lectures, a marriage renewal program, and the continuance of both our church/community Pathfinder club, and our URF soup kitchen and Bible study meeting.

Conclusions and Recommendations Procuring to Launch a Continuation of the Process

In the book *It Takes a Family* Karen and Ron Flowers talk about the impact our church would have had in the world if we were to retain all the people we have won to Christ. The illustration they use is, "Seventh-day Adventists in the 1960's numbered around 1.55 million worldwide."⁴ However, if the church would have been able to retain

⁴Karen and Ron Flowers, *It Takes a Family: Discipling Children and Teens for Christ* (Lincoln, NE: Advent Source, 2002), 91.

members (meaning that no one leaves the church for other than natural causes), from 1848 until 1960, membership would have reached 128 million.⁵ So taking this powerful illustration a little further, how much more our membership might have grown if we had had an EFM mindset from the beginning!

The main point of EFM is not to stop what we are already doing but to add an approach that is more family minded, that reaches out to the households of those joining our lines. The EHSDAC has been transformed by this approach. The important thing now is to develop a plan for the continuity of this initiative.

In a previous chapter it was clearly shown that the American family is in trouble. The source of this trouble is in itself. Cathy Lynn Grossman in an article titled "Believers OK with Many Paths," said the following: "Duke University sociologist Mark Chaves, like Lugo, attributes the shifts to long-term changes in family with rising divorce, increased cohabitation, smaller families and steady increases in religiously mixed marriages. 'Do not look at the church, look at home,' he says."⁶ The church is the place these individuals should be looking at, not for blame, but for solutions. When the households that surround the church realize that the church provides power and resources for the troubles they are experiencing, they will come to us before we call them. But there needs to be a plan, a strategy, so that the church purposely pursues EFM.

Recommendations

The EHSDAC has adopted an EFM attitude. A positive evidence of the impact of

⁵Flowers, *It Takes a Family*, 91.

⁶Cathy Lynn Grossman, "Believers OK with Many Paths," *USA Today*, 24 June 2008, Sect. D, 1-2.

this EFM initiative is the desire from the leadership and core members of the church for the continuity of this same process. It also has attracted people to our church in the form of Adventist visitors and membership transfers, as well as secular media. A local newspaper reporter published two articles about our church because of the activity she saw on Wednesday evenings.

Concerning how evangelistically-active churches attract individuals Mark Mittelberg makes the following statement: "On the brighter side, an exciting phenomenon occurs when you lift up a vision and commitment to evangelism: New people who already have the value will be attracted to your church!"⁷ When visitors come and see people genuinely desiring their friendship they tend to stay.

There are areas or subjects not covered by these seminars that need addressing as this EFM continues. The presenter used two words interchangeably: household and family. Because of the many different types of households the term family seemed to be restrictive, but it was used because it still identifies the larger portion of households in most communities throughout the United States. The word "household" can include more than the word "family" because it can be applied to many settings such as singles, the word "family" because it can be applied to many settings such as singles living alone, or friends sharing a house/apartment, or a mixture of relatives living under the same roof.

In order to be effective each church needs to understand the community in which it resides and tailor ministries that will truly connect with the household-types around them. An ever growing type of household is the single parent household. Parents trying to

⁷Mark Mittelberg, *Building a Contagious Church: Revolutionizing the Way We View and Do Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 129.

keep it all together in these circumstances need a lot of support from friends and family. The church should be the first to provide guidance and tools for these families. The children in such households also need to be given support, mentorship, and role models. Once again the church has people power to reach out in these areas. Although that was not addressed in this dissertation, due to the limitations of this research, it is an area of great importance for today's church. As Satan continues to destroy family-values and break up families the church family needs to have a loving disposition and welcoming heart, knowing it is the safe-house and sanitarium where people learn about God's love and the restoration of relationships.

Another subject not covered by this dissertation is the ministry of reaching out to and supporting those members who are married to unbelievers or to non-Adventist. The theme is hinted in this paper but not fully addressed as a need that the church has. Throughout the world many married individuals join our church without their spouses. Considering cultural differences from country to country each region should consider how to address this issue in order to properly reach out to the non-believing relatives of church members.

Here in America the culture is more individualistic allowing for couples to marry while following different faith paths. Because of the commission to discipleship that Christ gave His disciples it is imperative to find ways to reach out to the members' spouses who have not joined our church. It needs to be done with love, with careful consideration of their individuality, and also considerate of cultural differences, but it must be done because they too need Jesus. This is an area that needs to be explored as a continuation of the material presented by this dissertation.

The follow-up for this material and recommendation to the EHSDAC is that the committee for evangelism should incorporate EFM as part of the planning for the events of the church's calendar. Also, it is recommended that the church board continue to think and plan for EFM as part of the overall approach to ministry, as part of what the church is all about. This dissertation did not intend to simply make a presentation to provoke the minds of the leaders, but to help the congregation and its leaders to have a different approach to soul winning. In order to continue this program successfully, the board needs to spend time in the planning and preparation of events, to evaluate them to make sure that they follow an EFM mentality.

Future planning concerning the expansion of the building of the EHSDAC, should consider the needs of families/households, the desire to minister to them and what would best work to accomplish this goal. For instance, as the congregation plans for an additional building that a "Family Life Center" should be part of their planning, not only for the use of the members, but as a tool for evangelism.

Another area to consider is the "marketing" of the church and its activities. It would be ideal to form a committee, or to assign an individual the sole responsibility of contacting media and advertising church activities. The goal would be to make sure that the church has a "family-friendly" image. This image needs to be real. It is vital that the church board and members make sure that activities, events, and support ministries truly reflect the idea of being family-friendly. This was one area that we did not cover within the scope of this dissertation. Some of the activities mentioned in this dissertation were not advertized at all while others were advertized minimally.

Marketing the church in general is a challenge for the EHSDAC. The best way

people become aware of what a congregation does is by the "friend to friend" advertisement system. Unfortunately, most Adventists soon after joining the church lose connections with people they used to consider friends. When they take time to make a list of their friends, they find that most are church acquaintances. Adventists in general need to awaken to this fact and start making friends who are not yet in the church in order to lead them to Christ.

In considering the presentation of the seminars, time was a challenge. The presenter introduced them as one hour presentations; however, the material covered really needed one and a half hours. Each seminar gave plenty of data and facts; in order for people to better process this information the presenter should change the time allotted. The audience did not complain about rushing through the material, but it would have been more effective and easier for people to assimilate it if more time had been allotted. In retrospect, it would have been ideal if each session was made of two parts: one of fifty minutes and the next one forty minutes with a five minute break in between.

At the time of the seminars the participants were given an outline of the presentation. These instruments had the information presented by the speaker. One thing missing in these presentations was interaction. Future presentations should be more interactive instead of having just the presenter speak. Also, these presentations should encourage people to continue studying when they go home by giving some type of follow-up assignment that they do in their spare time that would motivate them to continue the thoughts provided by the presenter. Only one of the presentations had a worksheet where participants could list who was in their circle of influence. This one assignment should have included a break-out session where people could gather in small

groups to list their names and encourage each mission of sharing the Gospel with those in their household or circle of influence.

Conclusion

The core idea of EFM could be confusing at first. It is not a “family ministry” program or events. Family ministry is only a small part of it. EFM is about thinking of the families of those that come to the church, it is about considering our own circle of influence as a tool for evangelism, it is about the church being family friendly, it is about brainstorming about the possibilities in reaching out through ministries that connect with the needs of the households in the community that the church services, it is about thinking beyond the needs of the adults to consider what will be a blessing to the young ones and supplying ministry tailored for them.

Many churches are content with doing evangelism that simply brings in individuals. What about the families/households of these new converts? What if these families were to come to our church? Would they feel welcome and appreciated or would they find that there is no room for them? Evangelism that does not connect with the entire family is missing a greater return from the investment of money and time put into it.

Rick Richardson makes the following comment, “Most people today will come to faith in the context of a community. Belonging comes before believing. Evangelism today is about helping people belong so that they can come to believe.”⁸ EFM does that same thing. It helps the church create that sense of community for the new comers to

⁸Rick Richardson, *Reimagining Evangelism: Inviting Friends on a Spiritual Journey* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006), 50.

include those they love so they do not journey alone.

While there are many churches that are already doing things for the family often it is not done purposely but as a side product, yet these are ahead of the rest. Churches in general need to understand the connection that an individual has with his/her household and think of ways to reach out to them by making the Gospel truly good news for the entire family/household. It is the goal of this dissertation that EFM becomes a popular thought in Adventist Evangelism and that the advances in evangelistic endeavors will great multiply because of it.

APPENDIX A
MISSION AND VISION PROCESS

Erwin Hills Church Board Meeting Agenda

Values, Mission, Vision and Goal Setting Meeting – What are we all about?

March 21, 2008

Agenda:

1. Opening prayer
2. Old Business
 - a. New Budget approval
3. New Business
 - a. Values – Mission – Vision – Goal setting session

#1 Source of guidance and inspiration, God's Word.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

What is God telling us in this passage?

Joshua 1:1-3

What is God telling us in this passage?

Zachariah 4:6

What is God telling us in this passage?

Core Values

It is very important for us to define our values, as a group, we need to understand who we are, what we do, what is important to us, what gives us happiness and brings back the greatest return. It is possible that as we seek answers to the previous statements we may come back with different answers. Sometimes that is the reason why churches do not succeed. They are going in all directions thus accomplishing very little for the Lord.

"When Vince Lombardi was trying to regroup the failing Green Bay Packers he called the team

into a locker-room huddle, picked up a football, and said, 'this is a football.'" ¹

You may think it is coming up with a list of values is an easy task but it can be tricky. Let's practice... Answer the following questions with out thinking too much: What is the most valuable thing for you? [No wrong answers here!] Now, think about it, where do you put most of your money in? If we were to check your receipts what would we find? That you like shoes? Electronics? Gardening? Eating out? Do you see how we can say one thing but act in an opposite way!

The following question is to be answered first individually and then corporately. What is the most important thing for the members of the Erwin Hills SDA Church?

Personal answer: _____

Group answer: _____

Did the previous two answers match in your paper? If yes why? If not, why not?

Go to the next page and answer the paper titled "Application Toolbox." We will tally the answers and the will try to make a list of core values in our church.

Following discussion, list the top core values for our church:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Mission Statement

Our mission is not as complex as finding values, but it is usually forgotten, left last in the list or simply diluted in the general picture of the church.

Why do I say that defining a mission for our church is easy? Because our mission has been given to us in written form from our leader:

Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:46-49

As I was doing my research I found the following statement: "A good mission statement provides strategic vision and direction of the organization and *should not have to be revised every few years...*"² [italics for emphasis] so true! This applies perfectly to the mission of the church.

¹Alan Nelson and Gene Appel. *How to Change Your Church without Killing It* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 2000), 22.

However, our task is to take Jesus commission and put it in words that will become our mission statement. It is an adaptation of His words to fit our context.

Please review the following three pages to see how other churches have put their mission statements into words.

Inspirational thought:

"Every soul was precious in His eyes. While He ever bore Himself with divine dignity, He bowed with the tenderest regard to every member of the family of God. In all men He saw fallen souls whom it was His mission to save."³

So, what it going to be our mission statement?

- Study all three records of Christ's words to His disciples.
- Make a list of all the similarities between them and also the differences.
- Make one of the three.
- Revisit the list of core values and see if they reflect our mission and/or if they can be incorporated or reflected as part of the mission statement.
- Together let us formulate a mission statement that reflects our mission here in Erwin Hills.

Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church Mission Statement:

²F. John Reh, *How to Write a Mission Statement*, <http://management.about.com/cs/generalmanagement/ht/missionstatemen.htm?p=1> (accessed March 20, 2008)

³Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1908), 12.

Erwin Hills Seventh Day Adventist Church Vision Statement: [see following section prior to filling out these lines]

Vision Statement

This page might be the most challenging to work with: the creation of a Vision Statement.

While the mission statement is philosophical in nature, the vision statement is strategic in nature.

The Work ahead:

In order to come up with a clear and powerful "punch-line" that will become our vision statement we need to revisit our list of core values and review our mission statement.

To the drawing board! Let's put our heads together and formulate a Vision Statement for the Erwin Hills Seventh Day Adventist Church. We should revisit our Core Values and our Mission Statement in order to make a statement that reflects them clearly.

Goal Setting

Now we can dream, but I do not mean that in the sense of building castles in the air. This is the section where we visualize the potential of the church, mix in the core values, mission and vision statement, and with prayer we formulate for the future.

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." Jeremiah 29:11

I know that God does not want us here just paying the electric bill, holding hands and singing Amazing Grace [got you!], and doing things for the church family only as if the church was an exclusive club. I've met churches like that, not wanting new members because they did not want disruption in their programming or mix with the wrong people.

There are different ways to set these goals: short term, long term, yearly or based on the board members, etc. So our first task will be to define the type of goals we will be setting, then review our core values, mission and vision statements, and put it together in a blender.

I believe that these goals also need to reflect a personal challenge to the church member as individuals and corporately for the church body. We will also have to consider

expectations and set up check points along the road. If we set a five year program we will need to have at least a review every other year.

The goals can be set up as a list or by categories. We could also choose to simply focus all the strategy through a single theme, for instance discipleship: Discipleship = prayer – service – soul-winning – growth in Christ.

Or the theme of ONE for Jesus:

My Life is one for Jesus. Can you give more than what God has given you? Our church family is often overwhelmed by the thought of what is being asked of them. What if we were to ask people to give one for God?

- One time for worshipping the Creator.
- One time for fellowship and spiritual growth, small groups.
- One hour of service to God each week.
- One soul for Christ each year.

Once again let's hit the drawing board and "Dream for our church."

Implementation

Now what? If we stopped with the previous step we have done nothing but waste time. Even with the goal setting there needs to be strategy to reach the goals, well, that is what this section is all about.

This section, however, is blank because it is dependant of the previous pages and the decisions that have been inscribed in them. At this point we can take a break and return, assign a group to deal with this, or whatever the group decides. But it must be followed through so that the previous work will not be wasted.

APPENDIX B

BECOMING A FAMILY FRIENDLY CHURCH, PART 1

Becoming a Family Friendly Church, part 1

Eli Rojas

Matthew 18:1-6

1. Introduction

- a. Working with young people is always full of surprises.
 - i. Video of young man jumping into the baptismal tank.
- b. Some people say that it is the sign of a growing church to have young people,
 - i. They are the future of the church.
 - ii. Yet this group is vanishing from our congregations.
- c. For a church to retain the young it needs to be family friendly and this does not happen by accident.
- d. During the next three sermons, this one included, we will be starting a conversation on how to become a "Family Friendly Church."

2. Challenges to becoming a Family Friendly Church.

- a. Connectivity with the church
 - i. Many group up disconnected to the church and as they get older plan on leaving the church.
 - ii. Not relevant.
 - iii. No ownership of the church.
 - iv. No desire to pursue religion...
- b. Numbers tell the story

- i. Between 1965 and 1995 we almost tripled our membership in North America.
 - 1. From 370,000 to 815,000.
 - ii. However,
 - 1. In 1965 the average age of our members was 35
 - 2. In 1995 it was 65.
 - c. What can we do to stop the exodus of the younger generation?
 - i. Acknowledge them.
 - ii. Train them.
 - iii. Empower them.
3. Acknowledge Them.
- a. This means that we know who they are, get involved in their lives, and do the best to connect with them.
 - i. Find in your Bibles Matthew 18:1-6.
 - ii. Jesus picked up a child and placed him on His knee.
 - b. The obstacles some people build
 - i. "We do not have a program for the youth, but they can go to "Main St. Church" because they have programs for the youth.
 - ii. This is a great idea if we are trying to get rid of them and their family.
 - c. What to do?
 - i. Learn their names.
 - ii. Karen Flowers and the little boy.

- iii. Small town in Midwest with teen pregnancy problems
 - 1. They learn the names of their youth, called them out when they saw them around town, the problem was greatly reduced.
 - iv. Do not tell them about the rules, tell them about your life.
 - v. Accept them as they are, God will make the necessary changes.
 - vi. Include them in the prayer groups in church.
 - vii. Participate in their activities and milestones of their life.
 - viii. Celebrate their success and cry with their defeats.
 - ix. Call them when they miss church.
4. Train them.
- a. Read Prov. 22:6
 - b. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church excels in this area.
 - i. While other churches "baby-sit" their children we have a complete curriculum.
 - ii. Many departments dedicated to our children:
 - 1. Sabbath School classes.
 - 2. Adventurers/Pathfinders Club.
 - 3. Day care programs.
 - 4. Elementary schools.
 - 5. High schools.
 - 6. Universities.
 - c. Sadly many churches do the training but not the enabling.

- i. We fill their heads with knowledge but do not allow them to serve.
 - ii. Then we entertain them, but still do not allow them to participate.
- 5. Empower them.
 - a. Allow the children and youth to participate in a meaningful way in the church's events.
 - i. It will transform them.
 - b. Throughout Scripture God trusted the young.
 - i. Joel 2:28
 - ii. Isaiah 11:6
 - iii. Samuel 1:1; 4-11
 - iv. Isaiah – Jeremiah – John...
 - v. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."
 - vi. Matthew 19:14
 - c. What does it mean to empower them?
 - i. Every generation has rebelled in their own way, fighting the old standards.
 - ii. To empower our youth means to get them involved:
 - 1. Sing, read, participate in some way or fashion, get their opinion on issues, and give them leadership assignments.
 - 2. But we are afraid that they will mess up!
 - iii. What will happen if we get them involved?
 - 1. They will feel part of the church,

- 2. They will have fun memories of the church,
- 3. They will remember their accomplishments,
 - a. and they will think "my church."
- d. We should say to them:
 - i. "Come, however you feel comfortable, however you dress, however you sing, however you smell. You are not only welcome, but you are the very heart of this congregation, and we need you. It's not just that we want you here, it's not just that we like you here. We need you."¹
 - ii. "Unless your church is a caring, extremely loving organization, then it clearly does not have the gospel."²

6. Conclusion

- a. It is time for us to take responsibility of our youth.
 - i. Not to send them somewhere else,
 - ii. But to help them truly belong.
- b. As we accomplish this then our church will be a truly "family friendly church," because as families visit they will feel that we truly care for their young.

¹Myrna Tetz and Gary L. Hopkins, *We Can Keep Them in the Church: Success Stories and Ideas That Really Work: How to Love Our Children so They Won't Leave* (Oshawa, Ontario, Canada: Pacific Press, 2004), 30.

²Ibid., 17.

APPENDIX C

FAMILY FRIENDLY CHURCH, PART 2

Family Friendly Church, Part 2 - Contagious Families

Pastor Eli Rojas

Acts 5:42

1. Introduction.

a. Here's a business idea:

i. Create a business called "Rent a wife."

1. The purpose is to fulfill cleaning, cooking, and activities that busy wives do not have the time to perform.
2. You could also start up a "Rent a husband;" "Rent some teens;" and when these two are done, then rent a wife to clean up the mess.

b. Family is very important and within the Christian community families have lost their place in ministry. It is important that we stop "renting a pastor" to do the things that families could more effectively do if they were to commit their households to God's service.

2. The role of the household in the Early Church.

a. Read Acts 5:42

b. Context for Acts 5:42

- i. Ananias and Sapphira
- ii. Fear because of miracles
- iii. Angelic deliverance
- iv. Testifying before Sanhedrin
- v. Beating

- vi. Growing pains [6:1]
- vii. The Early Church
- c. The faith of the Early Church shaped their actions...
 - i. Read James 2:14-26
- d. Acts 5:42 gives us three things that were important to them:
 - i. Daily in the Temple
 - ii. Strong desire to BE with God.
 - iii. Teaching and proclaiming the Gospel.
- 3. Daily in the Temple
 - a. They had a strong desire to be in the temple.
 - i. To witness firsthand the acts of God.
 - 1. They could have the same excuses we have today, but their desire for God was greater than their own personal agendas.
 - 2. Daily wages so: No work, no money.
 - b. Read
 - i. Acts 2:44-47.
 - ii. Acts 16:5.
 - iii. Acts 17:11, 17.
 - c. Why daily?
 - i. The Bible study
 - ii. The preaching
 - iii. The fellowship
 - iv. The miracles

- v. The Holy Spirit
 - vi. The power of God
- d. Do you want to experience God's power today?
 - i. Go to where God is working!
- 4. From house to house.
 - a. Worship for the Early Church took place in four places:
 - i. Temple, Acts 2:46.
 - ii. The Synagogue, Acts 13:5
 - iii. Nature, Acts 16:13
 - iv. Homes, the most popular:
 - 1. Acts 9:11
 - 2. Acts 12:12
 - 3. Acts 18:7
 - 4. Acts 21:8
 - 5. Romans 16:1-5
 - 6. 1 Cor 16:19, 23
 - 7. Col 4:15
 - 8. Acts 18:7
 - b. There are many reasons for the church to be extended to the household.

The greatest tool in the expansion of the Gospel in the Early Church was the extension of the church to the household.
- 5. Teaching and proclaiming the Gospel.

- a. "The greatest evidence of the power of Christianity that can be presented to the world is a well-ordered, well-disciplined family. This will recommend the truth as nothing else can, for it is a living witness of its practical power upon the heart."¹
- b. Even the single parent should share Christ, 1 Timothy 5:4
- c. Acts 5:42 says that they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the Gospel.
 - i. It is seen in the way God brings the family together.
 - ii. It is reflected in the way they deal with the good days and the difficult days.
- d. "By being social and coming close to the people, you may turn the current of their thoughts more readily than by the most able discourse. The presentation of Christ in the family, by the fireside, and in small gatherings in private houses is often more successful in winning souls to Jesus than are sermons delivered in the open air, to the moving throng, or even in halls or churches."²

6. Conclusion

- a. It is clear that the household played a pivotal role in the development of the Early Church.
- b. Today the story is the same.

¹Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 32.

²Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1948), 193.

- i. Our home should be extensions of the church for the proclamation of the Gospel.
- ii. This in itself will bring blessings to the
 - 1. Home
 - 2. Community
 - 3. Church

APPENDIX D

FAMILY FRIENDLY CHURCH, PART 3, LOVING RELATIONS

Family Friendly Church, Part III - Loving Relations

Pastor Eli Rojas

1. Introduction.

- a. In the animal world we find plenty of examples of creatures that get along, even when they should be enemies at times you may find tender moments.
- b. Do we need to behave like “Tom and Jerry”?
- c. As the body of Christ we need to realize that relationships within the church family testify powerfully about the impact that the Gospel has on people.
 - i. It changes our relationships within our household.
 - ii. It changes our relationships within the family of faith.
 - iii. It changes the way we relate as a means for outreach.

2. The Body of Christ.

- a. Read Romans 12:5
 - i. There are many references in Scripture about the Church being the Body of Christ.
 - 1. Romans 12:4-6
 - 2. 1 Corinthians 12:11-13
 - 3. Ephesians 4
 - 4. Colossians 3:14-16
- b. The Key to Success to the Early Church was Prayer and Unity.
 - i. Acts 1:14
 - ii. Acts 2:1

1. Unity
 2. One in Purpose
 3. One in Prayer
 4. One in Heart
 5. In one location
 6. Waiting for the Holy Spirit to be poured out on them.
- c. Cancer attacks the individual cells in the body thus debilitating the body.
- i. There are illnesses also for the Body of Christ.
 1. Satan loves to spread decease through the Body.
 2. Things like:
 - a. Criticism
 - b. Uncontrolled Tempers
 - c. Selfishness
 - d. Negative Words
 - e. Prejudice
 - f. Speaking badly of others behind their backs
 - g. Unwillingness to forgive
 - h. Attitude of superiority
 - ii. "There are in the church unconsecrated, unconverted men and women who think more of maintaining their own dignity and their own opinions than they do of the salvation of their fellow creatures; and Satan works upon these to stir up difficulties that

consume the time and labor of the minister, and many souls are lost as the result.”¹

d. What is God’s solution?

i. Read Colossians 3:14-15

ii. What is God’s solution?

iii. What do we do with those that are not acting like ME?

iv. What to do with the sinner?

v. Keeping the distance, at least people won’t think he’s one of us...

3. God’s solution is Love.

a. Jesus made our relationships a matter of prayer – John 17: 11, 21-22

b. See John 13:34-35

c. 19 times the NT uses the expression “Love one another.”

d. Paul endorsed it.

e. Notice these verses:

i. Romans 12:10

ii. Romans 13:8

iii. Galatians 5:13

iv. Ephesians 4

f. John wrote an entire book on the subject: 1 John

g. And Peter...

i. Peter and Love

¹Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 5:616.

- ii. John 21:15-17
 - iii. Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?
 - iv. 1 Peter 1:22; 3:8; 5:14
 - v. "love one another deeply..."
4. A true sign of God's power.
- a. Read John 13:35
 - b. "Church members have no right to follow their own impulses and inclinations in dealing with fellow members who have erred. They should not even express their prejudices regarding the erring, for thus they place in other minds the leaven of evil. Reports unfavorable to a brother or sister in the church are communicated from one to another of the church members. Mistakes are made and injustice is done because of an unwillingness on the part of someone to follow the directions given by the Lord Jesus."²
5. So what do we do?
- a. Jesus provided us with a paradigm for dealing with conflict...
 - i. Matthew 18:15-17
 - b. So what do we do?
 - i. Do not listen to gossip.
 - ii. Do not listen to criticism.
 - iii. If you hear it, do not share it.

²Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 7:260.

- iv. And if judgment knocks at your heart... Reject it!
- c. Be Careful how you relate to your family, church family and community.
 - i. Matthew 18:6
- d. A true sign of God's power. John 13:35
- e. "Whatever the character of the offense, this does not change the plan that God has made for the settlement of misunderstandings and personal injuries. Speaking alone and in the spirit of Christ to the one who is in fault will often remove the difficulty. Go to the erring one, with a heart filled with Christ's love and sympathy, and seek to adjust the matter. Reason with him calmly and quietly. Let no angry words escape your lips. Speak in a way that will appeal to his better judgment. Remember the words: "He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."³ James 5:20. {7T 261.2}
- f. "If your brethren err, you are to forgive them. When they come to you with confession, you should not say, I do not think they are humble enough. I do not think they feel their confession. What right have you to judge them, as if you could read the heart? The word of God says, "If he repent, forgive him. And if he trespasses against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt

³White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 7:261.

forgive him." Luke 17:3, 4. And not only seven times, but seventy times seven--just as often as God forgives you.⁴ {COL 249.2}

6. Conclusion.

- a. There was a Christian couple that noticed that people in their apartment complex were having marital problems.
 - i. They got some marriage enrichment material, asked for the complex's meeting room and invited their neighbors to watch the videos.
 - ii. Soon enough things started to improve and the people started to ask of the Christian couple where was it that they went to church.
 - iii. The initiative of this couple helped their neighbors and blessed the church with new members.
- b. Forgiveness and loving relationships are the most powerful testimony of God's power working in the household, the church and the community.

⁴Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1941), 249.

APPENDIX E

**SEMINAR 1 – BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR
EVANGELISTIC FAMILY MINISTRY**

Biblical Foundation for Evangelistic Family Ministry

Seminar presented by Pastor Eli Rojas, D.Min.

1. Introduction

- a. There is plenty of material on family ministry and help for the family in general.
 - i. "Did you know that if you took all of the books available today on parenting and divided them by the number of days in a year, you'd discover that there has been an average of ten new parenting books produced every day of the year for each of the past twenty-one years? That is more than 75,000 different parenting books currently at your disposal."¹
- b. When it comes to church related ministry most of the material published has to do with in-reach, helping and serving the families within the church family.
- c. Very little has been written from the perspective of Evangelistic Family Ministry (EFM), meaning ministry to families with the aim of helping them to know Jesus.
 - i. This is due to a tunnel-vision approach to evangelism, only one style or type of outreach is generally used.
 - ii. An EFM approach would be helpful in retention of new members.

¹George Barna, *Revolutionary Parenting: What the Research Shows Really Works* (Carol Stream, IL: BarnaBooks, 2007), xi.

d. It's imperative for the Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church (EH) to launch into ministry that reaches out not only to individuals but that also connects with the household of the new converts.

i. "It is time to take a fresh look at how we 'do church' in Adventism ... it would be far better for us to examine the Scriptures, our Adventist heritage, and the writings of Ellen White to discover God's plan for how we should 'do church.'"²

2. The Biblical Mandate

a. The importance of the home.

i. God puts together the first couple

1. Gen 2:23, 24

2. "Upon awakening, Adam instantly recognized the close and intimate relationship that this specific act of creation made possible."³

3. The first home was intentional: "In forming the first family, He established the basic social unity for humanity, giving them a sense of belonging and providing them with an opportunity to develop as well-rounded persons in service to God and others."⁴

²Russell Burrill, *The Revolutionized Church of the 21st Century: The Explosive Power of a Church Built on Relationships* (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center, 1997), 14.

³*Seventh-day Adventists Believe: A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines*, 2nd ed. (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 2005), 331.

⁴*Ibid.*, 330.

ii. The influence of the household in society.

1. "No church, community, or nation will rise higher than the spiritual condition of its families."⁵

2. Notice the power of the family:

a. "Carl Zimmerman, a Harvard University sociologist, once studied the rise and fall of every major empire in world history. More specifically he traced what happened to the family in each of these empires. He concluded that families go through three phases, the last occurring just before each major empire fell apart. In his book *Family and Civilization*, he listed these characteristics of families in their final phase:

- i. Marriage lost its sacredness, and alternative forms of marriage were advocated.
- ii. Feminist movements flourished.
- iii. Parenting became more difficult.
- iv. Adultery was celebrated, not punished.
- v. Sexual perversions abounded, including bestiality, but especially incest and homosexuality."⁶

⁵Dennis Rainey, *Building Strong Families*, Foundations for the Family Series (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2002), 15.

3. Genesis 2 and 3 indicate that the home is God's strategic place for humanity to learn about God's love and His plan of redemption. Likewise Satan thinks of the home as a strategic place where he can create soul-deteriorating experiences, a source for deep disappointment, a place where ill feelings fester, and destruction of the soul takes place.

- iii. Household of Salvation

1. An individual's acceptance of the Gospel directly affects his/her household.

2. Acts 16:23-34

- a. Main events:

- i. Paul and Silas in prison
- ii. An miraculous earthquake sets them free
- iii. Jailer reacts by attempting suicide
- iv. Paul shouts: "do thyself no harm"

- b. Verses 30 and 31 are pivotal

- i. "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

⁶George Rainey, *Ministering to the Twenty-First Century Families* (Nashville, TN: Publishing Group, 2001), 1.

- ii. Two keywords: "Sozo" and "oikos."
- c. "Sozo" Save
 - i. The specific conjugation used is "sothese" from the Greek word "sozo" meaning to save, rescue, deliver, and keep safe. It is used in the indicative-future-passive 2nd person singular meaning "you will be saved."
 - ii. First let's clarify that this is not salvation from physical harm.
 - 1. It is possible
 - a. Acts 12:19; 27:42
 - 2. Context gives us an answer
 - a. Luke uses this word always within a context of spiritual salvation
 - i. Luke 8:12; 13:23; in chapter 15 three stories; 19:9
 - 3. Paul is the character in this story, and he uses "sothese" only three times:
 - a. Rom 10:9
 - b. Acts 11:14

c. Acts 16:31

4. "They impressed on the suppliant the truth that salvation depends on personal belief in the redeeming life and work of Jesus."⁷

d. "Oikos" House-Household

- i. In the New Testament (NT) it is used twelve times for house and three for household.

Key distinction is that where this word is connected to a person the best translation is 'household.'

1. Some Bible versions translate this word as family, but the implication is greater than a group of individuals connected by blood lines.

- ii. "Primitive Christianity structured its congregations in families, groups and 'houses.' The house was both a place of fellowship and a place of meeting."⁸

⁷"Acts," *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed. F. D. Nichol, 7 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1953-57), 6:334.

⁸Gerhard Friedrich, "sozo," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans) 5:130.

iii. Here the word household could be best understood as the circle of influence of an individual.

1. We could say "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved and those that you interact with on a daily basis, those that you are close to will be saved as well."

iv. Cornelius in Acts 10

v. Lydia in Acts 16:15

vi. Crispus in Acts 18:8

iv. Acts 16:31 implies that when a person accepts Jesus Christ as Savior those under his/her circle of influence will greatly benefit from it, in fact they too will be inclined to accept Jesus as Savior. It is like a domino effect. If we are going to attempt a translation that reflects this idea we could say "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved and those that you interact with on a daily basis, those that you are close to will be saved as well."

3. Biblical examples of the application of this principle of Salvation through the household.

a. An example of the opposite: Cain

i. Cain kills his brother – Gen 4:1-15

ii. Cain moves to the land of Nod – Gen 4:16-24

1. Disobedience of his descendants
 - a. Gen 4:19; 23-24
 - iii. Two camps started – Gen 4:26; 6:1, 2
 - b. Abraham
 - i. Abraham is chosen. Gen 12:1-3
 - ii. That blessing reaches out to today – Rom 4:13-25
 - iii. Abraham's influence amongst his household.
 1. "During their stay in Haran, both Abraham and Sarah had led others to the worship and service of the true God. These attached themselves to the patriarch's household, and accompanied him to the land of promise."⁹
 2. According to White Abraham's household comprised more than a thousand souls.¹⁰
 - iv. Gen 24 details the reach of Abraham's influence over his household, because when embarking on a mission his servant seeks God's guidance throughout this mission.
 - v. "The greatest evidence of the power of Christianity that can be presented to the world is a well-ordered, well-disciplined family. This will recommend the truth as nothing else can, for it is a living witness of its practical power upon the heart."¹¹

⁹Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1958) 127.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 141.

¹¹Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 32.

c. Moses' orders to Israel

i. Deut 11:18-21

4. Application of the Biblical Mandate to the Church Family at EH

a. Understand that this mandate is from God.

i. Jesus gave us the Gospel Commission - Matthew 28:19-20.

ii. God created the home and blessed it. Satan is also aware of the power of a household where God's name is praised.

iii. Acts 16:31 reminds us that the Gospel impacts the household first.

1. 1 Cor 1:16

iv. Jesus first miracle took place in a wedding. John 2:1-10

v. God deeply desires to be the God of today's family. Jer 31:1

b. Understand that this mandate is imperative.

i. Action is the response to understanding.

1. The EH has tremendous potential because of its history, its location, and mostly because of its people.

ii. "The local church plays a vital role in reforming the family, but before I present several mandates concerning the family for the church in the new millennium, I need to explain three critical assumptions that must be understood and embraced before we take action:

1. First, if we want to reform the family we need standards... This issue of convictions is so important

because the enemy of our soul does not want parents to take a stand on anything.¹²

2. Second, a family reformation will require courage...¹³

3. Third, a family reformation will require innovative strategies and new tactics by local churches."¹⁴

c. Understand that this mandate starts at home.

i. "Missionary work is to be done in the home. Here those who have received Christ are to show what grace has done for them."¹⁵

ii. "Our Work for Christ is to begin with the family, in the home... there is no missionary field more important than this... by many this home field has been shamefully neglected, and it is time that divine resources and remedies were presented, that this state of evil may be corrected. (AH 35)"¹⁶

5. Conclusion

a. "There is no question that evangelism is one of the church's highest priorities. This fact, then, makes family ministry essential because it, too, is evangelistic. Family ministry aims to train people how to fulfill parenthood as Christians, which includes nurturing their children in the

¹²Rainey, *Building Strong Families*, 16.

¹³*Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁵Ellen G. White, *God's Amazing Grace* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1973), 226.

¹⁶Karen and Ron Flowers, eds., *Family Evangelism: Bringing Jesus to the Family Circle* (Silver Spring, MD: Department of Family Ministries Publication, 2003), iv.

faith, a task assigned to them in Ephesians 6:4. Parents who evangelize and disciple their own children are doing the work of the church. The home is as much an agency of the church as the Sunday school and children's church. Looking at its families as an arm of the church, church leaders should be concerned about training parents in child development, evangelism, counseling, teaching, personal relationships, and other parenting skills."¹⁷

- b. Recognizing our Theological Foundation I propose:
 - i. There is a clear Biblical Mandate for EFM
 - ii. The Bible has many examples of the application of the principle of a "Household of Salvation."
 - iii. It is imperative that we apply these principles to the Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church's evangelistic planning.

¹⁷Charles M. Sell, *Family Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 17.

APPENDIX F

SEMINAR 2 – TRANSFORMING EVANGELISTIC FAMILY MINISTRY

Transforming Evangelistic Family Ministry

Implications of EFM in the congregation and the board, ministry changes.

Seminar presented by Pastor Eli Rojas, D. Min.

1. Introduction

a. "A friend of ours was a disciple of William Edwards Deming, who did more to bring the era of people-as-cogs to a close than anyone. One evening, at a dinner for Dr. Deming, our friend asked him if he could sum up his entire theory of work, production, statistics, variation, systems, knowledge, and control in a single sentence. Deming did it in two words: 'People matter,'"¹

b. People matter to God.

i. Several times in Scripture this is reflected

1. Luke 15 three parables, all reflecting the joy in heaven for each sinner that returns to God.
2. Jesus instructing His disciples to make disciples from all people-groups on earth.
3. Acts 10, however, shows this and more. There is a transformation that takes place from God's work in the church and the non-church.

ii. Acts 10

¹Alan Nelson and Gene Appel, *How to Change the Church Without Killing It* (Nashville, TN: Word, 2000), 71.

1. Verse 1 – God talks, through an angel, to a non-Jewish, a Roman, a soldier.
2. Verse 4 – You matter to God.
3. Verses 9-20 – God changes Peter's heart
4. Verses 21-27 – Cornelius invites everyone he can to his household
5. verses 28-33 – Peter and Cornelius exchange their testimonies
6. Verses 34-43 – Peter shares the Gospel
7. Verses 44-48 – The Holy Spirit is poured out on Gentiles; witnesses that accompanied Peter are changed (changed at heart); Cornelius, his household and friends are baptized.

c. The previous narrative reminds us that change is possible for believers and non-believers.

2. Awareness of a paradigm shift in soul winning

a. Curses and blessings of change.

i. Change is hard

1. "We uncover a great paradoxical truth. Change is hell. Yet not to change, to stay on the path of slow death, is also hell. The difference is that the hell of deep change is the hero's journey. The journey put us on a path of exhilaration, growth, and progress."²

²Nelson and Appel, xiii.

2. The old ways

- a. Peter struggles with his tradition of "Israelites only."
 - i. God has to show him a shocking dream to change Peter's view. Acts 10:9-20, 28, 29
- b. We too get hanged up on traditions/the way it used to be.

3. Why Churches take change slowly:

- a. Churches see themselves as tradition keepers.
 - i. The worry about apostasy
 - ii. Acts 10:45 shocking to see the Holy Spirit poured out on the "non-circumcised."
- b. Culture (church culture) plays a huge role in how churches operate. Acts 10 is a clash of cultures: Jewish vs. Roman.
 - i. We Seventh-day Adventists have such a peculiar culture that at times we struggle with how we will be able to bring "heathens" in to join our fellowship.
- c. Churches are usually not in touch with their bottom line.
 - i. Come together, hold hands, sing "Kumbayah."

- ii. However the church's business is about nothing else but soul winning.
 - iii. Imagine a car dealership that is not concerned with having car-sales department.
- d. People see the church as "bastion of relief." "In this world of change, it's nice to know there is one place that stays the same: the church."
- e. Churches tend not to be leader led.³
- ii. Why do we have an advantage in change?
 - 1. First, we are "Holy Spirit Led."
 - a. That was the case of the Early Church. See Book of Acts.
 - b. That was the case of Acts 10.
 - i. Cornelius was led by the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. Acts 10:1-3
 - ii. Peter was led by the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. Acts 10:10-20
 - iii. Then the crowd was baptized with the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. Acts 10:44
 - 2. We are people focused thus we have a lower overhead.

³Nelson and Appel, 44-45.

- a. Buildings help, but the church goes on without buildings.
 - i. "Church without walls." A concept that reminds us that the church is not a building.
 - b. Our greatest asset is people: disciples.
3. Our faith brings us together as a family.
- a. The importance of relationships within the church family.
4. Our history challenges us to change.⁴
- a. Our history as Christians
 - i. The principles of Scripture have remained the same.
 - ii. The methodology for discipleship has adapted to each generation through the ages.
 - b. Our history as Seventh-day Adventists
 - i. Our church has changed the methodology from place to place, era to era, culture to culture, and always with the aim of sharing Christ.
5. Our higher calling.
- a. Matthew 28:19-20

⁴Nelson and Appel, 46-47.

- b. Not buildings,
 - c. Not traditions
 - d. But discipleship!
- b. What do we have to do in order to be an EFM church?
 - i. Involvement
 - 1. Peter did not go alone; he took some of the old faithful with him. Acts 10:23, 45.
 - 2. We need to realize that ministry is for all.
 - a. Not just for the pastors.
 - b. Not just for the elders.
 - 3. It is when each member, or a large majority, realizes that this is their church and what they do matter, that the greatest growth begins to take place.
 - a. God working in His people.
 - b. God's people sharing God with others.
 - ii. Initiative.
 - 1. We serve with what we have, where we are, reaching out to those around us.
 - 2. God asked Moses" "What do you have in your hands?"
 - a. God asks you today, "What do you have in your hands?"
 - b. You have the gifts God has given you. Everyone has one at least!

3. Baptisms from

- a. Racquetball
- b. Literature
- c. Horse ranch
- d. Quilting club
- e. Many more.

iii. Unity in diversity

- 1. It is not all doing the same, but rather all doing different things to bring people to Christ.

3. Ministry impact

a. Evaluation of the ministries currently serving the church.

i. When Peter was confronted with the dream his ministry was exclusively to the Jewish community.

- 1. The linen filled with unclean animals and the command to kill and eat was shocking to his cultural tradition.
- 2. Once he understood the purpose of the dream his ministry approach, his ministry emphasis changed.

ii. We take inventory of what we do.

- 1. Then we ask of each of our ministries,
- 2. How is it reaching out, not only to individuals, but to their families too?

b. How do we know what to toss and what to keep?

- i. Albert Einstein said: "Out of complexity, find simplicity."⁵
- ii. Notice Peter's experience:
 1. Acts 10:20 "So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."
 2. Matthew 28:19 "Therefore go ... and surely I am with you always."
- iii. We toss anything that does not fulfill God's Commission.
 1. "Many churches have become cluttered. So cluttered that people have a difficult time encountering the simple and powerful message of Christ. So cluttered that many people are busy doing church instead of being the church."⁶
- iv. We keep everything that fulfills God's Commission.
 1. Sharing the results of a church that has a "simple process that is clearly defined, moves people, and is implemented throughout the church,"⁷ Thom Rainer quotes them saying:
 - a. "Our ministry process has resulted in adults being more proactive in inviting their friends to the appropriate venues that are geared toward connecting people to Jesus Christ and other Christians. This process has also resulted in adults

⁵Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples* (Nashville, TN: B & H, 2006), 3.

⁶Ibid., 19.

⁷Ibid., 90.

sensing a need to make a greater commitment to Christ by learning how to share their faith with their friends and family members.”⁸

2. Even the Church Manual for the Seventh-day Adventist Church indicates that the main purpose of the Church Board is the planning of Evangelistic endeavors.

- a. Under definition and function of the Church Board it says: “It’s chief concern is the spiritual nurture of the church and the work of planning and fostering evangelism in all of its phases.”⁹ And it adds:
- b. “When the board devotes its first interests and highest energies to every-member evangelism, most church problems are alleviated or prevented.”¹⁰
- c. Ministry that starts up within the church family
 - i. A young person is reading about free car washes, and then the light-bulb goes on...
 - ii. A family finds out a need in their neighborhood, a neighbor needs an access ramp and can not afford it, and a ministry is born...
 - iii. A man living in an apartment complex finds out that many of the

⁸Rainer and Geiger, 91.

⁹*Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 17th ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005), 90.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

marriages in his complex are having trouble

1. He finds material and starts a marriage support group right there in the complex
2. Soon they ask him "where do you go to church?"
3. Baptisms from a personal initiative.

iv. A stuttering young man can not share Jesus without stumbling all over the place

1. Gets literature and keeps it in his pocket, sharing every time he can.
2. At one point a coworker has questions so he shares as much as he can, but it isn't much.
3. Calls his elders and soon another person joins the church.

4. Physical impact

- a. How do you fulfill a program without the right facilities?
 - i. Do not let that stop us
 - ii. Plan ahead
- b. What would be the physical impact for our congregation?
 - i. Expansion
 - ii. Careful planning
 - iii. Moving forward in faith!

5. Conclusion

- a. People are seeking for churches that are relevant to them and their families.

- i. "My first awareness of helplessness came to me when as a young mother I felt the weight of responsibility for my children's faith. It grew as I wondered about bringing my kids up in the neighborhood's church we had attended for several years. There seemed so little there that I could enthusiastically pass on to my children. It never occurred to me that the church might change or that I might have a role in that change. All I knew was that some kind of change needed to happen. I wanted my children exposed to a faith would challenge and sustain them"¹¹

1. This statement was written by Sue Mallory.

- a. Her transformation was such that she ended up writing a book entitled "The Equipping Church, serving together to transform lives."
- b. The change started in her heart, became contagious to her church, and transformed both.
- b. It took Peter a message that came directly from God.
- c. Through the Holy Spirit we, at the EH have the same call/challenge by the Lord to be more simple in our ministry, one focus, Evangelistic Family Ministry.
 - i. We face the challenge of Change guided by the Holy Spirit.
 - ii. We evaluate what we are doing

¹¹Sue Mallory, *The Equipping Church: Serving Together to Transform Lives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 18.

1. Focus on Christ's commission
- iii. We find ways to get the church family involved in this process
 1. The Holy Spirit empowers
 2. We enable
- iv. Move forward in faith if physical transformation is required.

APPENDIX G

SEMINAR 3 – MINISTRY TO THE GOOD, THE BAD,
AND THE UGLY

Ministry to the Good the Bad and the Ugly.

Reaching Families where they are.

Seminar presented by Pastor Eli Rojas D. Min.

1. Introduction

- Acts 16:31
 - This text is a challenge for today's church
 - Why is it a challenge? Just think of the meaning of the word family. What's a family?
 - In the 2000 Census they used the term "household" because of the many different "family types" they deal with.
- A family is no longer the "perfect nuclear family" of the days of "Leave it to Beaver."
- How does the church cope with that?
- What is the meaning of "household" in Acts 16:31?
 - Some Bible translations use the word "family" in Acts 16:31
 - Bible in Basic English and New International Reader's Version
 - But that translation is limited in today's context.
 - Circle of influence.
 - Whatever makes a household, that is a family.

2. Dealing with the many family types in society today.

- Today we deal with many forms of family as the following list shows (not an exhaustive list):

- the nuclear family, foster family, extended family, blended family, same-sex family (referring to the parents being of the same sex), single parent family, complex family, fictive kin family¹, plural marriage family, etc.
 - Diana R. Garland explains: “The definition of *family* shapes social and institutional responses to those called ‘families’ and those deemed ‘not-families.’”²
- Garland explains that there are, in today’s society, two ways of looking a family:
- **The structural definition** actually looks at the members of the family and the roles/functions they play in it, and the roles are never obsolete (an aunt does not stop being an aunt after an absence of twenty years).
 - **The Functional definition** looks at the relationships within a group:
 - A friend becomes an “adopted” uncle.
 - An older neighbor might assume the role of a grandparent.
 - “The functional definition seems to better fit Jesus’ teaching about family. For followers of Christ are not to be bound by the structures of legally recognized or biological

¹Diana R. Garland, *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 35.

²*Ibid.*, 22.

based relationships. Rather, family relationships are defined by relationship processes – loving one another, being faithful to the same Lord, and adopting one another as brothers and sisters in the household of faith.”³

- Notice the New Testament’s advice on this subject:
 - I Tim 5:1-2
 - John 13:35
 - 1 John 3:1
- So the Word advises us to relate to one another as a family. This includes new converts and their families.
 - So what if the family is **GOOD**?
 - They old idea that good people does not really need the Gospel because they are good.
 - But we must come to understand that without Jesus...
 - Nothing we do is good as a means of salvation,
 - Only through Jesus we are saved.
 - Acts 4:12
 - The good family type needs Jesus too.
 - As a church we must devise strategies to reach out to them.
 - So what if the family is **BAD**?
 - The Bible is filled of stories about bad families.

³Garland, 50.

- Referring to the current spiritual situation in the USA
George Barna says: “The unfortunate truth is that most citizens of ‘the greatest nation on earth’ are mired in an agonizing revolving door of trial-and-error efforts in a disheartening and unfulfilling search for truth, integrity, meaning, wholeness, connection, passion, and inner peace.”⁴
- That is the reason for us to be reaching out to families in conflict.
 - Home building events
 - Seminars on relationships
 - Facilitation of resources
- More important yet, to make these families feel welcome in our church because after all,
 - We too have problems
- So what if the family is **UGLY**?
 - Obviously we are not referring here to looks, but families with serious trouble.
 - Divorcing
 - Abused
 - Addictions
 - Disconnected

⁴George Barna, *Revolution* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2006), 13.

- Split
- Dysfunctional is almost the norm today.
- Do we not have a duty to them?
 - I love to hear certain passages about Jesus.
 - Matthew 9:10-13
 - Matthew 11:19
 - “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”⁵
 -
 - If Jesus mingled with sinners for their sake, what are we to do?

3. The importance of being a “Sanctuary,” or place of refuge.

- The family is under attack.
 - White explains: “His work (Satan’s) is to bring into every family the cruel elements of self-will, harshness, selfishness. Thus he seeks to destroy the happiness of the family.”⁶

⁵Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1905), 143.

⁶Ellen G. White, *The Upward Look* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1982), 163.

- What a blessing it would be if people from all walks of life would come to us because they know they are safe here!
 - Today's Christian Church has a solemn duty to share the light of the Gospel with families/family groups all around in their communities so these can escape the depravity of the age in which they live and families can experience wholeness. White ads: "And this is why there are so many godless families; this is why depravity is so deep and widespread."⁷
- "Parenting occurs on the front lines of the spiritual battle that defines our daily existence and purpose."⁸
- "Viewed in this way, seminars on marriage and parenting are not nice, optional programs intended to make people selfishly happy, they are necessary to keep people morally and spiritually healthy."⁹

4. Conclusion

- "There is no question that evangelism is one of the church's highest priorities. This fact, then, makes family ministry essential because it, too, is evangelistic. . . . Looking at its families as an arm of the church, church leaders should be concerned about training parents in child development,

⁷Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1948), 143.

⁸George Barna, *Revolutionary Parenting: What the Research Shows Really Works* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2007), xxi.

⁹Charles M. Sell, *Family Ministry*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 16.

evangelism, counseling, teaching, personal relationships, and other parenting skills.”¹⁰

- As result of this understanding of ministry that reaches out to all households:
 - We become aware of the many different family-types with the purpose of reaching out to them.
 - Loving relations are the most important thing we can offer
 - Jesus, Paul, John and the NT teach this principle.
 - We are encouraged to make our church a family.
 - The Good, Bad, and the Ugly all need Jesus.
 - The Church if God’s agency to show God’s love and to help people connect with Him.
 - The Church is God’s Sanctuary.
 - We at the Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church need to carefully gear all our efforts to be:
 - Evangelistic
 - Family oriented
 - Reaching out to the households of those that find Sanctuary in our fellowship.

¹⁰Sell, 17.

APPENDIX H

SEMINAR 4 – THE POWER OF THE HOUSEHOLD AND THE CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

The Power of the Household and the Circle of Influence.

Homes reaching homes.

Seminar presented by Pastor Eli Rojas, D.Min.

1. Introduction

- a. This material is "Bible-based" and today's text is the spring board for understanding how our homes can make a difference.
 - i. Deut 11:¹⁸*Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.*
 - ii. God certainly did not have in mind body piercings, jewelry, or formalism for that matter.
 - iii. "In your heart and soul..." It starts with God's action in the heart.
 - iv. "A sign upon your hand..." It shows in our actions.
 - v. "Frontlets between your eyes..." A conscious decision of our mind and a direction for our eyes.
- b. God did not intend this text as a "set of rules to follow." But as a suggestion of what "true religion" can do not only in your own heart but on those that come in contact with you.

2. Circle of Influence within the Church Family.

- a. Transformation of the church family into a household of faith.
 - i. 1 Tim 5:1-2
 - ii. Because of what Christ has done in/for us we no longer see each other as strangers, fellow worshipers, or acquaintances...

iii. We are family in Christ

1. 1 John 3:1, 23

iv. If we are family or a household of faith our relationships are thus transformed.

b. Transformation of the relationships within the household of faith.

i. No longer strangers but family in Christ

ii. We see each other with tender care as a family member

1. If we have had a bad "family" experience.

2. In God's Family we should have a good family experience.

c. The powerful testimony of this transformation.

i. John 13:35

ii. Unity in diversity is the most powerful testimony of God's power.

3. Circle of Influence within our social network.

a. I accept the Savior.

i. John 3:16

ii. John 10:10

b. I share the Savior.

i. Our household has changed:

1. Today it means our immediate family and the people we contact day to day.

2. Clerks, coworkers, friends, even family members, and our neighbors.

4. Circle of Influence within our neighborhood.

a. Household of Salvation in the midst of households in turmoil.

- i. Deut. 11:¹⁹ *And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

1. The greatest thing that the Adventist/Christian home has lost is the time of worship, the time when as a family we sat together and talked about God.
2. "Religious parents, failing to walk in His statutes, do not command their household to keep the way of the Lord."¹
3. "The law of God is not made the rule of life. The children, as they make homes of their own, feel under no obligation to teach their children what they themselves have never been taught."²
4. "And this is why there are so many godless families; this is why depravity is so deep and widespread."³

- ii. "The greatest evidence of the power of Christianity that can be presented to the world is a well-ordered, well-disciplined family.

¹White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 143.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

This will recommend the truth as nothing else can, for it is a living witness of its practical power upon the heart.”⁴

iii. It does not mean that you have a “perfect family,” but that your family is made perfect by God’s presence.

1. We struggle with our family relationships because

a. I’m not totally surrendered to Christ

b. They are not totally surrendered to Christ

2. “The Hebrews were taught how to train their children so that they might avoid the idolatry and wickedness of the heathen nations.”⁵

b. The Power of the Household of Salvation.

i. Deut 11:²⁰ *And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates:*

1. What is this talking about? Physical evidence that your home belongs to the Lord.

a. Many homes display flags

i. American

ii. Confederate

iii. Their nation of origin

b. Is the Christian flag flying in front of your house?

⁴Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 32.

⁵Ellen G. White, *Christian Education* (Battle Creek, MI: International Track, 1894), 178.

- ii. Our relationship with the neighbors and friends is influenced by my relationship with God.
- iii. We mingle with them and influence through genuine friendships.
 - 1. They do not hear our "on a soap box sermons."
 - 2. They see our interest for them and see our caring works for them.
 - 3. "You have neighbors. Will you give them the message?
You may never have had the hands of ordination laid upon you, but you can humbly carry the message. You can testify that . . . all for whom Christ died shall have everlasting life if they believe on Him."⁶
- c. The Power of the Household of Salvation is that Christ can be their Savior too if allow Him to work through us.

5. Conclusion

- a. Deut 11:²¹ *That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.*
 - i. The blessings of following God will be obvious to those around us and would at times initiate conversation inquiring about our faith.
 - 1. At times our simple presence will make a difference.

⁶Ellen G. White, *In Heavenly Places* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1967), 323.

b. We at the Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church need to carefully gear all our efforts to be:

- i. Bible-based, Evangelistic
- ii. Family oriented and inclusive.
- iii. Reaching out to the households of those that find Sanctuary in our fellowship.
- iv. Helping our families reach out to the households in their community.
- v. Families winning families to Christ.

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- 1987 to 1991. Director of Work Study Program for Pine Forge Academy. Part time Pastoral work with three congregations. Organized the Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church in Orange, NJ.
- 1993 to present. Pastoral assignments for the Carolina Conference of Seventh-day Adventists districts and accomplishments:
 - 1994 to 1998 four church district: Blythewood English, Charlotte Spanish, Spartanburg Spanish, and Columbia Spanish Churches.
 - Planted the Monroe Spanish Church
 - 2001 to 2007 Charleston Seventh-day Adventist Church.
 - Planted the Charleston Spanish Seventh-day Adventist group
 - Planted the Mount Carmel Seventh-day Adventist Company
 - 2007 to present Pastor of the Erwin Hills/Burnsville District.

Educational Experience:

- Southern Adventist University, Graduated BS in Theology, 1993.
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