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Increasing Effectiveness and Efficiency through a Collaborative evangelism Strategy within the Georgia-Cumberland Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

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ABSTRACT

INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY THROUGH
A COLLABORATIVE EVANGELISM STRATEGY WITHIN THE
GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTISTS

by

Victor Maddox

Adviser: David Penno

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Professional Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY THROUGH A
COLLABORATIVE EVANGELISM STRATEGY WITHIN THE GEORGIA-
CUMBERLAND CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

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Problem

There were a number of organizations, ministries, and individuals throughout the
Georgia-Cumberland Conference (GCC) territory engaged in various forms of
evangelism which include health education, literature distribution, media presentations,
community service, Bible instruction, etc. All had some level of success. Personal
observations of these efforts revealed a redundancy in programing, uncoordinated
planning, insufficient record-keeping, inadequate follow-up on interests generated, and
failure to build upon the results of previous evangelistic meetings within the GCC.

Method

The goal was to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the evangelism process in the GCC through the coordination of evangelistic meetings between organizations, ministries, and individuals whose emphasis is on sharing the gospel message. These meetings focused on ways to work collaboratively to develop, implement, and evaluate a conference-wide process for evangelism that incorporated the evangelistic specialties of each participant. Three phases of the evangelistic process were identified: "pre-work" for training and preparation, "the event" where the proclamation or execution of the evangelism effort took place, and "post-work" consisting of intentional follow-up practices.

Results

There was an overall improvement of the evangelism process within the GCC through a determination to continue working collaboratively. Communication and coordination of plans between churches, organizations, ministries, and others are becoming a standard practice. Collaboration has resulted in better planned meetings, intentionality in building upon the results of past efforts, and better handing off work from one practitioner to the next, better follow-up of interests, and continued support of the collaborative process. An increase of collaborative evangelistic efforts in the GCC has been planned throughout the conference by various organizations and congregations.

Conclusion

Through the process of evangelistic collaboration, the silos of separation between entities have been relaxed, and the sense of territorialism has decreased. The

accomplishment of the work of the gospel through collaboration has increased the

effectiveness of evangelism in the GCC.

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Presented in Partial Fulfillment

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Description of the Ministry Context

The Georgia-Cumberland Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GCC) was established in March of 1932 through the merger of the Georgia and Cumberland Conferences. It covers the geographical territory of Georgia, East Tennessee, and Cherokee County, North Carolina. It includes more than 229 Adventist churches, companies, and mission groups, along with 35 elementary schools, two junior academies, three academies, and one Adventist University. There are two Adventist hospitals and nine Adventist Community Services Centers. More than 40,000 Adventist members representing over 30 cultures make up the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. The Conference employs approximately 778 full-time and part-time individuals serving in roles such as administrators, pastors, chaplains, Bible workers, community service leaders, teachers, and support staff.

The Vision Statement of the GCC is: "A passionate commitment to intimacy with God and a firm belief in Christ's imminent return compels each of us to share the everlasting gospel by every possible means." Each year approximately 1,200 people are baptized or join the GCC through profession of faith. As the Vice President of Ministerial and Evangelism it is one of my responsibilities to provide guidance to the overall evangelism and church growth process of the GCC.

Statement of the Problem

There are several organizations, ministries, and individuals engaged in sharing the gospel message through various means and services throughout the territorial boundaries of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. Outreach through these entities have taken the form of health education, literature sales and distribution, media presentations, person-to-person Bible study, community compassion and awareness building events, direct mailings, online correspondences, and other means. Though these methodologies obtain various levels of success, the lack of an intentional cohesiveness and coordination reduces their overall potential. Churches, organizations, and other practitioners of evangelism have done little to jointly plan their work together. As a result, over the previous four years, there has been an observable redundancy of unplanned repetitive and overlapping evangelistic efforts in a number of districts. The absence of an intentional record-keeping system has resulted in lost opportunities to build upon previous evangelistic work in certain areas. There has been inconsistency in plans to follow-up with people who show interest in the gospel message, or desire further information.

Statement of Task

The task of this project was to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the evangelism process in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. This was accomplished by coordinating a series of meetings between representatives from organizations, ministries, and individuals whose emphasis is upon sharing the gospel message. These invitees operated within the geographical boundaries of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. The intent of these meetings was to discuss ways to work collaboratively in an effort to develop, implement, and evaluate a conference-wide process for evangelism

that would incorporate the evangelistic specialties of each participant. This evangelism process was launched as a collaborative conference-wide evangelistic event scheduled in January, 2017 and ended in December, 2018. The results were evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the evangelistic process and the inclusivity of all interested participants. The process will be calibrated and implemented on a bi or tri-yearly basis within the Georgia-Cumberland Conference.

Description of the Project Process

The process for this project focused upon five components which together collectively addresses the task of this project. These components included a theological foundation, a review of recent literature, the development of an intervention strategy, a report on its implementation, and finally an evaluation of the complete project process.

Theological Reflection

The theological reflection for this project focuses upon the story of the man found casting out demons in the name of Jesus, in Mark 9:38-40 and Luke 9:49-50. My desire was to understand the dynamics and possible theological and methodological elements present in the teachings of Jesus, which may support the existence of a variety of distinct ministries operating simultaneously in a region, and provide insight on how these ministries might find commonality in their efforts. This reflection focused upon the following areas:

First, the parable of the unidentified worker presents the potential for the existence of a multiplicity of ministries. This idea is reinforced if the act of "casting out demons," in Mark 9:38a and Luke 9:49a, is viewed as an example of ministries that

might be executed outside the direct control or influence of the twelve disciples or any specific ecclesiastical governing body.

Second, attention was given to the disciples' unwillingness to be inclusive and their refusal to recognize the ministry potential of this unnamed man or others who might operate outside the disciples' circle. This position of non-conformity (non-association) is seen as the reason given by the disciples to justify their attempt to prevent this unnamed man from continuing his solo ministry. Special attention was given to the meaning of the words ἀκολουθέω (to follow) and κωλύω (to hinder) as used in both Mark 9:39b and Luke 9:49b, and how they may reflect present-world mindsets of exclusion and control.

The third point focuses upon the possibility of discovering relevancy in other ministries, by seeking to recognize the potential points of common interest. These points of interest can serve to promote the formation of a unity of purpose in ministry, as implied by Jesus in His response to the actions of John in Mark 9:39 and Luke 9:50. And finally, this theological reflection lays out a proposal for a collaboration of diverse ministries, through a unified purpose, as extrapolated from the accounts of Mark 9:38-40 and Luke 9:49-50.

Review of Literature

The Review of Literature begins with the formation of a working definition of what it means to collaborate in the context of evangelism. This is accomplished by discussing what collaborative ministry has to offer to a group or team, and the kinds of activities that are associated with collaboration. Collaborative teams are then briefly compared with teams that function under the guidance of an authoritative hierarchal leader. This project has not focused upon the different dynamics that may exist in a team

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versus a group, as extrapolated in the writings of Hornstrup, Loehr-Petersen, Madsen, Johansen, and Jensen (2013, chapter 6). For the purpose of this project, the terms "group" and "team" are used interchangeably to refer to a gathering of people for the purpose of collaborating on evangelistic methodologies.

The findings of this review of literature have been summarized into four areas that are believed to be necessary for any collaborative evangelistic endeavor. First, the project is to be gospel-driven. That is, the content of the collaborative process should embody the gospel message in every way. Various ways the gospel can inform the vision, mission, purpose, and the implementation process, is given consideration. Second, discussion is given on the interdependent nature of collaboration and how this is to inform the working relations between the distinctive evangelistic disciplines. Embedded in this second aspect is the brief mention of a third aspect which discusses the idea of a shared decision-making process and how this process is to include every participant involved in the collaborative process. And fourth, consideration is given to what the end-results of any collaborative endeavor should be.

Of the many important factors that could have contributed to the success of this collaborative evangelism process, four have been shared. Again, these factors were found to be pertinent and foundational to the success of this particular project. First, discussion is given to the importance of having a correct view of mission and how mission is a foundational factor behind any collaborative endeavor. Second, discussion is given on the foundational nature and place the gospel message should have in any evangelistic endeavor. Consideration is also given to ways the message can be presented in today's world. Third, attention is given to the importance of relationships with the community, as

well as relationships between community members and the impact these relationships can have on the collaborative process. Finally, emphasis is given to the importance of exercising authenticity in the evangelistic process, through acts of social mercy, and in how a congregation might present itself to the community.

Development of the Intervention Process

The development and implementation of this project started with a number of group discussion and planning sessions, involving a number of people and organizations whose work relates to evangelism. The content and outcome of these meeting are shared in detail. From these meetings came the acronym, AWKWARD, "Advancing with Kingdom Workers as We Reach New Disciples." This aptly captures the collaborative intent of these meetings and this project.

The criteria for participation in these meetings are shared along with the results of several group surveys on the challenges of evangelism. Development of a collaborative evangelism process, the need to include participating members from various fields of evangelism, and the desire for it to be flexible in order to acknowledge the many cultural and contextual differences within the conference were given consideration.

After much discussion on the many facets that a collaborative evangelism process might involve, the participants were in agreement on a proposed simple three-stage evangelism process that consists of "Pre-Work," "Event," "and Post-Work" stages. Each stage is presented in detail and includes additional information necessary to prepare congregations and other evangelism participants for the proper implementation of each stage. A calendar for each stage is also provided.

Implementation of the Intervention Process

The intervention process was implemented by synthesizing a number of activities around the three starting dates for each of the three phases of the collaborative evangelism project. The pre-work stage began January 1, 2017 and prepared congregations to become involved in a number of initiatives that would strengthen community and church relations, address social challenges, establish networks with other religious bodies and community organizations serving the community, and prepare for the event stage.

The event stage started conference-wide on February 10, 2018. This stage involved various methods of advertising a common theme using five thematic formats. Details are shared concerning the preparation and start of evangelistic meetings, available presentation materials, and conference statistics on the start of many of the local meetings.

The post-work stage starting date was dependent upon the ending date for the individual congregation's event stage. Once started, the post-work stage continued until the congregations concluded their work with the interests generated during the entire evangelism process. The post-work stage also involved a number of initiatives and ideas to aid in the follow-up of interested people and the assimilation of new members.

Evaluation of the Results of the Intervention Process

A review of the learning points covers the need for a range of improvements in several areas of this project. Ways to increase the number of participants during the planning and implementation of this evangelism project which would expand the scope of

collaboration are given consideration. Ideas for improving communications to the various participants and better methods to share updates between participants are also discussed.

Since this project could be replicated in various demographical settings, a number of recommendations are offered that would improve the chances of success in other settings. Recommendations for improving the pre-work, event, and post-work stages of this project are discussed. An evaluation of the effectiveness of this project and its contribution to the evangelism process of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference of Seventh-day Adventist is also presented.

Limitations and Delimitations

This project was limited to working with organizations, ministries, and individuals whose emphasis is on sharing the gospel message in various formats such as health-related initiatives, proclamation, Bible studies, etc. These participating entities had to be based within the geographical boundaries of the GCC.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

Introduction

The theological reflection for this project focuses upon the story of the man found casting out demons in the name of Jesus in Mark 9:38-40 with reference to the related account in Luke 9:49-50. The goal is to understand the theological implications present in this story and how they relate to the development of a practical theology for a collaborative evangelistic ministry model. This model was used to develop a collaborative evangelism strategy which has been initiated in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. Gaining an understanding of the context in which this pericope of Scripture takes place will set the stage for this theological reflection. All English biblical references are taken from the New American Standard Bible. Consideration is given to an argument raised by the disciples during a particular journey with Jesus and how this argument reveals their true feelings about outsiders. An understanding of authority and the exercise of such by the disciples will be discussed, as well as Jesus' view on authority and how this view informs the collaborative process.

An Argument Concerning Greatness

In Mark 9:33-37, Jesus and His disciples were on a journey to Capernaum. On the way, the disciples were disputing between themselves over who would be the greatest.

When Jesus inquired concerning the content of their discussion in verse 33, the disciples kept silent.

> They came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He began to question them, 'What were you discussing on the way?' 34. But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest. 35. Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, 'If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.' 36. Taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, 37. 'Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me.' (Mark 9:33–37)

It is evident from the text that for unspoken reasons the disciples were reluctant to share with Jesus the content of their discussion. Nevertheless, Jesus, by divine means or intuition, was aware of the content of their discussion, and therefore, opens a conversation on the meaning of greatness, by using a little child as an object lesson.

<div align="center">The Disciples' Concept of Greatness</div>

The disciples' roadside discussion concerning greatest may have been precipitated by their desire to establish some form of hierarchy between themselves. Culpepper (2007, p. 311) notes, "Rank and status were important in antiquity, and social order depended on establishing one's position and that of others." The prevalence of hierarchy in antiquity was seen in the community of the Essenes at Qumran, where there was concern about their individual rank within the community (Brooks, 1991, p. 150). Up to this point the discussion about greatness seemed to have focused only upon the twelve disciples. What they failed to take into consideration was the possibility that others outside their immediate circle could also be included within the ranks of greatness.

Expounding on the word "greatest," Lenski (1961) notes, "The Greek uses $\mu\varepsilon\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega\nu$, the comparative, which is quite exact. The implication is that all of the Twelve will be great, yet that some will be 'greater' than others" (p. 390). It would seem

appropriate to assume that in their estimation, considering their association with Jesus, the disciples saw themselves as already great. Their concern here was probably who among them would be considered the person in charge, or even, what would be the pecking order among them. To this point the disciples seemed to exclude the possibility that others outside their circle could be included among those who could be considered for greatness. Their concern was with how they measured in comparison to one another.

<div align="center">Jesus' Concept of Greatness</div>

In response, Jesus, in verse 35, provides His personal understanding of greatness and what it should entail for His followers. Unlike the prevailing models of today's world, where greatness can be associated with an outstanding accomplishment, a dominant personality, a noteworthy achievement, or special notoriety, Jesus' understanding of greatness is derived from a different source.

Response to the Disciples

For the disciples, the status of being first and greatest obviously entitled the bearer to certain benefits, authority, and/or privileges. Here, Jesus challenges this incumbent idea by first equating greatness with being "first." "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all" (Mark 9:35). Here, Jesus is associating the idea of "first" with actions that are contrary to its normal hierarchal understanding. Taking this thought further, Cole (1989, p. 224) adds, "Those who desire or grasp at spiritual position thereby will condemn themselves, as punishment, to the lowest place in the kingdom." This desire for position may result in such punishment; however, such desire for position is probably more a reflection of a mind and heart that is contrary to that displayed by Jesus himself as one who came to serve (Matt 20:28; Mark 1:45). For Jesus, this primary status

is achieved only by humbling one's self to render service to others (Arndt, Danker, Bauer, & Gingrich, 2000, p. 221). This upside-down concept of hierarchy was most likely foreign to the disciples and their contemporaries.

For illustrative purposes Jesus takes a little child in His arms and says, "Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me" (Mark 9:37). The Greek word $\delta \acute{\epsilon} \xi \eta \tau \alpha \iota$, translated here as "receives," has the idea of being receptive of someone, to receive and welcome, in this case a little child, who normally would be considered among the least in the Kingdom of God. Commenting on the status of children during the time of Jesus, Brooks (1991) notes:

> The meaning of the symbolic action cannot be grasped without recognition of the lowly place occupied by children in ancient society and a realization that the same Aramaic word means both child and servant. A child in the Bible is both a symbol of innocence and of helplessness and vulnerability. (p. 150)

Therefore, in order to be first, in Jesus' reckoning, one would need to consider oneself as a child or a servant, the lowest of persons during the first century. This was probably not what the disciples had anticipated in their quest to be the greatest. With this child illustration Jesus challenge the disciples' notion of greatness.

Greatness Contrary to the Norm

Brooks further proposes that, "Jesus' point was that in the kingdom ordinary human values are reversed. The paradox of the gospel is that the way of service—the way of Jesus Himself—is the way to true greatness" (p. 150). Being great in the Kingdom of God is associated with a life of dedicated service and interest in the wellbeing of others. It is a willingness to receive and welcome others in a way that is honoring to God. This is

the immediate backdrop for reflection on the resultant interactions between John the disciple and Jesus in Mark 9:38-40, informed by the related account in Luke 9:49-50.

The Disciples Act of Exclusion

As the discussion between Jesus and the disciples unfolds, John takes the lead by introducing the context which possibly gave rise to the disciples' interest in the topic of greatness. Mark 9:38 reads, "John said to Him, 'Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to prevent him because he was not following us.'" Why would John choose to interject the story of this unidentified man at this point in the discussion on greatness? Two of several possible reasons are proposed. The first reason is that, having heard and received Jesus' explanation on greatness, John was satisfied and was merely starting a new line of conversation. Or a second reason is that by his statement John was probing as to whether Jesus' notion of greatness would apply to others outside the group of twelve disciples. The latter will be explored.

Unauthorized Use of Jesus' Name

Concerning exorcism, there is historical evidence supporting its practice among the Jews and others long before the writing of the Gospels. These practices may have involved known magical incantations as well. In contrast to these practices, Eitram (1966) points out that in his miraculous exorcisms, "Jesus acted with an authority quite different from that of an ordinary magician or exorcist, making any technical gesture or use of names superfluous" (p. 30). Jesus exercised absolute authority which was emphasized elsewhere in Matthew 8:28–34. This text is structured to focus on the single word of command, "go," which effected the deliverance of the two men from their demon

possession. But here in Mark, we find this unknown man evoking the name of Jesus to perform his ministry of deliverance (Reese, 1992, p. 141).

The disciples' major concern with the activities of this man was his act of casting out demons by using the name of Jesus, "We saw someone casting out demons in your name" (v. 38). In other contexts, the use of the phrase "in my name" or the name of another person is a common Semitic expression that very often means "with my authority" or "in my place" (Kernaghan, 2007, p. 183). Hooker (1991) adds, "A name was believed to have power in itself, and the name of a known wonder-worker would clearly be thought to have power to effect cures" (p. 229). To the disciples, it may have seemed that this impostor had not received the proper permission from Jesus, or recognition from them to perform such ministry by use of the name of Jesus. Meyer (1883, p. 148) explains,

> The exorcist in our passage was not an impostor, but a believer; yet not one belonging to the constant followers of Jesus…. What he had done appeared to the disciples as a privilege still reserved for the narrower circle, and as a usurpation outside of it.

Lange, Schaff, and Shedd (2008, p. 89) support the idea of this man being a valid believer. "Had he been a deceiver, he would not have been able to cast out demons by the name of Jesus; for the name of Jesus wrought no magical effects." Concerning this man's authenticity, Lange et al. (2008, p. 89) further delineate, "The passage therefore means, that there was in him a measure of trust in the name of Jesus, a germ of true faith." Therefore, the disciples chose to deal with this unofficial act of ministry by prohibiting its exercise.

It is interesting to note that earlier in this chapter, the disciples, following a father's request, were unsuccessful in their attempt to liberate his son from a state of demon possession (Mark 9:14-29). It can be assumed that the disciples attempted to carry

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out this act of exorcism by the use of the name of Jesus but failed in their efforts. But here in this discussion, this unnamed man seemed to have been experiencing some level of success in demon exorcism through the use of Christ's name. Understandably, this man's success in exorcism obviously extended to him the power and authority accorded to perform such actions. The disciples may have felt slighted by their apparent failure, and therefore felt justified in prohibiting this person from performing such acts without having received what they perceived to be proper authority.

<div align="center">Prevention of an Unauthorized Ministry</div>

The phrase ἐκωλύομεν αὐτόν, "we tried to prevent him" (v. 38b), utilizes the word κωλύω which can be translated, "to keep something from happening, hinder, prevent, forbid" (Arndt et al., 2000, p. 580). The most pivotal reason presented for attempting "to prevent" this man from practicing exorcism in the name of Jesus was, "He was not following us" (v. 38b). English (1992, p. 170) points out that the disciples must have felt justified in limiting this man because of their proprietary attitude towards Jesus.

> Hadn't he called them, and no-one else, to be permanently with him? Wasn't he now, quite deliberately, giving most of his time to teaching them? That they were twelve in number, as there were twelve tribes of Israel, gave a completeness to their establishment which neither needed nor allowed anyone else. For once they felt confident about having done something right in forbidding outsiders who cast out demons in the name of Jesus.

The Greek phrase ὅτι οὐκ ἠκολούθει ἡμῖν, translated here as "not following us," utilizes the word ἀκολουθέω which can be translated "to move behind someone in the same direction, come after, to follow or accompany someone who takes the lead, accompany, go along with, to follow someone as a disciple" (Arndt et al., 2000, p. 36). Brooks (1991) notes, "The objection of John, who evidently was speaking on behalf of all the disciples, was only that the man was not part of their little group and had not been authorized by

Jesus to use his name" (p. 151). We must not forget that John's words to Jesus concerning this man in verse 38 were "he was not following us," and not, "he was not following you, Jesus" (Lange et al., 2008, p. 89). Therefore, the disciples probably felt justified in their attempt to exercise this act of exclusion to prevent this man from executing a necessary ministry by means of using the name of Jesus, mainly because he was not a member of, nor recognized by, their established group or ministry.

Jesus' Emphasis on Collaboration

Jesus addresses John's inquiry by using several short parables to demonstrate how others outside the circle of the disciples can, through their acts of ministry towards others, be associated with the work of the God. Perhaps the most illustrative is found in Jesus' response given in Mark 9:39-30.

In answer to John, Jesus said, "Do not hinder him, for there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me. For he who is not against us is for us" (Mark 9:39-40). In His instructions to the disciples concerning this man, Jesus uses the word $\kappa\omega\lambda\acute{\upsilon}\omega$ which can be translated, "to cause something not to happen—'to prevent, to hinder'" (Louw & Nida, 1996, p.164). Jesus instructed his disciples by insisting that they do not hinder or prevent this man from continuing his activities. This is the same word used by the Apostle John, in verse 38, to describe the efforts of the disciples "to prevent" this man from executing his ministry. Jesus speaks contrary to the actions of the disciples and provides insightful wisdom to support the bases for His instruction. No one can do good in the name of Jesus and later intentionally bring disparagement upon that name.

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Unlike the seven sons of Sceva in Acts 19:13-17 who failed in their attempt to exorcise a demon through their invocation of the name of Jesus, he was successful. This seems to suggest that he had an understanding of Jesus' mission and exercised an intent to partner in this mission. Although history does not make mention of this unnamed exorcist outside of Mark 9 and Luke 9, based on the success of his ministry, he seemed to have had, at one time, some form of contact with Jesus which provided him the means to understand the power associated with the use of Jesus' name and the understanding of His mission. He may have been among the seventy sent out by Jesus, in the Gospel of Luke, who later returned with joy and saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name" (Luke 10:17). Maybe he had simply witnessed the life and teachings of Jesus and had become a believer.

Whatever his level of association, his belief in the name of Jesus allowed him to experience some level of success in his ministry. This relationship would also undoubtedly have made it difficult for such a person to, on one hand, perform miracles in the name of Jesus, and on the other hand, find reason to undermine his relationship with Him to the point of developing a negative stance towards His work and mission. As France (2002) points out, "There is no suggestion that the man is personally known to Jesus; rather, he has associated himself with him by using his name, and his choice of that authority, together with the fact of his success, marks him as being on the right side. Such a person cannot in consistency go on to speak as his enemy, and so there is no justification for Jesus' disciples to oppose him" (p. 377).

Theological Implications for
Collaborative Evangelism

As previously mentioned, this theological reflection presupposes the idea that John's introduction of the story of the unnamed exorcist, following the discourse of Jesus on greatness, appears to have been motivated by his need to know whether other believers outside the circle of the twelve disciples could be considered among the candidates for greatness. John's story raises four theological implications that could serve as support for the development of a collaborative view for engaging various ministries in the work of sharing the gospel in a conference-wide evangelistic endeavor.

Multiplicity of Ministries

The story of the unidentified worker supports the probability of a diversity of ministries in existence during the first century. This can be perceived when the act of "casting out demons," (Mark 9:38a and Luke 9:49a), is viewed as an example of the many other possible ministries of service in operation at the time. Dowd (2000, p. 97) seems to agree with this inclusive stance of a variety of ministries:

> The use of "the name" makes it clear that the issue is not the ultimate status of "anonymous Christians" (non-Christians who perform acts of compassion); rather, the issue is the necessity of openness toward the ministry of Christian groups other than one's own.

Jesus' use of the indefinite article "a" in reference to "one who will perform a miracle in My name" (v. 39b) could allow for the substitution or inclusion of other miracles or acts of ministry that are likewise performed by the authority of the same name. In support of this view, Edwards (2002, p. 290), comments on Jesus' response given in Mark 9:39, "The present tense of the Greek imperative κωλύετε ('Do not stop him') implies that

Jesus' counsel is not limited to this particular instance but is valid for all such instances, that is, 'Do not stop such people.'"

The reason given for such inclusion is that "No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me." Therefore, it is plausible that Jesus' idea of service or ministry would include an extensive list of benevolent acts executed in His name which seek to render service to others and promote the expansion of the Kingdom of God. For the purpose of this project, I have presented from Scripture a number of ministries in operation during the time of the early church. These acts of ministry could have taken on many forms. The ministries that are listed below were performed by people who the Scriptures make no mention of having any direct contact with Jesus, but were nevertheless associated with His cause. This is by no means intended to be an exhaustive list of ministries.

The Ministry of Dorcas

Acts 9:36-42 introduces the story of Dorcas who was known for her acts of service. Although Scripture never mentions any physical encounter between her and Jesus during His earthly ministry, some sort of encounter can be assumed by the fact that Dorcas was called "a disciple" of Christ who "was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did" (Acts 9:36). The Greek μαθήτρια is a rare term. It can be translated "female disciple" or simply "Christian" (Kittel, Bromiley, & Friedrich, p. 461). There is Scriptural evidence of other women who were considered disciples of Christ, those who followed Him and sought to live according to the principles He taught (see Luke 8:1-3; Mark 15:4). Although this discussion concerns women disciples of Christ, it is evident from Scripture that Jesus did not give patronage to cultural or gender

preference. In the following statement, Weder (1992) seems to dismiss deference to any cultural or gender biases: "It is evident that Jesus called people into fellowship regardless of social, religious, and ethnic background or gender" (p. 208).

As a female believer, Dorcas was evidently involved in ministering to the widows of her community. These widows later shared with Peter some of the articles of clothing Dorcas had made for them before she became sick and later died. Other disciples of the city of Lydda sent for Peter as he was visiting the neighboring city of Joppa. Upon his arrival, Peter prayed over the body of Dorcas. This prayer resulted in the miraculous resurrection of Dorcas. Once restored to life, it can be assumed that Dorcas continued in her acts of ministry to others in the name of Jesus.

The Ministry of Aquila and Priscilla

Acts 18:1-4, 18, 26, mentions Aquila and Priscilla as companions of the Apostle Paul. Aquila and Priscilla spent some time traveling with Paul as missionaries. Paul called them, "my fellow workers in Christ Jesus" (Rom 16:3). They also served as advisors and support for other strong proponent-missionaries of the gospel such as Apollos. In his closing remarks to the leaders of the Corinthian Church, Paul included greetings from Aquila and Priscilla and made mention of "the church that is in their house" (1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16:3-5). The existence of this church in the home of Aquila and Priscilla suggests a notable level of committed support and ministry in the early Christian work.

The six times Aquila and Priscilla are mentioned in Scripture would logically indicate the importance of their ministry to the early church. History has no records of their having ever had direct contact or association with Jesus Christ during His earthly

sojourn. However, the record of their ministry makes it evident that they were acquainted with the ways of Jesus and had dedicated themselves as faithful disciples giving their lives in service to His cause for the salvation of others.

The Ministry of Apollos

Apollos was a contemporary of the Apostle Paul and was also of Jewish decent. Concerning his giftedness, the Scriptures describe him as "an eloquent man… mighty in the Scriptures" (Acts 18:24). He was found to be fervent in spirit and an ardent dispatcher of the truth, which he had received from the teachings of John the Baptist. It was later discovered that his understanding of the gospel message was not complete. Therefore, it became necessary for him to be given a fuller knowledge of "the way of God" through the mentorship of Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:26). With this fuller understanding of the gospel and through the use of his oratorical giftedness, Apollos ministered as a masterful apologist who "greatly helped those who had believed through grace, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ" (Acts 18:27–28).

The Scriptures never include Apollos on any lists as a member of the original twelve disciples of Christ. Neither is there any record of his having a personal encounter with Jesus. Whatever his initial exposer to the gospel message was, Apollos' ministry as a capable orator and defender of the Gospel was highly respected and treasured by the Apostle Paul, the early church leaders, and the Christian community (1 Cor 3:4-16, 16:12; Tit 3:13).

Based upon the evidence presented, it is plausible that there were many ministries in operation during, and following, the time of the first century Church. The lists of the

gifts of the Spirit, in Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, and 1 Peter 4:11, support the

existence of a multiplicity of ministries following the times of Christ. The particular

ministry of casting out demons serves as an example of the many ministries in existence

during and following the times of Christ. Therefore, based upon this study thus far, the

first theological implication for this project gives recognition to the possibility of

involving a number of diverse ministries in a collaborative evangelistic endeavor.

Inclusion of Ministries

Two related areas of exclusion seem to surface in the disciples' efforts to prevent

this man from performing his ministry. "John said to Him, 'Teacher, we saw someone

casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to prevent him because he was not

following us'" (Mark 9:38). The first reflects the collective desire of the disciples to

establish some sense of control over who should be permitted to use the name of Jesus in

their execution of ministry. This prohibition would naturally lead to the second area of

exclusion, embodied in the words of John regarding the unstated limitations that would

come into play under the emerging idea of a structural authority. It will be discovered that

in His response, Jesus seems to prefer a ministry of inclusion.

**The Disciples' Exclusive Use
of the Name of Jesus**

The disciples' objection to this unnamed person was not necessarily founded upon

what he was doing; that is, his ministry, but had more to do with the execution of his

ministry without first receiving permission. The way to obtain this permission is not

stated, but from the fact that they were the ones holding this man's ministry in question, it

can be assumed that John may have viewed the disciples as the source of permission.

Rather than noting the level of success he appeared to be experiencing in his ministry of "casting out demons" (present, active, participle), the disciples chose to focus on the fact that this exorcist was an unauthorized user of the name of Jesus.

It seems evident that the disciple did not have any prior knowledge of this person and had not recognized him from among the many people who, at various times, gathered to hear the teachings of Jesus. This lack of association seems to have led to an act of exclusion and failure to recognize the ministry potential of this man. As in our present-day setting, such a sense of exclusivity could be inadvertently exercised towards any person or group that may attempt to perform ministry in the name of Jesus without first obtaining permission from those who deem themselves in a position of influence over the work of the church. A present-day example of an act of exclusion may occur when an evangelist, not recognized by the conference, is invited by a local congregation to present a series of evangelistic meetings in an area. Although the conference maintains the right to prevent unfamiliar people or organizations from conducting evangelistic meetings within its territory, an appropriate effort might be to vet such people in order to understand whether they are acting with good intentions or not.

Jesus' Response of Inclusivity
in the Use of His Name

It seems evident that in His response to John, Jesus was giving recognition to the existence of what might be viewed as an inherent association between a person or group of people seeking to carry out ministry in His name and with Christ Himself. The unstated implication here is that no one can successfully carry out ministry through the power invoked by the use of the name of Jesus without first having experienced some level of association with Him. Furthermore, the probability of one successfully

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performing such a ministry attributed to the power of Christ, and then follow such display

with an action that undermines the integrity of the ministry of Jesus is somewhat

inconceivable. One should rightly expect that a ministry done successfully in the name of

Jesus would therefore include a sense of loyalty and relationship to the bearer of that

name.

Therefore, in His response to John, "For he who is not against us is for us" (Mark

9:40), it seems Jesus was presenting an idea that stood contrary to that which John was

promoting. John was concerned with keeping a distinction, maintaining separateness, and

enforcing a sense of exclusion. On the other hand, Jesus focused on points of

commonality such as the redemption of life, the setting free of souls, and completing the

work of the gospel. In the place of exclusivity, Jesus sought inclusivity of those

attempting to minister to a hurting world through the use of and in association with His

name.

**The Disciples' Hierarchal
Structure of Exclusivity**

A primary motivation for the disciples' desire to deter this man in his solo

ministry seemed to have been based on their observation that he "was not following us"

(Mark 9:38). The use of the word ἀκολουθέω which means "to move behind someone in

the same direction or to come after" (Arndt et al., 2000, p. 36) is used in both Mark 9:38

and Luke 9:49. This word was discussed in detail above and seems to aptly reflect the

disciples' mindset of exclusion based upon a sense of hierarchy, "because he was not

following us" (Mark 9:38). Luke 9:1-6 speaks of Jesus sending out the twelve disciples.

This man was not recognized as among those chosen by Jesus and sent out by Him to

perform acts of ministry in His name. Luke 10:1-11 refers to "seventy others" Jesus sent

out in pairs ahead of Himself to all the cities He was planning to visit. Although there is no biblical support for this assumption, it is possible that this unnamed man could have been among these seventy. However, it should be noted that the casting out of demons was not one of the charges given by Jesus to this group of seventy, but given to the twelve (Luke 9:1).

Embodied in this attempt to forbid because of an overt absence of association, the disciples' actions inadvertently hint at a sense of structured authority. In function this hierarchy would prohibit spontaneity and freedom in the execution of certain ministries without first receiving recognition and/or permission from some controlling body, most likely the disciples themselves. In the overall context of John's discussion with Jesus, this hierarchal subtleness would also exclude this man or any other outsider from taking part in the conversation concerning who would be greatest. This idea of exclusion or failure to recognize the ministry of others operating outside the inner circle of the disciples, would deem to be a point of correction by Jesus, in his efforts to illustrate greatness and inclusiveness.

Jesus' Response of Hierarchal Inclusivity

In the statement, "For he who is not against us is for us" (Mark 9:40), Jesus appears to dismiss any nuance of hierarchal limitation by using what Cole (2010) calls "the great 'minimal' test" (p. 226). In this case, the minimal test would determine whether a person is for or against Christ. Spence-Jones (1909) references Matthew 12:30 where we find Jesus using an inverted form of this expression, "He who is not with Me is against Me." He states, "The lesson which both these apothegms teach is the same, that there is no such thing as neutrality in reference to Christ and his cause. We must be either

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with him or against him" (p. 8). This would seem to place all people on the same basic level regarding inclusivity in the cause of Christ.

In the case of this man, Jesus seems to express this sense of inclusiveness. Edwards (2002) writes, "This saying shows the Master to be more inclusive than his disciples. The making known of his name is more important than their distinctions" (p. 290). Kernaghan (2007) summarizes this point well.

> While the disciples wished to exclude people who were not part of their group, Jesus declared, 'Whoever is not against us is for us.… Anyone who gives you a cup of cold water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.' This is the broadest, most inclusive language possible, and it makes membership in the group of his followers open to anyone. (p. 184)

Therefore, a theology of inclusivity would propose that regardless of the Seventh-day Adventist organization or group one is aligned with, or the form of ministry one practices, inclusivity could be discussed and established between those who exercise the intentional purpose of supporting the cause of Christ.

Summary

The teachings of Jesus recorded in Mark 9 and Luke 9 seem to imply an inherent recognition of an inclusiveness of all ministries based upon two parameters. This inclusiveness involves ministries done in conjunction with, and through, the power of the name of Jesus. It can be assumed that inappropriate activity that is unrelated to the actions and ministries of Jesus, would not rightly be executed by the authority of His name and would therefore not be viewed as a ministry associated with Jesus. Instead, the second parameter would conclude that those ministries done in the name of Jesus would evidentially be identified as supportive of the mission of Christ and would therefore be included and welcomed as ministries supportive of His cause. Based upon these two

parameters, Jesus' response to the disciples seem to promote a theological implication for inclusiveness of various ministries.

Empowerment of Ministries

In what appears to be a statement of empowerment concerning the work of this man Jesus says, "Do not hinder him, for there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me" (Mark 9:39). The phrase, "do not hinder him," is an imperative statement Jesus uses to instruct the disciples to not interfere with or prohibit the ministry of this man. Such a prohibition against interference could in itself also be a means of affirming or allowing the actions of this man in his performance of miracles. This case of support could aptly be applied to other instances where ministry is carried out for the cause of Jesus. This sense of permission would most likely imply an empowerment on the part of Jesus to do ministry based upon two important factors. The first would involve permission to use His name to perform ministry. The second would be based upon the application of Jesus' statement regarding association, "For he who is not against us is for us" (Mark 9:40).

Empowerment Through the Use of His Name

It is possible that the effort of the disciples to prohibit this man from fulfilling his ministry was not based upon a desire to stop the actual ministry, but to prohibit the means by which the ministry was being executed—particularly the use of the name of Jesus. In their reckoning the disciples may have erroneously concluded that no person functioning outside their group had equal authority to use the name of Jesus. However, Jesus' command not to hinder this man was in essence a statement of empowerment which seems to also extend permission for ministry under the power of His name. Jesus'

statement can be taken as an acknowledgement which gave permission to continue using

His name to successfully minister to the needs of the crowd through deliverance ministry.

As previously proposed, certain principles arising from this discussion which has

centered on this one example of ministry, could equally apply in discussions involving

other forms of ministry. As also noted above, Edwards (2002) supports this view in his

comments on Jesus' charge to the disciples not to prohibit this man in his ministry. "The

present tense of the Greek imperative κωλύετε ('Do not stop him') implies that Jesus'

counsel is not limited to this particular instance but is valid for all such instances, that is,

'Do not stop such people'" (p. 290). Regardless of the specific ministry focus, whether it

be exorcism, compassion-driven actions, health related services, needs based approaches,

proclamation, or other, ministries carried out with the intention of furthering the cause of

Christ, done in His name, should not be hindered, but given the support and

empowerment necessary for their success. This sense of empowerment appears to have

been at the heart of Jesus' command to not hinder.

**Empowerment Through the
Association of Action**

Jesus makes a summary statement in Mark 9:40, "For he who is not against us is

for us." This statement of Jesus and its message of support through association has been

given much attention in a previous section of this chapter. Jesus' point here is one of

emphasizing the understanding that one who is truly involved in the work of the Christian

cause would not at the same time be inclined to be an opponent against the same cause. It

would appear that having first a sincere association with the cause is the principle upon

which heavenly empowerment of a ministry occurs. This line of reasoning would also

seem to support the opposite thought, that is, without an association with Jesus, the power of Christ would be absent.

It can be assumed that most people practicing a ministry which bases its success upon the empowerment received through the use of the name of Jesus should on the basis of that success naturally be associated with the cause of Christ. That practitioner would most likely not be working against or have intentions that would be in opposition to the work of Christ. It is easy to assume that such contrary intent would render the use of the name of Jesus powerless and without success. This could be the rule in most cases; however, there is mentioned in Scripture a case where people who prophesized, cast out demons, and did miracles in the name of Jesus were, in the end, unknown to him (Matt 7:22, 23). For whatever reasons, this group, though successful in their ministries, seemed to have lacked the necessary fruit of character (Matt 7:17-18) and failed to minister according to the will of the Father (Matt 7:21). In the case of this man, Jesus identifies him as not being against them, but ministering according to what is expected of any follower of Christ (Mark 9:40). It is this evidence of empowerment that would rightly identify this man or any ministry as being associated with Christ and supportive of His cause. The apparent success of this man could serve as an example of the possible success to be achieved by any ministry associated with the will of Christ and therefore executed through the empowerment of Christ.

Summary

A plausible conclusion is that no form of ministry can find success without first being associated with the cause of Christ. Such association would naturally require some form of empowerment on the part of Jesus, through the use of His name. In addition, this

association should also warrant some form of recognition from the body of Christ and receive support to function. Therefore, in Mark 9:40 and Luke 9:50 Jesus appears to reverse the disciples' notion of control over the use of His name and their sense of exclusion, and establishes Himself and His mission as the empowering, cohesive interest of any ministry done in support of His cause.

<div align="center">Collaboration of Diverse Ministries</div>

Both Mark and Luke record Jesus' statement concerning the ministry of this man and his potential collaboration with the disciples, "For he who is not against us is for us" or "For he who is not against you is for you" (Mark 9:40; Luke 9:50). The fourth theological implication focuses upon the plausibility of establishing missional relationships with other ministries by focusing on points of common interest. Through this shared missional interest, a collaboration between different ministries can be discussed and established.

A Point of Common Interest

In Mark 9:40 and Luke 9:50 there appears to be a subtle point of common interest implied by Jesus in His response to the actions of the disciples towards the unnamed man. "For he who is not against us is for us," and "For he who is not against you is for you?" It should be understood that this ministry of exorcism does not serve as the point of common interest. There are many humanitarian efforts which are considered acts of kindness which bring relief to the suffering of the downtrodden, and call attention to the plight of the underprivileged. The performance of all such efforts are not the points upon which to establish a common interest. However, in the context of Mark 9 and Luke 9, there is a distinguishing factor between benevolent acts of kindness which any non-

Christian organization can perform and that which is done out of the sense of a call to share in the cause of Christ. So, what would be the point of common interest in a ministry executed by a follower of Christ? Would it not embody the mission of Christ in his quest to redeem the world from its state of alienation from God? Therefore, the point of common interest for Christian ministry would be found in its intent to carry out its work or ministry for the cause and mission of Jesus Christ.

In his work of exorcism, this man had been engaged in a ministry which at its core replicated the same mission of the gospel work carried forth by Jesus and His disciples. By casting out demons, the exorcist was uniting in the mission to expand the influential boundaries of the Kingdom of God by releasing people for the bonds of the enemy. This was and should still today be the common point of interest for any Christ-centered ministry. This point of common interest would serve as the platform for the discussion on the plausibility of uniting in a collaboration of ministries.

The Possibility of a Collaboration of Ministries

The theological implication upon which collaboration can be established between multiple ministries can be found in their common interest to share the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The style or format which ministry might take should not pose a problem in their efforts to collaborate. Whether the ministry is health related, involve individual Bible study, specialize in proclamation events, engage in community compassion events, offer children programs, or provide community services, the focus or specialty should not be a cause for divisive concern. Collaboration between various ministries can be established on the common desire to fulfill some aspect of the mission of God.

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The manner in which missional intent is expressed through a purpose or mission statement will be shaped in a variety of ways depending upon the focus of the ministry. For example, health-related ministry will express its mission through health reform and improved health practices. Compassion-focused ministries find expression through acts of mercy and community reform. Bible worker ministries revolve around building relationships and studying God's word. However, these distinct missions do not diminish God's overarching mission for all believers to share the good news of the gospel. Fulfillment of the mission of God is the common ground upon which to establish collaborative relations.

Summary

Jesus saw in the actions of the exorcist a desire to spread the influence of the Kingdom of God. Recognition of this intent was the bases of Jesus' statement of association based upon a common mission. Such unity in mission can be found in any form of ministry done for the purpose of Spreading the gospel of Christ. It is upon this common point that discussions concerning collaborative evangelism can be established. These discussions would naturally entertain the possible outcomes and benefits resulting from working together. They would involve planning that would intentionally incorporate the outreach specialties of all persons and entities involved in the collaborative discussion.

Chapter Summary

This theological reflection has been based upon the story of the man found casting out demons in the name of Jesus in Mark 9:38-40 and Luke 9:49-50. Our effort has been to understand the dynamics and possible theological and methodological elements present

in the teachings of Jesus which may provide support for the formation of a collaborative

evangelistic ministry model for the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. The four

theological implications identified in this pericope of Scripture involve the need to first

recognize the possible existence of a multiplicity of ministries within the geographical

boundaries of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. Rather than exclude ministries for

whatever reasons, the second implication seeks to include all viable ministries in a

collaborative discussion. Rather than attempting to control or diminish the ministry

potential of others, the third implication desires to extend empowerment to individual

ministries to promote their success. And finally, the fourth implication proposes that

diverse ministries should be open to having discussion on ways to work with other

ministries in an effort to discover ways to collaboratively achieve the work of God.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Evangelism today is being implemented by various means around the world.
Barna and the Cornerstone Knowledge Network (2016), commenting on evangelism
research conducted with church plants and multisite congregations, states, "The thing to
know is that churches are growing, and there are many who desire to make Christ known
in every corner of the world" (p. 71). Many congregations are struggling to understand
what evangelistic methods might be the most effective in their changing communities.
The purpose of this chapter is to review academic literature in an effort to discover and/or
develop a collaborative approach to presenting the gospel message, and to inform the
intervention designed to address the problem addressed in this dissertation.

Towns, Stetzer, and Bird (2007) surveyed a number of unique methods of church
growth developed in recent years. In their consultation with churches resistant to change,
Towns and his team concluded, "The message to us all is this: When culture changes,
adjust your methods or you will lose your effectiveness… but never change your message
or your principles" (p. 16). The willingness to utilize various tried and true, as well as
innovative methods for sharing the gospel, including a collaborative method, may have
come of age as the present generation of believers endeavors to share the gospel in this
post-modern world. Alongside the need for consistent innovation is the importance of

presenting the gospel message with clarity and in its truest sense. This should be the aim of every evangelistic method and generation of Christian believers.

The first part of this chapter presents a working understanding of evangelism and how it relates to collaboration. The second half of this chapter covers several foundational aspects which should be considered in any collaborative relationship. These ideas are in no way intended to present a broad survey on the subject; however, when given consideration and implemented, they could in many cases improve the results of the evangelistic endeavor in a community.

Collaborative Evangelism

Stetzer (2020) distinguishes evangelism from the Christian mission Christ gave to the church in Mathew 28:19-20. This mission involves the demonstration of gospel power and love through the proclamation of the gospel message, and "also such things as learning the culture and language of an area, caring for physical and emotional needs, and being salt in an area even as we shine the light of the gospel message" (para. 2). However, Stetzer (2020) sees evangelism as "a vital part of the mission" (para. 3), which "at its simplest is the telling of the gospel," and includes "a desired response and typically some sort of invitation to that response" (para. 8).

In this project, evangelism refers to what Stetzer has delineated, but more in the fashion of how it is presented in point two of the mission statement of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference of Seventh-day Adventist. Evangelism or kingdom growth involves the sharing of "the everlasting gospel through personal and public evangelism, church planting, small group fellowship, community involvement, and healing the broken by applying media, technology, and talent to reach all in our territory"

(https://www.gccsda.com). Based upon this understanding, evangelism allows for the collaboration of congregations, organizations, departments of the Conference, and professionals in the fulfillment of the mission to share the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

When it comes to collaboration, Surowiecki (2005) presents the idea that there can be more profitable decision making and problem solving, more creativity and idea generation when people come together from diverse backgrounds, think independently within a group, and experience a decentralization of power (p. 20). This is what Surowiecki (2005) calls the "wisdom of crowds" (Intro, sect II, para. 1). Within this collective wisdom, Briggs (2020, p. 22) states, "We inherently know more wisdom and health can be gleaned from others than we can muster ourselves."

Speaking from the church context, Brantley, Jackson, and Cauley (2015) state, "The most impactful forms of evangelism engage many departments in ministry to the community" (p. 46). That is, church departments in ministry such as elders, deacons, and deaconess boards; adult, young adult, youth and children's ministries; outreach and community-focused ministries; food pantry and compassion-related ministries, etc., all working collaboratively to reach the community. In an effort to fulfill the mission of a congregation and to achieve this with excellence, that is, putting forth the best possible effort, Brantley et al. (2015) state, "With a collaborative group of unified, passionate believers, nothing is impossible" (p. 160). Collaborative evangelism is built upon the idea that evangelism can be more effective when people from diverse evangelistic backgrounds come together and are encouraged to think interdependently upon a common mission in which they all share equal input and influence in the decision-making process. Nash, Pimlott, and Nash (2008) state that collaborative ministry (evangelism)

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can offer to any size group of church-based participants, "A more holistic, integrated, inclusive way of building the kingdom of God" (p. 1). According to Nash et al. (2008), collaborative ministry brings "an energy and synergy to what we do and enables us to achieve something we could never have done alone" (p. 1). The authors describe two main types of activity in collaboration. The first activity is a way of working together within an organization or agency. The second is working with and alongside other organizations and agencies (p. 2). Likewise, collaborative evangelism includes both activities where church leaders and members of different Seventh-day Adventist evangelism-focused organizations can work together and alongside one another in outreach endeavors. Such collaboration may, at times, include partnerships with non-denominational municipal, healthcare, business, and other agencies.

Hartwig and Bird (2015) present expert commentary provided by Jim Tomberlin who sees collaboration as "the secret to great teams." Tomberlin shares several beneficial results of working in collaboration with others. "Collaboration produces better decisions, and better decisions lead to better outcomes. Healthy teams move beyond authoritarian leaders and departmental silos" (p. 37). Speaking on the limits of autocracy Robertson (2007) states, "Autocracy accepts that one person holds power and makes decisions…. Collaboration recognizes that each person (participant) has power and the ability to make decisions – and expects each one to contribute to the whole" (p. 6). Relaxing organizational identity of participants is not the aim of collaboration. Finding commonalities between mission and vision to unitedly accomplish the work of the gospel is the focus. Speaking from the context of missional communities, where homes and small meeting places serve as missional launching points for gospel change, Bettis (2019,

p. 37; Simpson, 2019, p. 2), quoting a pastor serving in a missional community, states, "A missional community sees itself as a network of relationships with a common mission" (p. 4). The idea of a common mission as the connecting relational factor between evangelistic agencies is an important key to collaboration. Tomberlin continues, "True collaboration moves beyond the sharing of information or even cooperation to create something better together. Collaborative teams create synergy where the sum is greater than the individual parts" (p. 37).

In essence, to collaborate is to work together as a team where every participant operates on a level ground without hierarchal structure. It "is a cooperative activity that requires trust in others, humility concerning one's own wisdom and competences and a desire to release the creativity and gifts of those with whom one works" (Pickard, 2009, p. 6). Bruno and Dirks (2014) use the term *kingdom partnership* to describe the idea behind collaborative ministry and evangelism. Their definition of kingdom partnership is, "a gospel-driven relationship between interdependent local churches that pray, work, and share resources together strategically to glorify God through kingdom-advancing goals they could not accomplish alone" (p. 18; Heitger-Ewing, 2019, p. 46). With the substitution of a few words, this definition serves well to define collaborative evangelism: *A gospel-driven relationship between evangelistic entities that are willing to pray, work, and share resources together strategically to glorify God through kingdom-advancing goals which they could not accomplish alone.*

Nash et al. (2008) provide a four-point expanded definition of what collaborative ministry can provide, even to groups seeking to collaborate together which are not

ministry-focused (p. 3). These points are summarized in the following manner. First, collaboration shares a commitment to a common gospel-driven purpose, vision, and mission. Second, reflecting the nature of God and Christ's example requires interdependence and a willingness to work together overcoming barriers and conflict. Third, collaboration takes seriously shared decision-making and a devolution of power and authority. Finally, there are a diversity of gifts and vocations within the body of Christ which need to be identified and nurtured so that all can play their part in glorifying God. Points one, two and three combined, and four provide a three-point outline for a discussion on collaboration as presented in this section of the chapter.

Collaboration Should be Gospel-Driven

The aim of every evangelistic endeavor should in some way follow the example of Jesus as he stated in answer to a question posed by the disciples of the imprisoned John the Baptist, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else" (Matt 11:3). Quoting from Isaiah 35:5, Jesus said to them,

> Go and report to John what you hear and see: the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. (Matt 1:4-5)

The results of evangelism should be evident in the physical, mental, and spiritual manifestations of changed lives in the community. The gospel of Jesus Christ is to be shared with every echelon of people from the highest of society to the most oppressed of people. Robertson (2007) declares, "Collaborative Ministry rests on a practical theology which declares that Jesus is Lord, and the church a gathering of His disciples" (p. 129). Bruno and Dirks (2014) support the idea that collaborative ministry must first be gospel-driven. "The gospel of God's glory and grace must be both the fuel and final goal of any

effective kingdom partnership" (p. 19). Bruno and Dirks (2014) believe that in maintaining a gospel-focus, ministry will always remain vibrant and will less likely diminish to become simply a good humanitarian effort with no real kingdom impact (p. 19).

Sharing the gospel must be at the center of the vision or purpose of any collaborative endeavor. Speaking on the apostle Paul's decision to leave Antioch to deliver gifts to the suffering church in Jerusalem (Gal 2:2), Bruno and Dirks (2014) believe Paul's main reason for the trip was to ensure that the same gospel was being preached by all (p. 34). "He (Paul) knew that the gospel of the kingdom changes everything in life and ministry, and it's the only thing that makes true partnership possible" (p. 46). Robertson (2007) gives biblical reason to the question why Christians should collaborate together in ministry? "Because God collaborates with us. Wherever we look in the New Testament the same pattern is seen" (p. 63). Primuth and Kaspar (2019) assert that "Collaboration between members in the Body of Christ is vitally important because it reflects the very nature of the triune God and how he designed his Body to function" (para. 3). The Holy Spirit collaborates with those who minister and also with those receiving that ministry" (p. 63). Bruno and Dirks (2014, p. 38) provide an Old Testament example of an intentional partnering between the Godhead and humankind.

> The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have been in perfect partnership with one another for eternity. When God created Adam in "our" image, he also made him co-ruler of creation. Then God gave Eve to Adam as a partner "fit for him" (Gen 2:18). We were created for partnership, both with God and with others.

Therefore, partnering or collaborating in ministry "shares a commitment to a common purpose, vision and mission" (Nash et al., 2008, p. 3).

Because collaboration is the coming together of leaders from different ministries and organizations, the guiding purpose, vision or mission should be determined as a team rather than be dictated by a single leader. Hartwig and Bird (2015) suggest, "Great teams pursue a shared purpose that prioritizes making decisions together rather than advising one member who then makes key decisions" (p. 85). Likewise, the guiding purpose should not be that of any one person or organization, but should be the results of the collaborating group or team. "In true collaborative ministry, we build vision together rather than assuming that the leader has the vision that others should follow, the classic model in many leadership books, both Christian and secular" (Nash et al., 2008, p. 63). Blackaby (2001, p. 75) also believes that vision does not originate only with spiritual leaders, nor should spiritual leaders be tasked with selling the vision to others. Spiritual leaders must bring people into a "face-to-face encounter with God so they hear form God directly." Bell (2014) states that vision can have transformative results "only when it is developed within the hearts of people, when it is a shared and common image that inspires them corporately" (p. 347). With this in mind, team members should be given opportunity to engage in robust dialogue and prayer to clarify and establish the purpose for the collaboration. Designating ample time to establish clarity of purpose is so essential that Hartwig and Bird (2015) suggest that successful collaboration hinges on purpose. "Purpose is the invisible leader of exceptional teams" (p. 117). Every participant or team member should be clear on the gospel-centered purpose and/or vision for their collaborative efforts.

Collaboration Should be Interdependent

At the heart of collaborative relationships is the basic understanding of working jointly as a group or team in an environment where interdependence and sharing of responsibility is requisite to fulfilling the vision and/or purpose. According to Nash et al. (2008), "At its simplest a group (or team) is a collection or gathering of people who interact, have certain characteristics in common or share a common identity" (p. 17). In their definition of collaborative ministry Nash et al. (2008) "Believe that reflecting the nature of God and Christ's example requires interdependence and a willingness to work together overcoming barriers and conflict" (p. 3). Bruno and Dirks (2014) believe God created us, then redeemed us in Christ for partnership with both Himself and with others (p. 38). Speaking from the understanding that people of God are laborers together, White (2018) says, "Our success depends upon our unity. Our efficiency and the power of our influence depends upon our wise and unreserved cooperation with one another and with God" (p. 305).

Because the church belongs to God, He endows its members with the fruit of the Spirit and gifts for the strengthening of the whole body of believers (1 Cor 12:7). Commenting on the use of spiritual gifts, Robertson (2007) states, "Gifts may vary but each Christian, whatever their task, is an ordinary person who is called and equipped by God" (p. 29). A primary purpose of spiritual gifts is for the building up and support of the internal organizational machinery of the church. Alongside this function, members are also obligated to use their gifts externally. Christopherson (2019, p. 3) explains, "What if we turned those gifts outward and partnered with other members of Christ's body to collaboratively use our various gifts to live as disciple-making missionaries?" That is,

rather than viewing gifts as primarily relegated for use within the church, we find ways to use gifts evangelistically and collaboratively in the surrounding communities. Christopherson (2019) continues, "Those gifted in serving, hospitality, teaching, giving, and evangelistic harvesting could function seamlessly to leverage their shared capacity in order to see people far from Jesus find their hope in him" (p. 3). Robertson (2007, p. 29) adds, "A fundamental value of Collaborative Ministry is that each ordinary person serves God, the church and the world, extraordinarily" through their giftedness. In the context of this collaborative evangelism project, each evangelistic entity is invited to serve God, the church, and the community through its unique ministry within an interdependent relationship and process where every entity is valued and encouraged to contribute to the whole.

As team members work within these interdependent relationships, it is important to pursue and maintain a diversity of evangelism specialties, backgrounds, and perspectives rather than having too many people on board with similar specialties. This diverse complementary array of backgrounds makes for a better, more effective group or team (Hartwig & Bird, 2015, p. 86). White (2018) adds,

> Every line of God's work has a connection with every other line. Exclusiveness cannot exist in an institution where God presides; for He is the Lord of all tact, all ingenuity; He is the foundation of all correct methods. It is He Who imparts knowledge concerning them, and no man is to look upon this knowledge as exclusively his own. (p. 205)

With this understanding of God's intended interdependence between various ministries White continues, "Each worker should feel an interest in every line of the work, and if God has given him foresight, capability, and knowledge that will help in any line, he should communicate that which he has received" (p. 205). Again, commenting on the

need for interdependence in the work of God, White shares, "The one who is strong to do the will of God intelligently, who is using his mind in God's service, will just as surely be united with others whom God is using" (p. 266).

Collaboration Should be God-Glorifying

Christians of every denomination should understand that waging congregational turf wars over practice and biblical beliefs is not their mission. Minatrea (2004) states that the mission of every God-inspired church member is to rescue those under the influence of "a common enemy who stands opposed to righteousness." He continues, "No significant Kingdom accomplishment will occur until churches value kingdom more than their own sectarian accomplishments" (2004, pp. 126-127). From my perspective, kingdom matters associated with social relief and meeting certain community needs should hold priority over sectarian differences. There are social actions, such as providing breakfast or backpacks for hungry public-school students, helping the homeless, and assisting with family and marital challenges, that could be collaboratively undertaken by ministries and services from various religious and non-religious organizations. In many cases such activities do not call into question sectarian beliefs. In instances where religious practices and doctrinal beliefs are called into question and are sidelined for the sake of the activity, collaboration is discouraged. When the evangelistic collaboration occurs within the same denomination, it is not important to prove which method of outreach might be most effective, cutting edge, or preferred. The aim should be to seek better ways to accomplish what we have historically done individually, by uniting in our efforts to be more effective in enlarging God's kingdom.

Ferguson (2019, p. 121) recalls a presentation by Patrick O'Connell, Global Director of the church-planting network "NewThing." In a meeting O'Connell presented a theological framework supporting the need of networks in finishing the work of God. He explained that God gave the Great Commission (2016, pp. 40-41), as the call to evangelize based on Matthew 28:18-20. God gave the Great Commandment to love him and to love others (Matt 22:37-39). McIntosh (2016) associates this with the fulfillment of social actions of love (pp. 40-41). Finally, O'Conner believes God gave the Great Collaboration which is based upon John 17:22-23 where Jesus prayed for the disciples to come together, "That they may be one, just as we are one; I in them and you in me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that you sent me, and loved them, even as you have loved me." Ferguson adds, "If the church of Jesus Christ could put all three pieces together, we could realize the dream of the kingdom of God" (p. 121; Ferguson & O'Connell, 2019, pp. 25-32). In a similar way, this concept could be applied to the Adventist context. A Great Collaboration of Seventh-day Adventists believers from diverse backgrounds, specialties, and skillsets, collaborating together would enable the creation of better ways to accomplish the Great Commission and the Great Commandment bringing glory to the work of God.

Bruno and Dirks (2014) suggest that when the world and even the Christian community sees diverse churches, or in the case of this project diverse evangelistic entities, working humbly and joyfully together, many people will be led to give glory to the Father in heaven (p. 19). As organizational silo walls are breached, "We [can then] work together to accomplish kingdom goals that we couldn't achieve by ourselves" (p. 40). Nash et al., (2008) adds, "Collaborative ministry may not always be the easiest

context to work in but it can be creative, inspiring, challenging and an example of the kingdom at work" (p. 153). Working collaboratively has the potential of bringing greater glory and success to the work of God.

Foundations for Doing Collaborative Evangelism

The following paragraphs are by no means a thorough survey of the numerous factors that may increase the effectiveness of collaborative evangelism. The four ideas presented were discovered to be foundational to the discussion, development, and execution of this collaborative project. Without the inclusion of these foundational ideas, this collaborative venture would not have been able to unite the various ministries in pursuit of a common purpose.

Ideas concerning the role that mission plays in the way a congregation should function are presented in the first section. The importance of presenting a transmutable gospel message that remains true to Scripture as well as being able to speak with relevancy into today's world will be discussed. The importance of relationship, and finally the need for authenticity are also among the foundational ideas that have been found to best support a sense of collaboration among various evangelistic entities, congregations, and community organizations in an effort to share the good news of the gospel.

The Mission as Foundational

The Great Commission for the Church is found in Matthew 28:18-20. Many passionate Christians are enthused with the idea of sharing the good news of the gospel in a variety of manners and eventually seeing the results of such efforts in the additions

made to the kingdom through baptism. Kinnaman and Matlock (2019) convey mission based on the premise that "God is powerful, active, and intentional, and he wants his followers to play a part in redeeming people and restoring the world to himself…and seeking to save the lost in Jesus' name" (p. 178). Although Matthew 28:18-20 is a well-known text used to motivate and mobilize members to share the gospel, there is one key verb which Christians seem to overlook in practice. That is the word "go," from the Greek word πορεύω, meaning *to go*, *proceed*, *travel* (Arndt et al., 2000, p. 853). Many churches today omit the practice of mobilizing members to go physically into surrounding communities where people dwell and live, to share the gospel message in meaningful and relevant ways. Concerning the obligation to go, McNeal (2003) states that Christians "need to go where people are already hanging out and be prepared to have conversations with them about the great love of our lives" (p. 42). In opposition to this practice, many believers seem to prefer and expect those outside the church to come to the church in fulfillment of the Great Commission. This is accomplished by using well devised practices intended to draw people to attend church programs.

This section of the literature review will survey several ideas on what it means to be a congregation driven by the missional aspects of the Great Commission, and how becoming mission motivated or driven could inform how church and evangelism can function more effectively. As a foundation for effective collaborative evangelism, we will briefly review several mindsets which, if left unchecked, will, to some degree, impede the church in its efforts to fulfill the commission given by Jesus Christ.

Attractional Church Must Become Missional

During my 27 years of pastoral ministry and evangelism, I have at times functioned on the premise that the activities of the church should be planned and executed in such ways that might be appealing to non-church goers. If the programs are interesting, engaging, and provide answers to assumed questions and needs, outsiders will attend the church program. Swanson and Rusaw (2010, p. 28) define the attractional church as "One that through its presence, programming, and marketing—everything from cool Web sites to four-color brochures to word-of-mouth—seeks to attract people to its services." The attractional method worked well for a number of years. In today's post-modern world this method continues to have a diminishing level of success. Speaking on the fading popularity of churches which use programing and events to draw people, known as the attractional method, McNeal (2009) observes, "We've spent so much time in the attractional church trying to get the community to connect to us; now we need to learn how to connect to the community" (p. 53). The practice of simply attracting people to church or to an evangelistic event by the utilization of various styles of worship, program content, advertising schemes, etc., though still important, is slowly losing its appeal to our post-modern culture.

Hill (2011) states that today's efforts to reach the present generation known as Generation Y (Millennials) can no longer be based upon attractional methods which seek to draw people to attend a church sponsored event. He suggests that the best-known way to connect with Gen-Xers "Is to be with them, to enter into genuine spiritual friendships" (p. 29). In his discussion on the waning influence of the attractional method, Cole (2010) states that the wrong question to ask is "What can we do to make our church more

appealing to the people in our community?" (p. 56). He continues, "A better question is, 'Where is Jesus seen at work in our midst? Where do we see lives changing, and communities transforming simply by the power of the gospel?'" (p. 56). This statement agrees with a statement made by Jesus which identifies what the truest draw for any form of church sponsored event or evangelism is, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself" (John 12:32). The message of a loving, accepting, and accessible divine Being who desires to establish a mutual relationship should be the drawing factor.

Speaking from an incarnational understanding of the church as the body of Christ in today's world, McNeal (2007, p. 50) states, "Incarnational approaches focus on the church 'being there'—at home, in the street, in the marketplace, at school, in the neighborhood—in the places where people live their lives." Millennial believers share a similar view of this meaning of *incarnational*. For them, incarnational, "literally means 'in the flesh' or physically present" (Rainer & Rainer, 2011, p. 261). However, their view of incarnation has the deeper meaning of being present not merely as an individual, but specifically "as a representative for Christ" (Rainer & Rainer, 201, p. 261). As Christians interact with the community they do not simply represent a local church, they represent the presence of Christ to that community. Their words, their actions, their focus should be intently infused with the understanding that a glimpse of God and His love for the community is being displayed through their actions. Therefore, in the community interaction, they are to seek to bring awareness to the plight of the disenfranchised such as the poor, the homeless, the needy and the abused. They are to empathize with those who may be marginalized such as single mothers, orphans, ex-convicts, and the elderly. They should consider ways to peacefully challenge racial inequality, discrimination in its

many forms, and the laws and practices that prolong their systemic existence. Such are several of the activities that may motivate Millennials and others to engage as representatives of Christ to a community. Hirsch and Hirsch (2010) express the relationship between mission and being incarnational by stating, "If missional defines our being sent out into the world, then incarnational must define the way in which we engage the world" (p. 234). Hirsch (2006, p. 133) elaborates on the aim of incarnation, "The basic motive of incarnational ministry is also revelatory—that they may come to know God through Jesus."

The overall idea is upon taking the message of Christ to the surrounding community. Cordeiro (2011, p. 41) adds, "A church's emphasis should never be more on 'come here' than on 'let's go out there.'" If our task has been merely to get people to come to our church, we have overlooked the benefits of going. These benefits include the building of relationships with those living in the community around the church, increasing the ability to understand the challenges people face in life, and from firsthand observations become able to implement better ways for reaching the community with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, being present, getting to know the people, and understanding their needs will open the door for congregations to utilize a number of relevant evangelistic and missional measures to present Jesus in their communities where "they get a taste of God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven" (Hill, 2011, pp. 56-57). This philosophy of church as a missional entity which goes into the community will broaden the means by which the church can engage the community through a variety of evangelistic means.

Inward Focused Churches
Must Become Missional

Rainer (2014) surveys 10 reasons why church congregations that were once vibrant enter a state of decline leading to eventual death. He states, "But more than any one item, these dying churches focused on their own needs instead of others. They looked inwardly instead of outwardly" (p. 22). McIntosh and Arn (2013) define an inward-focused church as one which "spends its time, money, and people resources on self-centered activities… motivated to perpetuate the institution" (p. 14). According to Rainer this inward focus is evidenced by the church's reminiscent love affair with its past successes. They may even refuse to look like the cultural makeup of the surrounding community. They seem to delegate a major portion of financial resources towards the maintenance of the congregation. There also seems to be the absence of a mission driven purpose within the community.

Congregations that are focused upon survival tend to have lost their focus upon the mission to transform the communities where they exist. It appears that fewer people, especially those unassociated with the church, have limited interest in aligning themselves with any effort that simply serves to maintain a church. They want to be part of a movement that seeks to change lives around them, making the world a better place to live. As Rainer's research reveals, churches which seek to serve themselves will not succeed in reaching others for Christ. These inward-focused churches will eventually enter a pattern of decline, and over time, cease to exist (p. 22).

Commenting on the dire need for churches to move towards an external focus, McNeal (2009) states, "Moving to an external focus pushes the church from doing missions as some second-mile project into being on mission as a way of life" (p. 42).

Hirsch (2006, p. 135) believes that in order for the church to represent Christ in the "complexed multicultural world around us," we must be incarnational in the ways we operate. This tectonic shift in thinking will result in believers seeking to follow where Jesus might be at work, especially outside the doors of the meeting place. Outside the confines of the church building is where people who need to hear the gospel may be found. Commenting on church members who make such a transition, McNeal (2009) states, "The church is wherever followers of Jesus are. People don't go to church; they are the church. They don't bring people to church; they bring the church to people" (p. 45). Therefore, "Incarnational approaches focus on the church 'being there'—at home, in the street, in the marketplace, at school, in the neighborhood—in the places where people live their lives" (p. 50).

Cordeiro (2011) presents twelve traits that, when incorporated into the functions of the church, will produce an irresistible witness "That heaven can't help but get involved with and bring increased ministry to" (p. 21). Implementing these twelve traits will enhance a congregation's ability to become a draw for non-church attendees as well as those who regularly attend church. Of great importance for this discussion is Trait Eight which proposes that "An irresistible church connects everything to a soul" (p. 99). Such a practice identifies the need for congregations to be intentional in planning meaningful church programs and the use of a variety of evangelistic mediums that may appeal to a greater spectrum of people. Cordeiro (2011) continues, "Every function of the church is connected to the mission of somehow, somewhere, saving the lost and helping people grow in the faith" (p. 100). This idea is given further elaboration in Trait 11, where Cordeiro (2011) discusses the need for the church to use its mission as the means

to shape every function of the church. He continues, "One practical way of staying true to that mission is to consider each function of the church through the eyes of a person the church is trying to reach" (p. 133). In essence church sponsored picnics, vacation Bible schools, prayer meetings, children and youth programming, special emphasis days, evangelistic programs, and other programs or events should be selected and designed to appeal to the perspective of those the congregation is attempting to reach. Although Cordeiro (2011) may appear to be emphasizing an attractional way of doing church, the idea of building programs and focusing every function of the church upon those who are not yet present, in essence moves congregations from focusing upon their particular comforts and towards seeking ways to reach those outside the church.

<center>The Message as Foundational</center>

Throughout history the gospel story, from its inception, has transformed many lives. Different facets of its message have appealed to different generations. For example, the Baby Boomer generation focused upon "What is true?" The Gen-Xers are concerned with "What is real?" Millennials want to know "What is Good?" (Choung, 2014, pp. 60-61). In order to retain people's interest and relevancy, the way the old gospel story has been presented has changed over time and must continue to change in order for it to appeal to today's world. This need for change has been a source of alarm to many Christians who misperceive this necessity as an agent of doctrinal change. Rainer (2001) rightly argues "Churches that reach the unchurched are theologically conservative. They have a high view of Scripture" (p. 225). As churches struggle with new ways of presenting the message, there is little question on the fact that Christianity must remain true to Scripture. In an effort to provide clarification to misperception Malphurs (2007)

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states, "The church must not change its message—if that message is based on the Bible—but the church must rethink how it communicates the biblical message" (p. 37). Speaking on the need for the presentation of the gospel to be contextually creative, Barna (2019) states, "The gospel never changes, but because culture and history do, the way we communicate it changes" (p. 40).

As mentioned above, fewer people are interested in knowing biblical truth. They desire to know what is real, what adds meaning to life, and simply what is the right thing to do. Reid (2002) suggests that people tend to make the mistake of intentionally omitting the gospel from their conversations with non-Christians in order not to be offensive. He states, "Some in the church act as though the radically unchurched are also the totally unreachable" (p. 125). White (2014), who writes extensively on the subject of the social subgroup identified as the "nones," defines them simply as "the religiously unaffiliated" (p. 13; Pasquale, 2007, pp. 41-58). Masci and Lipka (2016, para. 2) define "nones" as "Those who describe themselves as atheists or agnostics and those who say they have no particular religion." Masci (2016, para. 10) commenting on the "nones" and their views of organized religion states,

> I think people assume that people who do not belong to an organized religious group reject religion altogether. But many "nones" believe in God and heaven. And spiritual experiences are still attractive for people who don't go to church. Some people find God in the woods rather than in a church.

Reid (2002) presents the idea that those sharing the gospel should not detract from the message in an attempt to make it more appealing to the unchurched. We should not water down the message to make it palatable to others. This, among other dilemmas, presents congregations with the challenge to discover new and effective ways to present a very old message in all of its truth. This also suggests the possible benefits of a collaborative

approach to outreach, which presents the gospel message through a variety of services and means. The following paragraphs will discuss in detail what this change might entail and how multifaceted the gospel message can be in its presentation while remaining true to its mission.

The Message Must Have Meaning for Today

Choung (2008) believes that in order "to present the central message of our faith in a more complete and attractive way, we need a new summary of the gospel that highlights three movements" (p. 195). The first movement is away from simply making a decision to experiencing a transformation where the believer moves from a one-time decision to accept Christ, to a life of daily training to become Christ-like. Choung (2008) elaborates, "With God's grace we train to become like Jesus and grow in Him so we can be His expression of love here and now" (p. 196). This growth in grace becomes a process of a lifetime. The second movement is from a focus on the individual to a focus on the community. Here, reaching the individual is no longer the final focus but leading that individual to understand the importance of life from within the community, as a believer, is the goal. Choung (2008) states, "Christian faith is expressed in community—it's not an option. In fact, no faith exists without community. The reflection of the kingdom of God shines through God's people when they're gathered and reconciled" (p. 197). Therefore, a gospel which highlights community in today's culture, which longs for intimacy and friendship, will possibly appeal in a stronger fashion to those who do not profess a belief in Christ (p. 198).

The third and final movement is *from afterlife* to *a life of mission*. Here, the attention is taken off looking toward future rewards to be received at the start of life in

heaven, to experiencing the gospel message and its impact here in the present. The kingdom of heaven begins in the here and now and is expressed, lived out, and experienced in the lives of those who believe.

Through these three movements, we are invited into a space where God can be recognized as really being in charge and capable of being experienced through the power of His Spirit. This is a place where love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control can be experienced by those who willingly desire such. It is about mutual service and love to those who believe, as well as to those living in the surrounding community. These three movements are inclusive rather than exclusive, creating a place where relationships are intentionally authentic and healthy. Choung (2008) believes this sense of community can be entered into in the here and now, before we die. That's the good news—the gospel (p. 198).

The Message Must be Incarnational

Cole (2010) defines the difference between propositional and incarnate truth. He suggests that propositional truth is presented in a verbal statement, such as a statement of faith, a decree, or proposition, but is often seen as "lifeless and out of touch to a postmodern viewpoint" (p. 26). On the other hand, incarnate truth is the message as it is lived out in the flesh and experienced in day-to-day living. This same opinion is shared by Stark (2016, p. 32), "Outsiders today evaluate Christianity and get a sense of who we are not by our words but by how we live and act." This results in young outsiders being pushed away by such inconsistencies which are viewed as inauthenticity and hypocrisy. Cole (2010), further elaborates, "If your truth remains a proposition and never becomes incarnate, it is just a statement of fact, not a faith" (p. 26). He illustrates this by taking an

example from the sayings of Jesus and emphasizing what the Lord did not say. Jesus did not say "'I know the way, the truth, and the life.' He said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life'" (John 14:6). Cole (2010) is proposing that truth cannot remain simply a proclamation, and continue to be appealing. Truth must be recognized as having a name, and that name is Jesus. Similar to truth which has meaning for today, incarnational truth is truth that is capable of being seen and therefore non-verbally proclaimed through the lives of those who believe and adhere to the tenets of the truth.

In addressing the need for the message to be incarnational, Reid (2002) raises the real issue in accomplishing this: "The reason many unchurched refuse to hear the gospel is because they have no desire to be like the Christians that they know" (p. 126). White (2017) says many outside the church think Christians today do not reflect their concept of Christ and his lifestyle. Rather, Christians are seen as "Hyperpolitical, out of touch, pushy in our beliefs, and arrogant… we are homophobic, hypocritical, and judgmental. Simply put, in the minds of many people, modern-day Christianity no longer seems Christian" (p. 82). Kinnaman and Lyons (2007) sum up thousands of outsiders' impressions of Christians, "it is clear that Christians are primarily perceived for what they stand against. We have become famous for what we oppose, rather than who we are for" (p. 24).

Reid (2002) suggest that Christians should raise the bar on how they live the faith. Their lives should testify to the power with which following Jesus influences how they live (p. 126). Barna (2011) states it in this manner, "There must be a connection between claiming the name and one's lifestyle and choices" (p. 124). White (2017, p. 82) adds, "God should look good on us to others." Vanderstelt (2017) speaks from the

understanding that Christians should "think, feel, and perceive everything in light of what has been accomplished in the person and work of Jesus Christ" (pp. 41-42). He defines this as "Gospel Fluency." Vanderstelt (2017) aptly summarizes the need for living the gospel fluently, "The display of our lives is definitely more convincing than the declaration of our lips" (p. 187). Howlett (2019) adds, "If our lives are already broadcasting the truth of the gospel, our verbal expression of it will have much more weight" (p. 108). Henry (2020) warns that there is a sense that many Christians may have "abandoned gospel fluency for a relevant, fun, and light-hearted gospel that appeals to the culture around us" (para. 3) rather than living and presenting a gospel that is counter to the prevalent culture. Reisman (2019), speaking as a biblical translator who uses language and culture to reach newly entered groups, reminds us that the language of the Bible is not only verbal, nor written, but it is lived through God's people. He states, "When we become immersed in the language of God – reading it, speaking it, living it – we make it our own and are better able to translate and interpret it to others" (p. 3). It is therefore apparent that in order to make the gospel message real, Christians are to connect with, and continually become, the message they seek to share.

Meyer (2010) speaks on the necessity for transforming the good news into a tangible message that should be lived out in the lives of church members. He further elaborates by answering the question concerning the "how" in moving the gospel message from within the confines of the church sanctuary to making it a message people outside the church may want to hear, and eventually, embrace. He states, "I suggest that our lay peoples' lives are the best bridge from the church to America's unchurched, individualized spirituality. Laypeople can tell the story alongside their stories with a

credibility pastors and pamphlets don't have" (p. 92). The gospel seems most powerful and convincing when it is witnessed through the lives and actions of those professing to be followers of Christ. Reid (2002) adds, "The key, then, to communicating the gospel to the unchurch is to be real" (p. 127). In his discussion on the need for the message to be embodied with authenticity Kinnaman (2011) writes, "We must make truth touchable" (p. 237). By such means the message will become real and incarnational, and thereby, have a greater possibility of appealing, with relevancy, to the world of today.

Message Must be Relevant

Stafford (2007), who writes from the church planting perspective, believes the church needs to learn lessons from returning foreign missionaries who have become attuned to traversing social barriers like religion, language, tribe, caste, and socioeconomic status to plant new churches. Commenting on the need to be intentional in this area, Stafford states, "A church may thrive among one group and miss a neighboring group entirely. You have to target each group separately, or you won't reach everybody" (p. 71). A blanket approach to sharing the message assumes that every member of the community will respond to a singular presentation of the message. Although such an approach may not be as effective as a more tailored approach, Reid (2002) warns that context should shape any proclamation strategy, but our proclamation content must not be altered (p. 86). Church leaders should not be negligent in identifying and discovering a variety of ways that might be used to reach the many people groups present in their communities. A collaboration of evangelistic approaches would meet this need for diversity and relevance. This intentional endeavor can also be aided by building relationships with a variety of people representing the various people groups of the

community, seeking ways to understand the prevailing needs of these subgroups, being willing to experiment with what might appeal and what does not, in the life ambitions of community members, and finally, discovering how the gospel message might be tailored through different strategies and ministries to effectively appeal with relevancy to the various life situations present within the community.

Reflecting upon need for relevance Choung (2014) believes the Millennial generation is very much of this caliber of thinking. He states,

> They're a connected generation that cares about issues like global poverty, the AIDS pandemic, terrorism, climate change, human trafficking and other world issues. They want to know if the Christian faith can help solve these problems and offer any good. They want to know how faith is practically lived out in the real world, and how it will make a difference throughout the globe. (p. 62)

Therefore, in order to appeal to Millennials and others in the community who are outside the church, proponents of Christianity will of necessity need to demonstrate how the gospel message can speak to the issues facing society today and how religious people can take action to make the world a better place for all. Again, this is where the gospel message, when presented through health seminars, after school programs, neighborhood intervention measures, proclamation ministries, and a number of various ministries can have a wider appeal to the relevant missional needs present in the life of a given community.

Relationships as Foundational

Pathak and Runyon (2012) share an account of how they and twenty leading pastors from the Denver area met with the city mayor to discuss ways churches can work together to serve the city. The discussion involved a number of common issues faced by large urban cities such as, "at-risk kids, areas with dilapidated housing, child hunger,

drug and alcohol abuse, loneliness, elderly shut-ins with no one to look in on them." The point was made that most of these challenges could be addressed if the community could become a "community of great neighbors" (p. 19).

In the discussions that followed, it was noted that no matter how good, government programs can be limited in their scope to address community issues. With this in mind Bob Frie, the mayor at the time, made the following statement, "relationships are more effective than programs because they are organic and ongoing" (p. 19). What Bob Frie was iterating is the natural plausibility of relationships within the community and the possible longevity and strength these relationships could have in addressing common needs. A church that has intentionally nurtured community relations could be recognized as part of the fabric of a community and therefore be a significant staple in raising concerns and addressing community challenges and needs. Working through such church relations with the community and encouraging relationships between community members make possible the introduction of a collaborative evangelism process.

Relationships With the Community

The most recognized means of influencing people towards the idea of entertaining religious themes or attending a church function is through the bonds of relationships (Barna, 2005; Cordeiro, 2011; McIntosh, 2016, Pathak & Runyon, 2012). Based upon research by Kidder (2011) relationships are one essential factor that influence people to join the Adventist Church (p. 115). Although relationships are a strong means for bringing people to church, Barna and Kinnaman (2014) share that in their most recent study, "the percentage of unchurched adults who expressed a positive reaction to this approach…is the lowest [they] have registered" (p. 157). Therefore, as culture changes,

alternative ways for using relationships and others methods of evangelism should be utilized. For the sake of clarity, Kidder also suggests that although relations are among the strongest of factors in bringing people to the church, factors such as reading literature, public evangelism, in home Bible studies, visitation, televised media, etc. will work well when utilized in combination. Rainer (2003), whose research involved former non-believers and what led them to Christ, believes that the most resistant segment of non-believers "become more receptive [to the message] after they have spent significant time with a Christian" (p. 236). In their research with young people Powell, Mulder, and Griffin (2016, p. 170) discovered that "As young people are choosing a church, warm community is often a stronger draw than belief." There is little doubt establishing relationships with an individual or within a community can play a role in increasing the possibility of influencing others towards Christ.

As an important theme to becoming an irresistible church, Cordeiro (2011) states, "An irresistible church promotes healthy relationships" (p. 67). This seems to imply that people in general are mainly interested in establishing meaningful relationships. The potential in establishing such connections plays an important role in developing opportunities to invite others to church related functions, or to, at least, be open to religiously-centered discussion or community relief efforts. However, establishing relationships simply with the intent of inviting people to church functions can be viewed as deceitful. Commenting on such motives, Pathak and Runyon (2012) note, "The truth is, many Christians have been taught by well-meaning people that they should do nice things solely for an opportunity to have a spiritual conversation. But Jesus never called us to use a bait-and-switch approach, where we become friends with people only to share

spiritual truths with them. We are called to love people—period" (p. 103). Being authentic in our acceptance and love for people as Christ modeled should be the foremost motivation in our quest to befriend and build relationships with others.

It is within this realm of genuine relationships that we are able to naturally share what we are most passionate about. without forcing ourselves upon others or act with wrong motives. Speaking from the stance that people tend to talk about what they love, Vanderstelt (2017) shares the following regarding our love for Jesus,

> When you come to know and experience the love God has for us in Jesus; when you realize that God loved us so much that he was willing to suffer and die for our sins, even though we were his enemies; when you meet Jesus and experience him pouring out his Spirit into your heart, filling you with himself and his love, you can't contain it. You have to talk about it! (pp. 95-96)

Because of our love for Christ, it is somewhat natural to talk about him. Pathak and Runyon (2012) believe that "If you love Jesus, then He will naturally come up in your conversations. It happens as we share the substance of who we are" (p. 107). In relationship building Pathak and Runyon (2012, p. 108) and Vanderstelt (2017, chapter 12) suggest that the easiest way to share Jesus is by sharing one's life story with all its layers, both good and bad. It's about transparently sharing one's life as it was before coming to know Jesus and highlighting the positive change that continues to be the result of coming to know Him. This becomes your personal testimony to the power of the gospel. This level of sharing also acknowledges to your neighbors that they too have a story to tell, and that you are willing to hear their story. This story sharing is key to strengthening emerging relationships.

Relationships Within the Community

Stetzer and Geiger (2014) offer six suggestions on how to establish and grow relationships with neighbors. Based upon these six suggestions, one can encourage the establishment and growth of relationships between residents of a given community. The first suggestion is that one should get to know their neighbors by learning their names and things that are of interest to them. Neighbors are then encouraged to do the same with other neighbors. Second, neighbors should be encouraged to reach out to others on a monthly basis to stay connected. Third, neighbors should pray for their neighbors. Prayer may not be practiced by all neighbors but modeling a sense of concern for others can be beneficial. Fourth, if the occasion arises, neighbors should be invited to a home group meeting such as crime watch or home association meetings which can be scheduled in different homes and locations. Fifth, one ought to be present in the neighborhood by walking, connecting, and serving others. Such activity can be contagious and provide opportunities for further relationship building. Finally, regular communal events such as a neighborhood swim party, fireworks, or welcoming of new neighbors should be encouraged (Stetzer & Geiger, 2014, pp. 180-184).

Briggs (2019, p. 18) simplifies how to identify relationship building activities by suggesting that one should "find something you already enjoy doing and ask others to join you," such as watching a game or a movie, having a cookout, or eating out. Such intentional relationship building will provide opportunities to better understand the possible challenges and needs, dreams and resources, and possible ways to impact the community with the love of Christ.

As believers build relationships with and among their neighbors, Rogers (2019) encourages them to see themselves as missionaries to the community where they live. He states, "Who better to know what would best connect with someone than a neighbor or co-worker who knows and interacts daily with them (p. 3). In his discussion on the absence of Millennials in the church, Hill (2011) shares a practice that can be applied to strengthen community relations which may eventually become opportunities to share Christ. "The only way to reach these young people is to be with them, to enter into genuine spiritual friendships and allow the flow to follow the natural terrain to Christ and, we hope and pray, to His church" (p. 30). Building upon this relationship theme, Copeland (2012) shares his practice of resorting "to an old pastors' trick: I listen a lot and talk very little" (p. 12). Vaters (2017) believes the growing reason people might decide to go to church is to develop "a genuine relationship with Jesus" (p. 2). They desire to engage with others who are seeking the same; however, "People want to engage with others, not just while someone else talks" (p. 4). They desire open dialog about Christ and difficult topics without criticism.

There are few means more effective in getting people to understand the mindset of others while simultaneously seeking to establish relationships, than simply having conversations where one seeks to hear what others have to say. In his work with young people, Copeland (2012) suggests that one essential aspect in building relationships is to provide space for them to address questions of faith, life and ethics in public settings. He believes that any forum with young people should not focus on delivering an "expert answer" from some theologically trained stranger. Instead, they must allow participants to listen to one another, to form friendships, and to relax in the beauty of holy

conversation. Copeland (2012) believes that for young adults, authority is found in these forms of relational conversation. These same allowances for conversation without the sage voice of an expert should be encouraged in the building of community between neighbors. One can be encouraged to trust that, through these carefully designed spaces of dialogue, the Spirit is at work (p. 13).

Building relationships with and between people is not a sure way of connecting them to Christ, but it is a right step towards building better opportunities to introduce a number of methods for sharing the gospel. Cole (2010) supports this statement by suggesting that establishing connections with the unchurched is of greater importance than fulfillment of the mission of the church. He explains, "The postmodern values relationships more than mission. Even if you have nothing to do with the fulfillment of my mission statement, knowing you and spending time with you is of value" (p. 28). It should be the hope that through these bonds with the community, people will sense a divine authenticity in the actions and service being rendered.

Authenticity is Foundational

Authenticity is a well-used term in religious, political, and business sectors. According to the Merriam-Webster (2003) it has several layers of meaning: (a) to be "worthy of acceptance or belief as conforming to or based on fact," (b) "conforming to an original so as to reproduce essential features," and (c) "not false or imitation: real, actual." A few synonyms for authentic are "genuine [and] bona fide which mean being actually and exactly what is claimed" (p. 82).

But how is authenticity expressed in the Christian community? For the sake of brevity, this discussion is limited to three areas, which could greatly impact how a

community might measure such in the actions of a collaborating team and the local

congregation. First, authenticity is revealed by the way a congregation prepares to

minister to the community and how it welcomes all comers. The second involves the

message of the gospel as it is demonstrated through acts of mercy. And finally, it is

demonstrated in the way the congregation aligns itself with the community and the

people it intends to reach.

Authentic Anticipation

Rainer (2005) presents the results of studies done on 50,000 North American

congregations. Of the 50,000 only thirteen churches met the criteria of what he calls

"Breakout Churches." These churches experienced growth stagnation for five years prior

to a point at which they began to experience significant growth over an additional five-

year period (p. 16). Several notable observations were: "The breakout churches were

surprisingly slow in adopting new methodologies and latching on to the latest and hottest

trends in the national church scene" (p. 25). Success did not come as a result of adapting

the newest and hottest trends in Church Growth. Neither did success come by altering

doctrinal beliefs or by jettisoning conservative theology (p. 26). Instead, Rainer presents

six principles of what he calls the "Chrysalis Factor" which were identified in the thirteen

churches that experienced a turnaround in their ability to reach others for the cause of

Christ (pp. 27-28). Each of the six factors is important to a church's effort to experience

an increase in their mission fulfillment. However, the fifth factor, which involves the

creation of a "culture of excellence," asserts a necessary awareness to the anticipation of

visiting non-members.

One researcher involved in the study of this sense of "excellence in all things" noted in an interview with one of the breakout churches, "'It seemed to me, as I interviewed people in this church, that everything they did revolved around those who were not there yet'" (Rainer, 2005, p. 136). It seems this spirit of anticipation would influence the planning of any church or community-based event with the intention of making possible attendees feel welcomed. White (2014) shares similar thoughts on the need for a church wanting to target young people unaffiliated with religion, known as "nones." These churches are challenged to create an environment where "Church members place a high priority on the needs of the nones and…make every effort to remove any and all barriers that could impede the exploration process" (p. 96). As has been stated concerning the centrality of the gospel, every barrier, except the scandal of the cross is to be scrutinized. White (2014) further clarifies, "This is not about an abandonment of orthodoxy in an effort to cater to the sensibilities of those alien to the Christian faith" (p. 96). This is important in the context of this project. Although in most cases an awareness of possible needs and expectations helped to determine what form of evangelistic intervention would have the best community appeal, the centrality of the gospel story was at the heart of every effort.

Though this idea of excellence in all things for the cause of Christ is laudable, Cole (2010) reminds us that authenticity is more valued than excellence, because congregations may work towards excellence and yet not be real. He warns, "Postmodern people can smell a lack of authenticity immediately" (p. 31). Therefore, organizing church and community events with a sense of excellence which points to the power of the gospel message is important in the anticipation of those who are not yet present. More so,

it is important that all efforts to address needs and challenges of the community be

executed with this same spirit of authenticity and an anticipation to welcome all who may

come in response to the gospel message.

Authentic Acts of Mercy

Ministries of mercy, where a congregation serves the community with acts of

kindness, are not only expected of believers, but seem to be a proven way to reach out to

and even enlist the participation of others in the community in carrying out further acts of

mercy. Sharing from a young believer perspective Rainer and Rainer (2011) believe

Millennials do not view the community as a place where Christians should look for

prospects to help the church. They believe the community "is a place where Christians

are called to serve and minister. (Therefore,) Millennials don't ask what the community

can do for the church; they ask what they can do for the community" (p. 260).

Emphasizing this focus on community Stetzer (2019a) states, "The most successful

church is not the one that grows the largest, but the one that digs the deepest into its

community, engaging it on mission" (p. 16). As part of the ministry of Christ, giving

attention to the social, physical, and spiritual needs of others is an important part of the

work of the gospel. White (1942) supports this idea with the following quote,

> Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The savior
> mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed his sympathy for them,
> ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then he bade them, "follow me"
> (p. 143).

Stetzer, Stanley, and Hayes (2009) believe young people desperately want to minister to

the needs of others by giving themselves to "something real, something authentic—and

they don't mind if it is messy" (p. 198). The messier it is with the lives of people the

more they see it as meeting an authentic need. Stetzer et al., (2009) continue, "Without the conflict (messiness) they are less likely to be drawn in. The rise of reality television, and also the effectiveness of churches that engage in messy ministries to the inner-city poor, homeless, addicted, and others" are points of interest for the young (p. 198).

The Scriptures are clear on the idea that believers should be involved in bringing relief to the many ailments, social challenges, and suffering of any given community. However, such acts should not be implemented simply as a precursor to an evangelism event as a means of earning quick credibility within a community or as a show of good will to win friends. Long before the initiation of any reaping campaign, authentic actions to relieve suffering and to address issues should be undertaken as part of sharing the love of Jesus. Acts of mercy are ways of expressing the love God has for humanity in tangible ways. Churches should be seen as places of safety, where people who love and care are found.

Commenting from the context of the church's need to be "good neighbors" to their community Powell, Mulder, and Griffin (2016) suggest, "While most leaders might guess this is important, we can't say strongly enough how vital it is for churches to engage in service, acts of compassion, missions, and social justice" (p. 242). Swanson and Rusaw (2010, p. 161) explain this foundational principle in this way, "Good deeds create goodwill, and goodwill is a wonderful platform for good conversations about the good news." White (2014), commenting on young people's interest in aligning with churches that are involved in helping the poor and needy, says,

> We may have lost the opportunity to talk to them and do life with them, but we haven't lost the opportunity to do good to them, before them, and with them—good that will then open their ears and hearts to the message of the gospel. (p. 100)

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Later Swanson and Rusaw (2010), in affirming the influence good deeds have in creating good will in the lives of those who witness these acts or are beneficiaries, remind us of the place of the gospel message. "Good deeds almost always create goodwill with others…. Nevertheless, goodwill alone does not lead people to faith in Christ, so it is important that we not mistake good will for the good news" (p. 165).

McIntosh (2016, pp. 40-41) wrestles with the relations between two contrasting priorities of the church. One is its call to fulfill acts of social action, which he relates to fulfilling the Great Commandment (Matt 22:37-39). The other is to fulfill the Great Commission through acts of evangelism (Matt 28:18-20). Although McIntosh (2016) seems to agree in concept with the need for churches to embrace both the Great Commandment and the Great Commission, he reminds us that "Other organizations can care for the poor, clothe the naked, and feed the hungry. Only the church… can proclaim the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ" (pp. 49-50). With this focus in mind, good deeds done to others in the name of Christ, are not only an act of unsolicited mercy, they can possibly encourage others to participate in such acts as well. This affinity in merciful acts could also result in increasing the community's curiosity to learn more about the life of Christ and His ultimate sacrifice of mercy.

Authentic Alignment

Experiencing success in reaching a community for Christ is not necessarily tied to a set of transferable practices. With any suggested practice, there are always differing factors that will determine its success. The idea behind authentic alignment is to become aware of these altering factors as much as possible while attempting to incorporate them into the planning and implementation strategies.

Franquiz (2013) presents three practices which may prove helpful in understanding and successfully reaching people outside the church. He calls them the "Irrefutable Laws of Outreach." The first law is: "Know who you're trying to reach" and are capable of reaching (pp. 85-87). For some, it is difficult to accept the understanding that churches are not able to reach every type of person in the surrounding community. Further commenting on this common assumption Franquiz (2013) states, "So few churches take the time to discover who God has gifted them to reach, and they inevitably make the costly mistake of seeking to attract everyone to their church" (p. 85). There may be many suggestions that can provide congregations guidance in choosing who they are capable of reaching. "The basic rule is that you generally reach people like you" (p. 87). This was a referral to the homogeneous unit principle introduced by McGavran and Wagner (1990). Not intending to appear racially biased (p. x), McGavran and Wagner (1990) state, "People like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers" (p. 163). It seems people tend to be more comfortable with people who they believe they can relate to without having to cross too many cultural barriers, which would include associating with people of faith. This is not a hard and fast rule but the odds that this rule is true are fairly certain. With this in mind, a sense of authenticity is realized in wrestling with such outreach limitations and intentionally acting out of who you are as a congregation reaching out to the community.

With that said, it is evident that race and culture continue to be points of tension in today's world and in local communities. Churches should be true to who they are and who they can reach; however, few ways better portray the transformational power of the gospel than when churches willingly cross-cultural lines to share Jesus. In his desire to

encourage pastors to address racism McCauley (2019) states, "All of us are called to embody the love of Christ, which is not bound by race, gender, or class" (p. 5). Williams and Woods (2019) add, "The Spirit enables followers of Christ—people with beautiful Asian, black, brown, and white skin; with a range of immigration statuses: with different accents—to pursue mutual sacrificial love for one another…as the people of God" (p. 3). Tradition and habit may be the props holding up walls of cultural divide and a reluctance to engage in cross-cultural evangelism, but the gospel has the power to transform believers and touch the lives of those they are seeking to reach with the love of God. Reaching people similar to oneself might be considered most effective, but being open to God's desire for "all men to be saved" (1 Tim 2:4), is a stronger display of authentic alignment with him.

The second law of outreach is: "Find the message, market, and media match" (pp. 88-89). The idea here is realized when these three elements are all aligned. In a previous section, we discussed the importance of presenting a meaningful and relevant message which non-believes, the market, might identify with. Franquiz (2013) suggests that the right message must be put in front of the right market by using the right media (p. 88). The correct match is achieved when the good news message is presented through the best preferred media-type that is mostly utilized by the intended audience. Radio and newspaper would in most cases be the media choice for reaching older generations who continue to depend upon these mediums. However, these mediums would not work for reaching most Millennials and younger generations. *Facebook, Snapchat, Tumblr, Instagram*, etc. would be the media of choice for these younger people groups. As more generations become acquainted with social media, Stetzer (2019b) believes the biggest

challenge to using social media is figuring out exactly how to use it and build it as a tool

to communicate with the community (p. 2). This involves discovering ways to effectively

advertise events that others can share with their followers. An example is *Facebook Live*

which permits broadcast of church services and social causes that can be shared, while

allowing additional advertising during the broadcasting of the live event. As the reach

potential and use of social media continues to increase, Stetzer (2019b) holds that social

media will give us opportunity to "both intentionally provide people with a strong and

winsome gospel witness and mobilize people for the good of the community" (p. 3). This

is the goal of using an appropriate media match.

The same can be applied to certain forms of outreach and how it is presented to

different age groups. In a recent conversation with several Bible workers it was shared

that the most effective Bible workers employ means of connecting and studying with

prospects based upon what might be most appealing and convenient. For example,

younger technologically astute Bible workers have better chances of connecting with the

younger generations through the use of technological means, while older Bible workers

may connect better with generations who may not be as technologically savvy. This too,

in no way is a fast set rule. The idea here is to simply be authentic in our choice of

marketing and actions geared to reach people through means that might be most

appealing to them.

Although Franquiz (2013) is correct in his suggestions concerning the need for

alignment between the message, media, and target, it is my belief that there is still no

substitute to the witness provided by the life of the believer. When believers' lives rightly

reflect the continual transformational power of the gospel message, within the concentric

influence of their relationships with others, then people will observe a living message, through a relational media, to a captive target audience.

The final law of outreach is: "Get people's attention" through building effective advertising. Franquiz (2013) states, "One big mistake many churches make is not focusing enough on the design of their promotional material to ensure that it is noticed" (page, 90). The worst thing that could happen is for churches to spend resources to create promotional material that is ignored. Whether congregations are developing material for mass mailings, billboards, flyers, banners, or social media, it is always worth the additional cost of employing professionals to create media and utilize proper channels to communicate the intended message. Even here, the ideal in the creation of sharing media is to in some way infuse it first with an authentic representation of the congregation's intended mission to the community. Second, it should reflect their message and its relevance to the world today. Third, it should express the desire to build real relationships with and within the community. And finally, sharing media should explain in authentic ways what the congregation is and whom it intends to reach with the gospel message.

**Summary and Implications
of Findings**

A collaborative approach to evangelism invites a number of diverse evangelism practitioners to work together and alongside each other to create more multifaceted opportunities for community impact. Such collaboration reduces the separation caused by the tendency to work in silos, and can produce better decisions and achieve better outcomes. Collaboration is built upon the idea that no single voice holds sway over any

discussion or planning session, but every participant is valued and invited to fully contribute from the stance of their evangelistic discipline.

There are four aspects which contribute to the collaborative process used in this project. The first aspect is based on the necessity for this project to be gospel driven. That is, in every way it should embody the message of the good news of the gospel. Nothing is to be done simply as a humanitarian or good-willed event or for the sake of providing programming. Everything should carry the purpose of expressing the love of God to participants and recipients. This sharing of the gospel is the center of the vision and/or purpose of any collaborative discussion or endeavor. Second, collaboration is an interdependent experience where the involved groups are to work jointly, reflecting the interdependence displayed by the Godhead in Its relations with humanity. Related to this second aspect is a sub-point, which promotes the idea of a shared decision-making process between every entity involved in the collaborative process. The lines of authority do not reside in one person, but in the group or team as a whole. And fourth, the end results of any collaborative endeavor should be to bring glory to God by expanding His kingdom through changed lives.

Although there are many factors which can contribute to a collaborative evangelistic process, this chapter mentions four which were foundational to this project. The first foundational factor is that the mission sets the tone for the way the congregation is to interact with the community. Rather than attempting to draw the community to the church, the church must be willing to go out to meet the community on its own turf. With this in mind, every function of the collaborative team should attempt to focus around the needs, preferences, and interests of the community. Knowing what these might entail will

determine how the second and third factors will be implemented. Second, the message of the gospel must be presented in a manner that is meaningful in the here and now. The benefits of the gospel are to be presented as being obtainable and experienced, not in a distant future, but in the present. This immanence of the gospel should be observable in the lives of believers who aspire to advertise the gospel's ability to make a difference in a person's life. Third, building relationship with the community as well as encouraging relationships between community members are essential in earning a voice or gaining influence in community matters. Relationships are also the most influential means for introducing members of the community to Christ. Finally, being authentic in how one anticipates and interacts with community members, how their social needs are identified and addressed, and how the church and its evangelistic outreach are introduced to the community should all be in alignment with the mission of the gospel.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT INTERVENTION

Introduction

This chapter describes the method used to implement this project. The development of this project involved a number of group discussions and planning sessions, between various individuals, who were involved in evangelism and community outreach, within the territorial boundaries of the GCC. Throughout these formative conversations, the pastoral staff and leaders of the GCC where periodically updated on the progress of this project and were polled for suggestions. The components of the project, which emerged from these meetings, were later presented to the pastoral staff and leaders, as the evangelism process for the years 2017 to 2018.

A Series of AWKWARD Planning Meetings

The descriptive acronym "AWKWARD," evolved out of the unusual nature of a series of five meetings that took place between March 2 and June 30, 2016. These meetings brought together a number of participants representing various evangelistically focused organizations and workers within the GCC region. To my understanding, this was the first-time representatives from a diversity of ministries within the boundaries of the GCC were brought together to discuss the idea of working collaboratively on an evangelistic process. It required the participants to view evangelism from an inclusive

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perspective. The participants included representatives from *It Is Written*, Southern

Adventist University, Wildwood Lifestyle Center, and the Georgia-Cumberland

Conference Church Ministries, Communications, Publishing, Youth and Young Adults,

and Ministerial Departments. It also included Bible workers, pastors, and educators.

The content of these planning meetings revolved around the plausibility of

creating a collaborative outreach model that would incorporate the evangelistic focus of

each involved participant. Although the title of these meetings embodied the challenge of

the proposed purpose and aim of the conversations, the application of a suggested

acronym, "AWKWARD," captured the overall collaborative intent of the meetings:

"Advancing with Kingdom Workers as We Reach New Disciples." A total of five

Awkward Meetings took place. Three subgroups were formed to focus on several facets

of the evangelism strategy which emanated from the conversations.

<center>Criteria for Participation in
the AWKWARD Meetings</center>

As stated, the AWKWARD meetings were an invitation to participate in a

discussion about the plausibility of developing a collaborative evangelism strategy for the

Georgia-Cumberland Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Participants in these

meetings needed to meet two criteria. First, the participant had to be an active practitioner

in a field of evangelistic outreach. This outreach could be health related, service or needs

oriented, gospel proclamation focused, youth ministry related, etc. Second, the

participant's outreach activities had to be based within the geographical boundaries of the

GCC.

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Contributors and Contributions
to the AWKWARD Meetings

It should be noted that prior to the first Awkward Meeting, which took place on March 2, 2016, individual meetings had been scheduled with a majority of the participants representing organizations and ministries not employed by the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. The goal of these individual meetings was to survey the participants' interest level in participating in this collaborative process. In an effort to ascertain the specific area of evangelism expertise and experience of each of the discussion participates, three questions were proposed:

1. What is it you do in the area of evangelism?

2. What are the challenges you face?

3. How can your area of evangelistic focus be integrated into a collaborative conference-wide evangelistic process?

Answers given to these questions proved useful in the further development of a process for collaborative evangelism.

Those participants employed by GCC were later asked the three aforementioned questions during the first and second AWKWARD meetings. It is important to note that every participant surveyed prior to, and during, the early group meetings expressed a desire to be actively involved in the project. The participant responses to the three questions above can be found in the chart "Participant Responses" (See Appendix A).

Though there were a variety of evangelistic challenges shared by the participants in their answer to question three, the two most common concerns were: (a) helping church members and church workers to understand their role in evangelism, and (b) ways to keep them evangelistically focused. Table 1 contains other common observations.

Table 1

Participants Observations of Church Members'
Understanding of Evangelism

General Observations	Understanding Personal Role
Need to encourage members to be involved	The disconnection of members from the community due to geographical distance
Update the congregation on the progress of the evangelistic effort	Integration of every member into ministry
Coordinate ministries of the church into the evangelism process	Personal ownership in the evangelism process
Maintain ongoing momentum in the evangelism process	Need for training and revival
Become and stay relevant to the targeted community	Moving from *maintenance ministry* to *every member an evangelist*
Keep the focus on Jesus	Recapturing the "movement" mentality

Developing a Process

Discussion concerning the form this collaborative evangelistic venture would take

was guided by the desire to keep the process simple. It was noted that such a process was

to involve all the discussion participants and utilize their areas of expertise in outreach.

Second, the process was to extend beyond a simple end, mainly the completion of a series

of meetings, but was to be cyclical in a manner which would allow for the process to

repeat itself. Finally, in recognition of the cultural differences of the members of the

GCC, it was necessary for this process to be dynamic in nature to accommodate such

diversity in evangelistic perspectives. Sensitivity to specific ministerial contexts

influenced by cultural diversity, the various geographical locations, and specific mission focus were also taken into consideration.

After much discussion of the many facets that an evangelism process might involve, the participants were in agreement with a proposed simple *three stages evangelism process*. The process consisted of "Pre-Work," "Event," "and Post-Work" stages.

Defining the Stages of the Evangelism Process

Evangelism as a continual process, rather than a scheduled event with a beginning and ending date, is popular among congregations of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. For many, evangelism is now a year-round activity serving as a guiding template for all ministry functions and services rendered by congregations. The pre-work, event, and post-work stages of evangelism proposed by the AWKWARD meeting will now be discussed.

Pre-work Stage

The pre-work stage focused on activities that enabled congregations to connect with their immediate communities in efforts to build and strengthen several pivotal areas necessary for effective evangelistic work. The first area involved the desire to build stronger church-community relations. The second area focused upon the need to become familiar with the social problems and challenges confronting the surrounding community. The third and final area provided opportunities to network with other religious and help-oriented entities with the intention of building trust, creating awareness, and establishing partnerships to address community needs. These three focus areas were further

incorporated into three sub-topics of the pre-work stage: spiritual preparedness of congregants, creation of a culture of evangelism within the churches, and building relationships with the surrounding community.

Spiritual Preparedness

During the group discussion, it was noted that in order to establish and maintain a sense of spiritual preparedness among church members for the work of evangelism, it needed to become a regular part of the congregational life. The group believed that building a sense of spiritual preparedness would include emphasizing the importance of scheduling regular times of personal and congregational spiritual renewal. This spiritual renewal could be expressed by members who decide to regularly attend worship services, mid-week services, and small group meetings. Churches could contribute by establishing weekly and quarterly calendars for individual and group prayer times, and encouraging members to engage in the daily nurture of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Finally, congregations would be encouraged to understand the necessity of rendering regular periods of Christian service to others. The group believed that these actions would promote a sustained spiritual stamina among congregants, thus elevating their readiness to participate in evangelistic efforts.

Creation of a Culture of Evangelism

It was noted that in order to create a culture of evangelism within the congregation, leaders would need to be intentional in this endeavor. Joseph Kidder (2015) describes a church with a culture of evangelism as a place where "Each member is encouraged to play a role in the congregation's effort to reach the people around the

church with the message of salvation in Jesus" (p. 36). Such a culture helped to create and maintain an overall focus upon this important aspect of congregational life. Ways to facilitate this included building an awareness of the demographic makeup of the surrounding community by answering specific questions: Who are the people living around the church? What is their social status? What stages of life are they experiencing? What is their economic standing? Such information was used to identify possible opportunities for the congregation to create appropriate ministries to address major neighborhood needs. Another action was to require that every church calendar event have, as part of its plan, an outreach component related to meeting the community needs and build relationships with them. No programming or activity was to be implemented only for the sake of the members, but was to be geared to ministering to the community. The aim was to encourage members to embrace evangelism as a way of personal and congregational life. Also, the importance of religiously celebrating the fruits of evangelism, the changed lives resulting from new encounters with Jesus, and sharing the stories of joy resulting from outreach efforts cannot be overemphasized in efforts to create a culture of evangelism. Kidder (2015) provides a number of tools to help facilitate a culture of evangelism such as being loving and accepting, depending on the power of prayer, training members to do evangelism, and establishing strong friendships with the community (pp. 37-44).

Building Relationships

As was previously alluded to, in order to create a culture of evangelism, some level of relationship building must take place between the congregation and the community. Being intentional about getting to know the people and community around

the church is at the heart of the pre-work stage and involves compassion-based ministries, where congregations seek to address specific community needs or challenges. Several examples involve cleaning up a community playground or providing breakfast for elementary aged children. Other ongoing relation building activities can be described as random acts of kindness where members distribute bottles of water at recreational events or offer assistance to mothers struggling to maintain control of their children.

Members were challenged to discover ways to connect with people within their sphere of influence. They were also encouraged to reach out to missing members of the congregation and connect with relatives of current members. Utilizing community service events such as health expos, door-to-door surveys, cooking schools, adopt a school, etc., were excellent ways to build relationships with the community.

Additional Matters

During the group discussions, there were a number of observations shared which were deemed important to the overall success of the evangelism process, especially during the pre-work stage. One pertinent observation was the need to utilize one common method for tracking interests from the start and throughout the entire process. This would make it easier to track the progress of interests and to provide the appropriate follow up. There were a number of tracking programs suggested. Due to time constraints, information on the practicality and proficiency of these programs could not be collected. Therefore, no specific program was chosen for this project.

Another group observation led to the development of a calendar to coordinate all involved ministries and the implementation of the various aspects of the pre-work stage. This calendar also incorporated the North American Division Evangelism Compassion

Ministries schedule, while including holidays and other events which could provide opportunities to connect with the community. This calendar also included latitude for churches to schedule their own local pre-work activities on one or more unscheduled weekends per month. There were a number of suggested pre-work events included in "The Pre-Work Calendar" (See Appendix B).

As can be observed on the calendar, there were scheduled training events presented by Wildwood, a local natural health and medical missionary training school, and SALT, which is an acronym for *Soul-winning and Leadership Training*. SALT serves as a partner of *It Is Written International Television* and is located on the campus of Southern Adventist University.

The pre-work stage for the Georgia-Cumberland Conference was implemented January 1, 2017, and was expected to be emphasized during the year. It was scheduled to transition into the next stage of the evangelism process, event stage, in the early months of 2018. As planned, the pre-work stage was not intended to be a stand-alone stage. It prepared the grounds upon which the next stage was to be executed. In addition, the pre-work stage included year-round activities supportive of the aims of the post-work stage as well, and offered many opportunities for new members to become involved in the ministries of the congregation.

The Event Stage

The event involved actual evangelism presentations given to a public audience. During the group discussion concerning the format the event would take, two important features became apparent. Since this was a conference-wide evangelism initiative, certain aspects of the event would need to be conference-initiated. Therefore, in order to

establish a sense of continuity and unity, a certain degree of over-arching structure was put in place. First, it was agreed that every church and organization would use a common theme and logo. Second, a common date was selected to mark the beginning of the event. Both a common theme and a common start date for the event allowed unified conference-wide advertising to take place through a variety of media outlets.

While promoting conference-wide unity, the second feature was to encourage a local application of the conference-wide plans. The Georgia-Cumberland Conference is comprised of over 35 culture groups operating in a number of geographical settings, ranging from urban and rural, to mountainous. Such diversity required a flexibility that would allow local churches to determine the format of their meetings based on what would be most effective in their region. A variety of formats were suggested for the event, including lunch-time presentations, evening seminars, talks in TED Talk format, meetings designed for obtaining decisions for baptism, etc. This flexibility also allowed local congregations to determine the dates and length of their meetings. Most participants preferred a reaping format that normally ran for a week, while others chose to present a three to four-week series.

Common presentation materials were suggested during the planning sessions. Although these materials allowed for thematic advertising based on a common subject matter, it was later decided to allow local pastors and congregations the option to decide the content. Regardless of the length of the event, format, location, or presentation material used, the first message title and start date of the local events were the same throughout the Conference. The start date for the event was scheduled for February 10,

2018. Again, the intention was to promote a certain level of unity and allow for conference-wide advertising.

Pastors and congregations of certain regions were given the flexibility to combine their events into regional meetings where they could elect to have a common venue and presenter (preferably a local pastor) for the event, or even to exchange pulpits. Other discussion on the event stage can be reviewed in "The Event Stage Planning Notes" (See Appendix C).

Post-Work Stage

A number of group participants observed that the post-work of many evangelistic efforts tends to be neglected. Usually little thought is given to the assimilation of new members into the life of the congregation, or how to follow up on those who do not make a decision for Christ during the evangelistic event. The group wanted to be intentional in addressing these concerns and incorporating ample planning into the post-work stage. Suggestions were made as to what the various congregations could use in their own setting. This was by no means an exhaustive list of materials and programs, or an attempt to limit such to this list. The post-work stage was scheduled to start at the conclusion of the event stage and was to continue until the end of the 2018 calendar year. Additional discussion on the post-work stage can be reviewed in "The Post-Work Planning Notes" (See Appendix D).

Assimilation

In order to integrate new members into the life of the congregation, pastors and local congregational leaders were to be intentional in working to establish relationships

between new members and existing members of the church family. Several ways to accomplish this was by assigning new members accountability partners responsible for continued support and coaching. These accountability partners encouraged new members to become involved in church and evangelistic ministry opportunities, and to participate in prayer meeting and study groups. These partners also provided inspirational material and modeled personal worship practices that would foster continued growth in the new members' relationship with God. Table 2 lists a number of suggested assimilation resources and their functions. Again, this is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Table 2

Assimilation Resources/Practices and Functions

Resources/Practices	**Function**
Small groups	Relationship building, accountability
Flocktock.com	Online small group meeting
Living your strengths	Gift and passion discovery
No Drowning Rabbits	Gift and passion discovery
Ministry fairs	Gift and passion discovery
Creation of new ministry positions	To accommodate unique giftedness

Sensitivity to Maturity Level of New Christians

It was important to encourage older members to be sensitive to the possibly fragile spiritual state of new believers by being supportive and providing an environment of safety for new Christians to grow in their walk with Christ. These new Christians also needed opportunities to discover their gifts and ways in which they could contribute to

the work of reaching others for Christ. Table 3 lists several ways congregations can

intentionally provide supportive, nurturing environments for new members.

Table 3

*Ways Congregations Can Provide Nurturing
Environments for New Members*

Practices	**Function**
Selection of nurturing members	Remain after services for relationship building and fellowship
Special interest members	Intentional relationship building based on shared careers, interests, hobbies
Spiritual partners	Coaching and support
Select Sabbath Schools	Safe places for lesson study
Personal ministry training	Teach new converts how to share gospel with family and friends

Sharing and Finalizing the Conference-Wide Evangelism Process

Much work had been done creating and planning the collaborative conference-

wide evangelism endeavor. Although a number of pastors and church members were

participants in the discussion groups, the initiative needed to be shared with all the

Conference pastors and local congregations.

The Georgia-Cumberland Conference Pastors

Later discussion in the AWKWARD meetings focused upon presenting this three-

stage collaborative evangelism process to the pastors of the Conference, and developing

its timeframe. Although complete in its conceptual design, the idea was to invite local

pastors and entities to review the plans from a field perspective and further refine the

overall process. This not only increased the infield feasibility of the proposed process, but

allowed pastors to contribute and build commitment and support for the project.

This integrated evangelism strategy was shared at three annual pastors' meetings,

with two meetings taking place before the first AWKWARD meeting of March 2, 2016.

The first presentation to the pastors took place during the summer of 2015 at the North

American Division Ministerial Meetings in Austin, Texas. The pastors were verbally

surveyed concerning their interest in such a project. The majority of those present

indicated a strong interest in participating.

The next presentation was made during the January, 2016 Winter Workers

Retreat, which included a Power Point presentation entitled *Whatif?* This title was

selected as the theme for the endeavor. During both meetings invitations were extended

to those interested in attending the AWKWARD meeting of March 2, 2016, which took

place at the Conference office. More than 20 pastors attended the five AWKWARD

meetings which took place up to mid-summer, 2016.

The third presentation took place during the 2016 Summer Pastors' Retreat where

a summary report was given to the pastors and their spouses. Three pastors who were

regular participants in the AWKWARD meetings presented the three stages of the

evangelism process and other particulars of the program. These reports were received

with enthusiasm. During this meeting, pastors were invited to assist in the continued

development of the evangelistic process. This continued evaluation and further

development was accomplished through the coordination and efforts of the four Regional

Ministerial Directors who encouraged continued discussion on the matter during

regularly scheduled regional and local pastor meetings.

The Local Congregation

As pastors became increasingly familiar with the three-staged collaborative

evangelistic process through their involvement, they also became the essential conduits

through which to inform their congregations of this upcoming endeavor. Pastors reviewed

the Pre-Work Calendar and merged it with the local evangelistic plans the congregation

had previously planned for 2017. Pastors also encouraged members to participate in the

scheduled local and regional training events. The pastors worked and planned with their

congregations and other pastors as to how to join the initiative, and also discussed other

possible pre-work needs for their regions.

The Communications Department of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference

produced a series of three-minute videos to assist pastors in sharing the process with their

congregations. Posters, cards, and banners were produced to be used in the churches for

the advertisement of the project. A timeline for each stage of the evangelism process can

be seen in Table 4.

Table 4

Projected Timeline for Collaborative Evangelism Process

Activity	Time Period
Pre-Work Stage	January 2017 to February 2018
The Event Stage	Starts February 10, 2018
Post-Work Stage	Starts near the end of the event and continues until the end of 2018
The Process Repeats	Starts with the post-work stage and continues

Summary

The development and implementation of this conference-wide collaborative evangelism project involved the participation of a number of people and organizations whose interests are in evangelism. Their participation in a series of planning meetings resulted in the development of a three-stage evangelism process. This process included the pre-work stage which focused upon the implementation of activities that enabled congregations to connect with their surrounding communities to build relationships, identify community needs, and to network with other religious and help-oriented entities to build trust and awareness. The event stage mainly centered on the actual evangelism presentation given to a public audience. The final stage, post-work, focused upon ways to assimilate new members into congregational life, while continuing to strengthen their relationship with God. The post-work also included intentional ways to stay connected to

those who may not have made a decision to accept Christ, but expressed interest in

learning more.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS OF PROJECT INTERVENTION

Introduction

The Georgia-Cumberland Conference's collaborative evangelism process began January 1, 2017 and was comprised of three phases: pre-work, the event, and post-work. The pre-work stage began January 1, 2017 and continued until January 31, 2018. The event stage began with a campaign start date of February 10, 2018 and continued to December 31, 2018. The post-work stage starting date was dependent upon the ending date for individual congregations' event stage and was to continue until congregations concluded their work with the interests generated during the entire evangelism process. The results of each stage are presented below.

The Pre-Work Stage

The pre-work stage focused on activities which enabled congregations to connect with their surrounding community, with the intention of strengthening several pivotal areas necessary for effective evangelistic work. The first area involved building stronger church and community relations. The second area focused upon becoming familiar with the social problems and challenges confronting the community. The third, sought to network with other religious and help-oriented entities to establish partnerships that would attempt to address community needs. These three areas of focus were

appropriately incorporated into a process aimed at preparing members and pastors to

adequately address these areas, mainly during the pre-work stage.

Member Preparation

Building stronger church-community relations, discovering community

challenges, and networking with other help-agencies, are three areas of focus that were

further incorporated into a three-part process for preparing congregations to engage in the

overall evangelism process. This three-part process included spiritual preparedness,

creation of a congregational culture of evangelism, and building a network of community

relationships.

Spiritual Preparedness

In order to encourage members to participate in evangelism, pastors and

congregation leaders made efforts to increase spiritual preparedness for the work of

outreach. Members were encouraged to schedule regular times to pray for family

members and friends who they would invite to upcoming events. This prayer time

included time for personal renewal and for growing a deeper relationship with God.

Seasons of congregational prayer and Bible studies were scheduled in an effort to inspire

members to partnership with God in the process of evangelism. Encouraging members to

become active in small groups and to attend church services on a regular basis was a

consistent part of the *announcements time*, during church services. Helping pastors and

members to understand the importance of knowing Christ, and living a life reflective of

His teachings, was paramount in preparation for reaching others. These actions and others

promoted a sustained spiritual stamina among congregants and appeared to have raised

their readiness to participate in evangelistic activities. This observation was noted by pastors who witnessed an increase in attendance and participation.

Creation of a Culture of Evangelism

Pastors were encouraged to be intentional in building a culture of evangelism within congregational life. This culture of evangelism was vital in helping church members to embrace a missional focus towards the surrounding communities and was reflected in their programs and outreach planning. Although the Conference signed a contract with a demographics program provider for the purpose of helping congregations to understand vital statistics about their surrounding communities, access to this resource was not available until later in the evangelism process. However, through internet-based resources and conversations with community leaders, pastors were able to obtain information about the makeup of their community, including social statistics, predominant life concerns, economic status, and other demographics. With this information, churches were able to provide appropriate ministries to address relevant neighborhood needs.

Church boards were encouraged to insist that most, if not all, church calendar events were to contain outreach components that would connect church programs and initiatives with the community. This would include attempts to meet community needs, promote community-based activities, and relationship building. These activities encouraged members to embrace evangelism as an integral component of personal and congregational life, rather than viewing evangelism as a mere segment of church programing.

Pastors were also intentional in highlighting the many positive results of their congregation's outreach endeavors. Members who were involved in outreach were given recognition during church services. Others were given opportunities to share testimonies of how people's lives had been touched, through their acts of kindness and other supportive means. People who had made decisions to follow Christ, or who were returning, as former members were recognized and given opportunities to share their stories. These activities and others were instrumental in heightening the evangelistic focus and fervor of those congregations which put these actions into practice.

**Building Relationships Through
Compassion Ministry**

To build on the effort to offer effective and relevant evangelistic work in the immediate community, congregations were encouraged to build stronger church-community relations. This was accomplished through the implementation of compassion-based ministries. Pastors and church members used door-to-door surveys, held conversations with community leaders, and met with other help agencies in an effort to better understand the community and its needs. In some communities, these efforts resulted in the opportunity to address several specific community needs, such as (a) providing family, parent, and financial counseling programs, (b) organizing breakfasts for needy children, (c) donating classroom material, (d) providing tutoring assistance to local schools, (e) volunteering staff for community events, (f) presenting welcome packages to people new to the community, and (g) providing support for single parent homes. Many of these compassion-based ministries allowed congregations to build relationships and networks with other religious and help-oriented entities in the community. This served to

elevate the community's awareness of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in many districts.

<div align="center">Pastor and Congregation Preparation</div>

Although a number of pastors contributed to the overall discussion and planning for this collaborative effort, it was necessary to provide a schedule of regional training events for all GCC pastors. Most of these dates were established during district pastors' meetings. In addition, the Conference and certain presenters provided resource material to be used in preparation for this collaborative process.

Training and Planning

During the years 2016 and 2017, discussions on the evangelism process, training on evangelism methodology, update reports, and testimonies were regular parts of the annually scheduled winter and summer ministers' meetings of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. Pastors appreciated the many presentations given on evangelism topics, such as, *How to plan an evangelism calendar*, *The process of preparation, execution, and follow-up of an evangelistic event*, *Preaching evangelistic sermons*, *How to make calls for a decision*, and *How to improve member involvement*. Pastors repeatedly received points of clarifications on the three stages of the evangelism process and on the expectations for each stage. These times of sharing promoted synergy and momentum, as transition towards the event phase of the endeavor took place.

These training dynamics within the large pastoral gatherings were augmented by fifteen smaller monthly regional pastors' meetings. In these smaller settings, pastors discussed the specifics of their district evangelism plans, encouraged one another, shared

evangelism resources, and prayed together. In more populated regions, pastors discussed ways they could work collaboratively, as partners. This collaborative spirit was most apparent between the Hispanic pastors, who, as a team, planned a collaborative conference-wide presentation, in conjunction with the *Whatif?* meetings, which involved a representative from the Southern Union Conference, as their main speaker. The Southern Union Conference oversees the work of eight Conferences, operating in eight states, located in the Southeastern region of the United States. This includes the Georgia-Cumberland Conference.

Preaching Materials

Several pastors, who had previously prepared preaching material, offered their material to be used with the *Whatif?* theme. Several wrote new series and offered to share these resources, as well. In addition, arrangements were made with *It Is Written* to offer their *Sermon Builder Gold* program, an evangelistic sermon development resource, at half-price, to Georgia-Cumberland pastors. The *Evangelism Resource Center* of Southern Adventist University also offered for free the use of their many evangelistic proclamation resources, to pastors and lay-pastors interested in using them. Pastors were encouraged to visit the Evangelism Department of the North American Division website, which contains a wealth of information on the evangelism process, as well as preaching material. Wildwood Lifestyle Center, a local natural health and medical missionary not-for-profit training school, made available their training materials on medical missionary work and their training manual, entitled *Essentials of Health Evangelism*. Pastors availed themselves of these preaching materials, as did several lay persons and office staff, who participated in this evangelistic initiative.

Calendar of Training Events and Activities

A calendar was created to coordinate the various programs of the pre-work stage, which included training and meeting events. This calendar incorporated the North American Division Evangelism Compassion Ministries schedule, on their website, and also, incorporated annual holidays and other programed events, which provided opportunities to connect with the community. This calendar provided churches the opportunity to schedule their own local pre-work activities (See Appendix B). It was noted in several regional pastors' meetings that several congregations found this calendar helpful in their pre-work planning.

As the calendar shows, there were scheduled health-focused training events presented by Wildwood, and Bible study and interest follow-up training provided by *SALT*, which serves as a partner of *It Is Written International Television*, and is located in the campus of Southern Adventist University. Due to changes in the staff at *SALT*, their regional training did not take place as scheduled. However, *It Is Written* provided training in the area of basic evangelism, correspondence Bible study coordination, and leading people to Jesus (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: *It Is Written* Advertisement Flyer for Training Events.

This training was provided by means of three scheduled webinars, which took place monthly, between August and October, 2017. These webinars were archived on the Georgia-Cumberland website, *gccsda.com*, and made available for viewing at later times. According to the Communications Department of the Georgia-Cumberland, these programs were viewed by approximately 15% of the Georgia-Cumberland congregations, which was below expectation.

Three regional training sessions on basic medical missionary work were provided by Wildwood (See Figure 2). As can be seen on the flyer, some of the topics presented were: *The Master's method of soul-winning*, *The Adventist Advantage*, and *Relevant: Health Evangelism in the 21ˢᵗ Century*.

Figure 2: Wildwood Advertisement Flyer for Training Events.

The pastors of the host churches for this training reported that attendance and support from surrounding churches was notable. Although these training sessions appeared to have been resourceful for both pastors and congregation members, due to delays in receiving confirmation on several of the training dates, a few congregations found it difficult to implement the training into their local church calendars, and/or arrange for travel to the presentation sites.

The pre-work stage for the Georgia-Cumberland Conference started its implementation on January 1, 2017 and was emphasized for the duration of that year. It

transitioned into the next stage of the evangelism process, the event stage, in early February of 2018. As planned, the pre-work stage was not intended to be a stand-alone stage. It very much prepared the grounds upon which the next two stages were to be executed.

The Event Stage

The event stage was the phase of the evangelism process where invitations were extended to the public to attend meetings. These meetings were also intended to provide opportunities for attendees to make some level of commitment to pursue life changes and to pursue a new –or grow an already existing— relationship with God. Planning for the advertisement of this stage involved three important components: the selection of one of five evangelistic thematic formats and materials to be used by pastors and local congregations; the launch of a series of public advertisements; and preparation for a common kick-off date.

Advertisements

Pastors and congregations were encouraged to use a combination of printed, electronic, and verbal advertisements, which were designed to extend invitations to the community and to relatives and friends to attend upcoming meetings and presentations. Some of the intended results of the pre-work stage became apparent during this time of invitation. For example, the efforts exerted in becoming better acquainted with the surrounding community, through compassion-based ministries, and the relationships and networks that were established, proved instrumental in the increase of attendance during the event stage. Many of the visitors who attended had been personally invited by church

members with whom they had become acquainted. According to verbal reports from a number of pastors, the efforts at being intentional in building relationships within the community appeared to have had a positive impact upon the number of people who attended their meetings.

Common Theme

As mentioned above, the theme for this collaborative evangelistic effort was *Whatif?* The theme itself was a product of the AWKWARD meetings, and the logo was developed by the Communications Department of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. Pastors of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference were given the opportunity to make suggestions on the final logo as seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Georgia-Cumberland Conference
Logo for the *Whatif?* Event.

This theme was then applied to several evangelistic formats that were made available for pastors to choose from, according to their congregation's evangelism plans. The decision was made to limit to five the number of format options. These five formats supported the following themes: health, prophecy, nutrition, social justice, and the hope embodied by the gospel. The services of *SermonView*, an all-in-one marketing company based out of Vancouver, Washington, were selected to design the artwork for the advertisement of the event and develop a congruent marketing concept for the five

thematic formats, which incorporated the Conference's *Whatif?* theme. Examples of each

thematic format are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Thematic Formats for the *Whatif?* Event.

Local congregations customized their choice of thematic format by providing

event times and locations, specific offerings, such as child-care or refreshments, gifts

offered to participants, speaker information, and opening night titles and topics. In order

to assist in the ordering process, *SermonView* developed a customized time-table,

marking the dates for each stage of their marketing campaign (See Table 5).

Table 5

SermonView's Proposed Time Table

Dates 2017-2018	Actions to Complete
October 15, 2017:	Conference receives order form and assists churches with planning/budgets
October 25, 2017:	Approval of the 5 templates
October 31, 2017:	Host website is up. Host church sign-up opens online
November 1 to November 30, 2017:	Churches can sign-up and order promotional resources
December 1 to December 31, 2017:	Resources get designed, proof approved, and printed
January 18, 2018:	All resources have been received by local churches giving them 3 weeks to utilize the resources

Materials

SermonView developed a basic promotional kit for each of the five thematic

formats. Each kit included one thousand 4" x 6" invitation cards to be hand-distributed by

members, one 8' x 4' outdoor banner to be displayed outside the place of meeting, and

one 2' x 5' indoor banner with portable stand. All printed advertising included a URL

code which linked to a custom website page, *BigQuestionSeminars.com* and

BigQuestionSeminars.org, which matched the look and theme of the chosen thematic

format, and also listed a toll-free number that accepted pre-registrations, provided

directions, and recorded messages for local congregations. Those responding to the

advertisements could choose to pre-register and receive email reminders 72 and 24 hours

prior to the event. Pastors received email notifications containing information on every person who registered to attend. This information was then used to prepare handout material especially selected for the potential attendee.

In addition to the promotional kits, congregations were able to select from a variety of supplemental materials. These materials consisted of 3.5" x 8" door hangers, 10' x 10' stage backdrops, pack of ten 18" x 24" road signs, and jumbo card mailers. Individual Facebook advertisement campaigns were offered to supplement the collective advertisement which also contained a video invitation to attend a local event. Regional advertising, which included additional Facebook advertisement and Instagram, YouTube, and Google advertisement campaigns, were available for purchase. All the other features offered by *SermonView* for this event can be viewed in the Letters of Agreement A and B found in Appendices E and F. According to *SermonViews'* observations, congregations that utilized the additional electronic advertising noted an increase in interest registration.

On November 1, 2017, congregations were able to sign-up and order directly from *SermonView* the basic promotional kits and other resources, as needed. The ordering process was totally handled by *SermonView* and appeared to have gone well, with few setbacks. In some cases, resource development and approval extended beyond the December 31, 2017 deadline date, to January 15, 2018. However, most of the material distribution was completed, at least one week prior to the common start date of February 10, 2018. Regional media advertising launched January 15, 2018. Although February 10 was the targeted start date, a number of congregations had planned to start at different times throughout the year, while still incorporating the *WhatIf?* motif. These congregations were unable to benefit from the general advertising done on the

BigQuestionsSeminars website, nor were they able to participate in the other advertisements presented on Facebook and the Georgia-Cumberland Conference website.

Start of Local Presentations

Of the 205 churches and companies of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, 46 congregations were signed up through *SermonView* to participate in the advertising services and the February 10, 2018 start date, for the collaborative evangelism event stage. In addition, 20 pastors, using the services of *SermonView*, indicated start dates for their campaigns that would begin before or after the conference-wide start date. Although two of the three Seventh-day Adventist Academies were invited to participate in the *WhatIf?* endeavor, only the Georgia-Cumberland Academy participated by planning their student week of prayer around the *WhatIf?* theme.

Congregation Participation

There were congregations that participated in the collaborative evangelism process but chose not to follow the *WhatIf?* theme. Some of those congregations worked directly with *SermonView* or chose other marketing companies and other means to support their meetings. In total, 77 churches utilized the services offered through *SermonView* to some degree during 2018. It is important to note that during the third quarter of every year, the Georgia-Cumberland's Ministerial and Evangelism Department sends to pastors an email link to what is known as an *Evangelism Subsidy Request Form*. This form allows pastors to give a description of the evangelism plans they have for the coming year and to provide an estimation of costs to fulfill these plans. During the third quarter of 2017, this form was adjusted to meet the evangelisms needs for the *WhatIf?*

event of 2018. The altered version of this form can be viewed in Appendix G. According to the number of evangelism subsidy request forms received before November 30, 2017, of the 205 churches and companies of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, 147 congregations requested funds to participate to some degree in the Conference-wide collaborative evangelistic event for 2018. This would indicate a 71.7% congregation participation in this conference-wide initiative.

Reports and Statistics

During and following the conclusion of the *WhatIf?* event, a number of pastors shared reports on the progress of the meetings which took place in their district. Most of these reports were given during local pastors' meetings and via email. These reports included the number of church members and visitors who attended the meetings nightly, the number of baptisms that resulted from the meetings, the number of returning members who re-dedicated their lives to Jesus, contacts that were made and would be followed-up with visitation and invitations to future events, and other statistics. Some email letters contained exciting reports of increased attendance which continued even after the meetings had come to an end. There were several pastors who voiced slight disappointment in the number of church members participating and the number of visitors. A number of email reports can be viewed in Appendix H.

Many stories of how people's lives were changed and how they were led to join the church were shared and celebrated during church worship services and other public gatherings throughout the Conference. A few stories were featured in the Conference newsletter, *The Communique*, which is sent out, quarterly, to all members. Stories of changed lives and increased church attendance were shared in various meetings and

through email reports. The Regional Ministerial Directors shared similar reports from
their regions in their monthly correspondences with Conference leaders.

Table 6 contains a comparison of the quarterly combined baptisms and profession
of faith numbers reported for the last five years and their yearly totals.

Table 6

Five Year Totals for Baptisms and Profession
of Faith Broken Down by Quarter

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
1st Quarter	158	218	202	172	248
2nd Quarter	374	288	338	251	332
3rd Quarter	302	299	268	226	260
4th Quarter	359	451	362	369	343
TOTAL	**1193**	**1256**	**1170**	**1018**	**1183**

To date, according to www.eadventists.org there appears to be a slight increase in
the number of people joining the church in 2018, as compared to the previous two years.
Years 2014 and 2015 also had significant evangelism programs to take place, which
resulted in increases in the number of people joining the church.

SermonView's Assessment

SermonView provided a summary assessment of all the meetings advertised
through their services. This summary includes the five thematic packages of health,
prophecy, gospel, cooking, and social justice offered to congregations, as well as other
themes chosen by pastors. According to their summary report in Table 7, themes related
to prophecy or felt needs/apologetics appeared to have garnered the best response as
compared to other themes.

Table 7

SermonView's Summary of Public Response to Thematic Advertisements

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Prophecy Meetings:

1. Included artwork/themes: Prophecies of Hope, Prophecy Countdown, Unlocking Bible Prophecy, and Final Events
2. Average Cost Per Registration: $181.93
3. Note: Churches that did prophecy events were more likely to support with higher budgets, Facebook ads, and mailers.

Felt Needs/Apologetics:

1. Included artwork/themes: Creation, Health, Cooking
2. Average Cost Per Registration: $89.30
3. Note: cost per registration does not include churches that receive only the free $500 kit and received no registrations. Churches did well with Facebook on these styles of meetings.

Hope in Jesus/Questions for God:

1. Included Artwork/Themes: Living with Hope and Hope for a Better World
2. Average Cost Per Registration: $274.35
3. Note: 17 of the 49 churches chose these themes but had the lowest results. Even when they invested in Facebook and mailings. This matches nation-wide data—meetings focused on Hope do not receive strong attendance from outside marketing. These meetings are best served only at churches with strong member participation, through personal invitation.

As can be seen in the table above, gospel and social justice/hope themes were the most expensive, per respondent, at $274.35 per registrant, as compared to $89.30, for those registering for felt needs/apologetics themed meetings. Other factors, such as the use of Facebook ads and congruence between what was advertised and what was offered on the presentation lineup list, had an impact on the public's response as well. For a full report from *SermonView*, see summary email in Appendix I.

Post-Work

The post-work stage was included to encourage pastors to be intentional in planning ways to assimilate new members into the life of the congregation and to follow up on those who had not made a decision for Christ, during the evangelism event. As stated before, the starting date for the post-work stage was dependent upon the ending date for the individual congregation's event stage and was to continue until each congregation had concluded its work with the interests generated during the entire evangelism process.

Nurturing Events and Activities

According to the plans developed during the AWKWARD meetings of 2016, the idea was to encourage pastors to have in place some form of support and nurture system for new or returning believers. For a full summary of these plans see the "Post-Work Planning Sheet" in Appendix D. As indicated in the submitted Evangelism Subsidy Request Forms, a number of pastors took into consideration the development of post-work strategies. There were four post-work plans that were most commonly noted in these requests. The first, was to provide leadership and discipleship training to new members. This training would expose new believers to ministry opportunities in the local congregations, while preparing them for service. The second was Bible study training, which prepared new believers to witness about their faith to their various relationship networks. Third, there were a number of pastors who scheduled follow-up events such as proclamation series, health-related seminars, prophecy classes, and outreach programs to maintain relationships with those who may not have made a decision for Christ. And

fourth, spiritual gifts discovery courses were offered to assist new believers in identifying their passion for church ministry and ways they could utilize their spiritual gifts.

Other post-work activities shared by pastors during their regional meetings involved the assimilation of new members into one of several different forms of care groups. These various groups were based upon a shared interest or hobby, life-stage themed groups (singles, new couples, young parents, etc.), interest in certain Bible study topics, and prayer and other spiritual growth groups. In several congregations, new members were enlisted in mentoring programs, where they were placed under the spiritual care of a person who acted as a spiritual mentor, coach, or friend. Also, in an effort to capitalize on the spiritual enthusiasm possessed by most new believers, several pastors invited them to participate in classes on how to share their faith with family members and friends. Other pastors scheduled monthly and quarterly social events for new believers, who were encouraged to invite their families and friends. These social gatherings became opportunities for members to strengthen their relationships with new believers and to meet new people who were invited to attend.

Pastors also invited new and returning members to share their stories of how Christ had impacted their lives. These stories were invigorating and served to enhance the spirit of evangelism in the congregation. Several of these stories were included in the Conference newsletter, *The Communique,* as well as in the Southern Union magazine, *Southern Tidings*. A few people were invited to share their conversion stories at one of the eight camp meetings held throughout the Conference.

Bible Instructors

To augment the post-work stage, Bible instructors with extensive experience and training skills were hired on a part-time basis to serve as regional Bible workers. Their purpose was to train and equip church members in how to give Bible studies, call for decisions to follow Christ, and follow-up on leads. Some of the in-depth training done by these Bible instructors involved training members to accomplish important post-work activities such as teaching members how to keep record of new interests, evaluate the level of their interest in Christianity, make phone calls, arrange visits with the pastor, send out correspondence Bible material, present in-home Bible lessons, and extend invitations to accept Christ. The work of these Bible instructors readied members to serve as Bible workers during and following the 2018 evangelism event, as well as preparing them for future meetings. This training took place in classroom settings, and included an in-field experience as part of the training.

The Bible instructors then served as coaches to assist members needing additional support. Although there were a number of trained Bible instructors interested in participating in this program, only seven were found who, not only had extensive experience in Bible teaching, but were capable of training members in Bible instruction ministry. Because of the scarce availability of Bible instructors, their training coverage for the Conference territory was limited. It is estimated that only 40% of the many regions of the Georgia-Cumberland territory were covered by the present Bible instructor team.

New Believers' Retreat

New believers were invited to attend the *New Members' Retreat* at the Conference

retreat center in Crandall, Georgia. There they were given the opportunity to meet the

Georgia-Cumberland Conference administrators and departmental leaders and receive

presentations to better understand the structure of the world-wide Seventh-day Adventist

Organization. They were also given the opportunity to experience the tranquil setting as

guests of the Cohutta Springs Conference Center, expense free. The *New Members'*

Retreat occurred on January 18-20, 2019. The president of the Conference sent out

invitations to every new member, inviting them to this event. This was a time for

establishing and strengthening relationships with members from different parts of the

Conference with the hope of further solidifying the new members' resolve to serve Christ

through the implementation of the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Summary

Overall, the implementation of the three stages of this collaborative evangelism

endeavor appears to have gone well, with a satisfactory level of participation from

members, pastors, Bible instructors, departmental leaders, and representatives from

external organizations operating within the territory of the Georgia-Cumberland

Conference. As a result of the *WhatIf?* collaborative evangelism event, the numbers for

membership increase reported for 2018 indicate a slight increase over the previous two

years. The Ministerial and Evangelism Department of the Georgia-Cumberland

Conference finds these numbers encouraging and supportive of the effectiveness of a

conference-wide initiative. According to reports from the Regional Ministerial Directors,

participation in the *WhatIf?* event appear to have resulted in a stronger spirit of

enthusiasm for community outreach and evangelism planning among the churches in their regions. Several pastors who were once critical of public evangelism have expressed optimistic support of the collaborative evangelism process.

Organizations that participated in the process voiced satisfaction in their involvement in this initiative. According to their representatives who attended the discussions during the AWKWAD meetings and participated in the conference-wide process, have rarely been invited to participate in Conference events. Many of these entities have expressed an interest in participating in future evangelism projects. A more in-depth critique of this project is offered in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

EVALUATION OF THE RESULTS

What Was Learned

As is to be expected in the development and implementation of any project of this nature, there were anticipated as well as unanticipated learning experiences. Although much was learned during the course of this collaborative evangelism project, a significant number of learning opportunities were recognized in hindsight, following the conclusion of the project. The following observations will be implemented in the planning of future collaborative evangelism projects.

Invite All Probable Prospects

When initiating conversations concerning ways to collaboratively evangelize a region, I have learned that it is important to be thorough in identifying and inviting all possible participants to the initial planning meetings. Those who were invited from the start seemed more willing to participate in the discussions and remained involved throughout the development and execution of the overall project. Failing to aggressively identify and invite all possible attendees can result in diminished participation.

The intent was to invite every known evangelistically-focused organization or practitioner operating within the Conference territory to participate in the first meetings. This effort required speaking with pastors and church leaders to identify these various

ministries. As the list, seen in Appendix A, was being created, no pre-assumptions were made concerning the possible interest level of any invitee to the project. At that time, known Adventist evangelism practitioners within the Georgia-Cumberland Conference territory were extended an invitation to participate, and an estimated 95% agreed to attend. Five months into the project three additional ministries, operating in the Atlanta area, were discovered which were previously unknown to those who were taking part in the discussion. These three ministries were given invitations to join the discussion. Representatives from two of these ministries showed little interest in participating. Both stated that crucial formative planning had already taken place without their input and that they preferred not to derail or change any plans by joining at a late stage. Although they were interested in the project, they preferred to wait until they could have full participation in a future initiative. In order to establish a sense of equal opportunity to influence the formation of the process, it would have been preferable to have solicited their input from the beginning stages of the discussion. Therefore, more stringent efforts should be exercised to identify all prospective participants before the start of the first meeting.

It was also observed that participants who were onboard from the beginning seemed more supportive during planning discussions and were more willing to contribute resources, training, or other type of support to the collaborative evangelism project. The shared value of inclusivity fostered a sense of commitment from those taking part in the conversation. It was observed that only a few persons who were involved in the earliest discussions made decisions to later decline further participation in the project, mainly because of time constraints.

Involve All Interested Prospects

During the planning meetings for this project, I had a built-in tendency to focus more on my personal passion in evangelism, which is the area of prophecy. I gravitated toward the discussions that emphasized proclamation. However, it was not long before it became evident that it was important to show sensitivity to the passions of others around the table. The ministries cherished by each participant deserved genuine interest. Maintaining this inclusive stance seemed to have prompted a sense of committed involvement from others. Individuals representing diverse evangelism-oriented organizations seemed eager to take part in the development of the collaborative evangelism process, only as they felt that their focus and passion for ministry was being viewed by the group, as essential to the outcome of the overall project.

Another learning point regarding the need for inclusiveness involved the representation of each participant as active contributors during the execution of the evangelism project. For example, when a representative from a medical missionary ministry agreed to participate in the project, it was important to include medical missionary ministry as part of the overall evangelism process. This involved their participation beyond the planning discussions and being included in the schedule for training pastors and members, participating in the execution of the evangelism process, and being included in the post-work stages. Intentional and earnest efforts must be made to be inclusive of all viable ministries desiring to participate in all stages of the project.

Communicate to All

Clear communications between all participants were essential to the success of this project. As the project was developed and implemented, efforts were made to keep

all involved parties informed and up-to-date. In most cases the pastors were recognized as the primary communication-link between the Conference and their congregations. It was later discovered that this was not the best practice. Although they received regular detailed information and updates, there were a number of pastors who failed to keep their congregations informed of the project as it unfurled.

Awareness of this communications deficiency became evident while giving a report to the Executive Committee of the Conference. This committee is comprised of lay members and employed representatives from around the Conference and is tasked with the oversight of Conference matters between constituency meetings. While a large number of committee members were aware of the *WhatIf?* project, about 40% of the committee had heard nothing from their pastors concerning this effort. Those present wanted to know more about the progress of this initiative and desired other means for receiving updates and information. They also sought ways they could assist in communicating this to their constituency. It was decided that in order to keep participating congregations updated, multiple lines of communications were required, which would not be solely dependent upon pastors.

To meet this need, the Georgia-Cumberland Conference Communications Department, which took part in the entire planning process, volunteered to include information about this project in many of their correspondences with local congregations, church leaders, and members at large. Church clerks and head elders were contacted and encouraged to include information about this project in church bulletins as well as mentioning it during times for announcements. One recent Doctor of Ministry graduate, who had been involved in the collaboration discussions, volunteered to create a monthly

newsletter which contained updates, suggestions on how to prepare and execute each stage of the evangelism project, testimonies, and prayer requests. Although these measures increased levels of communications, it would have been most helpful to have discussed and implemented other ways to effectively communicate with all participants, especially with congregations, during the early stages of the project's development.

Recommendations

The scope of this project is one that can be replicated in any setting where various evangelistically-focused entities operate and show interest in participating in a series of collaborative discussions, planning sessions, and evangelistic projects. During the execution of this study and project, a number of recommendations where noted that, if considered, could enhance the process and results of a similar collaborative endeavor.

1. Start collaborative discussions at least two years before the beginning of the evangelism program. This will allow time necessary for the discussions, development, training, and implementation. A well thought out timeframe or calendar for the project would be beneficial.

2. This project incorporated training courses for pastors and members from four local organizations: Wildwood Lifestyle Center, which promotes natural healing and health practices; *It Is Written,* which is an international televised evangelism and humanitarian organization; Southern Adventist University, and conference-employed Bible instructors. Whatever training courses are incorporated, they should be scheduled at least one year in advance of the starting date for the pre-work stage. This will allow adequate time for local pastors and members to receive training in order to be equipped

and ready to provide resources and services during the community support emphasis preceding the event stage.

3. Since coming to the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, I have emphasized the need for local congregations to connect with their surrounding communities through compassion-based ministries. This has strengthened several important areas necessary for effective evangelism. The first area involved the initiation of efforts to build stronger church-community relationships. The second area focused on the desire to become familiar with the social problems and challenges confronting the surrounding community. And the third area was the will to network with other religious and help-oriented entities with the hope of building trust, awareness, and establish partnerships that would address community needs. Conferences should work in advance with their Church Ministries and Community Services Departments to plan conference-wide training and program events that would also serve to connect congregations with their surrounding community.

4. During the *Whatif?* project, *SermonView* proved to be a proficient advertising service to work with. Although many churches received their evangelism materials several weeks before the event, it would be beneficial to receive material for distribution at least six weeks in advance of the start of the event. This would allow for hand-distribution of material during certain pre-work programs such as health fairs, cooking classes, community relief projects, etc., and can serve as part of the first wave of advertisement. This would also provide more time to share handouts with friends and relatives.

5. Wildwood, *It Is Written*, and Southern Adventist University were instrumental in

providing training and materials during the planning and execution of this project. If such large-scaled entities exist in regions contemplating similar strategies, it would be of great benefit to invite those entities to also take part in the project by executing their own evangelistic programs based on the common collaborative theme. For example, the Southern Union Ministerial and Evangelism Director, in conjunction with all the Georgia-Cumberland Hispanic pastors, presented collaborative meetings that where based upon the *Whatif?* theme. The ideal would have been to invite Wildwood, *It Is Written*, Southern Adventist University, and others to do the same.

6. The use of a common record keeping system at all meeting sites would allow congregations to manage and maintain records of interested people or contacts made. This common system would make it possible to gather composite data, useful in the gathering of statistical data that could inform future projections and planning. For example, it would have been advantageous for the Georgia-Cumberland Conference to have used an interest-tracking program that has been used by Southern Adventist University's Department of Religion to track interests during their last seven annual Evangelism Field School trainings for Theology and Religion majors. This information has allowed the Department of Religion to build a database on attendance habits of participants based upon methods of advertising, advertisement content, and other statistics. This data is region specific and could have been enhanced by statistics gathered during the *WhatIf?* campaign.

Evaluation and Conclusion

As a result of this project, the overall effectiveness and implementation of the evangelism process in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference has improved. There now

exists intentional communication and coordination between churches, organizations, ministries, and individuals engaged in sharing the gospel message, through various means and services, within the territorial boundaries of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. Congregations, in conjunction with other practitioners of evangelism, now have available an increased number of resources to provide a variety of outreach programs to their communities. Likewise, those evangelism focused organizations such as Wildwood and *It Is Written* are now experiencing an increase of outlets for their services to be implemented through further collaborative planning with local congregations. Continued collaborative planning between these entities is becoming the norm for effective evangelism, within the Georgia-Cumberland Conference.

The practice of uncoordinated, repetitive, and redundant evangelism efforts by separate entities has lessened. Rather than working haphazardly in silos, outreach is now team-planned. Evangelism planning is more inclusive and coordinated between congregations and other entities and is systematically executed in targeted areas. Transitions between introductory, main event, and post-work programs are intentionally planned and now take place with minimum disconnect. These smooth transitions allow entities nearing the completion of their efforts in a target area to pass along to other entities working the area pertinent information which was once neglected or taken for granted. This information could involve important demographic matters, discovered community preferences and interests, and lists of useful community based-services and networks.

As mentioned above, discussion was given concerning the use of a common interest-tracking system, which would allow all entities to maintain contact information

for those whom they had established some level of relations. This common system was also intended to collect demographic data, useful in planning future meetings. Although every entity did not utilize a common interest-tracking system, the awareness of such a need has prompted participants to be intentional in collecting and passing along acquired information. Once their efforts in an area are completed, rather than discontinuing their community relationships or allowing contacts to lose interest, evangelistic entities are being more intentional in referring interests to other entities scheduled to begin ministering in the area. This plan is reducing the tendency to disconnect with people who are interested in the gospel message and desiring further information.

One noted shortcoming of this project involved the need for a more formal evaluation process to measure the increase in effectiveness and efficiency. Although there were periodic meetings for feedback and further development, as well as an evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the project at its conclusion, greater evaluation would have proven beneficial. An assessment tool should be developed to provide an evaluation of the program and feedback from those implementing the program at every stage of the evangelism process. Pastors and church members, organizations, trainers, printers, and etc., would be asked to provide insight on what is working well, what is not working, what needs to be changed, and what recommendations would improve the overall process. This would include evaluation of the pre-work, event, and post-work stages. Such timely evaluations would prove useful and allow for necessary calibrations. Butler (2017) provides a number of discussion points that would be helpful in the development of an evaluation process. These points include clarity and measurability of objectives, meeting of timelines, effectiveness of communications, level of partner engagement, and

others (Issues section, point B). Another evaluative tool to consider is Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation that measures reaction, learning, behavior, and results of the project (Peck, 2020, pp. 2-3).

The results of many church research projects provide ample data useful in identifying societal and religious trends throughout the world. Such data has been referred to in various ways throughout this project. Traditional means of measurement has been based upon data such as number of people joining the church, increase in monetary giving, changes in member involvement in ministry, etc. As data patterns slowly shift with time, Moore (2019) encourages Christians to not discount what he calls "whispers of disruption (p. 2), which are variables that may not yet be detectable to researchers' tools of assessment. Examples of such would be spiritual growth and the discipleship of others which may be difficult to measure but are nevertheless detectable by observers. In the area of collaboration, another whisper of disruption involves what Moore (2019) calls "unprecedented unity" (p. 2). Moore (2019) states that in his 20 years of ministry, he has never seen church organizations so eager to partner in ministry. "Churches, denominations, parachurch, and non-profit networks are coming together in ways we've not seen in America" (p. 2). Moore provides a number of examples of organizations which have followed suit (pp. 2-3). The point here is, intentional collaboration between evangelistically-focused organization and individuals is on the increase. Such rise in collaboration could possibly one day become a trend in Christianity, as well as here in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference.

Since the conclusion of this collaborative experience, four regional collaborative evangelistic efforts have taken place or have been scheduled to start. Southern Adventist

University's Religion Department partnered with a number of congregations in the
Northwest quadrant of Georgia to conduct a collaborative field school of evangelism
during the summer of 2019. Although Southern typically organizes their field schools in
conjunction with local congregations, as a result of the *WhatIf?* campaign, this particular
event garnered an enthusiastic response from a larger than usual contingency of local
pastors and their congregation(s). Knoxville, Tennessee area Seventh-day Adventist
pastors completed a joint regional evangelistic series in the Fall of 2019. Similar plans
are being discussed between the Collegedale, Tennessee area Seventh-day Adventist
pastors who are planning joint regional meetings for the Spring of 2020. Since November
2019, *It Is Written* has been collaborating with Seventh-day Adventists pastors in the
North Atlanta, Georgia area to launch an evangelistic series in 2021. Using the
information and experience gathered from the *WhatIf?* project, the Georgia-Cumberland
Conference Ministerial Department is presently discussing plans for a more
comprehensive conference-wide collaborative initiative for 2022.

APPENDIX

A. Participant Responses

Position	Evangelism Resources	Challenges	Additional Information
SAU-Evangelism Coordinator		ERC can help to meet the challenge	
Missional Volunteer		Keeping Christ in view. A more sustained evangelism rather than spasmodic work	
Pastor		Maintain the momentum in evangelistic contacts. Moving forward	
GCC-IT Director		Prepare the churches to welcome guests.	
Pastor			
Pastor			
Pastor			
Pastor			
Evangelism Subcommittee			
GCC-Southern Region Dir			
GCC-Adult Ministries Dir		Descriptions of available ministries from his department. We have to stay focused about why we are here.	
Pastor/Missional Coordinator		Figure out how to get current saints to be excited about evangelism. Centralize model to have pastors oversee lay pastors. How do we make it sustainable-church plants. How to recapture our current status and make it a movement again.	
Wildwood		Better practical training locally for their students who are from all over the world to enable them to return to their countries and share.	
GCC-Communications Dir		How to effectively communicate with all involved in evangelism,	

Position	Evangelism Resources	Challenges	Additional Information
Pastor		relating to people on line, harnessing google to benefit all involved.	
		Helping churches to change the concept of making everything in the church look good so people will come, to going out to the community. Transition health ministries into bringing them into the church	
AMEN Minst/Missional Pastor			
GCC-Northern Region Dir		Conflict in the church drains the ministers. Transition churches into a mission mindset.	
GCA Pastor			
ABC Director		Staying relevant and having customers come into the store. Relevant with bread and butter customers – and how we stay current with the millennial crowd.	
Bible Worker		When studying with someone for a year or so, getting them to cross over the line into the church.	
GCC-Young Adult Ministries		How do we take what's true and show that it works.	
Pastor		Not an event but a way of life. Evangelism isn't dead, dead people don't do evangelism. Keeping evangelism as a part of your life. Create a relevant atmosphere that will keep people coming to Christ.	
GCC-Youth		What happens next for the	

Position	Evangelism Resources	Challenges	Additional Information
Ministries Dir		youth after they have been baptized and to use their gifts. Show them their gifts and that they are useful in their local church. Make it relevant and give them a purpose and a sense of joy. Help them to plug in.	
Chaplain Advent House/ACF Dir			
Pastor			
GCC-Publishing/PARL Dir			
GCC-VP Ministerial/Evangelism		Problems with interest and maintaining this fire for evangelism.	
Pastor		Health events, reversing diabetes, transitioning from health events to spiritual events. On years of not having John Bradshaw still keeping evangelism strong.	
It Is Written		More church members involved in evangelism. Not enough people who have the time to do evangelism. Many small churches are struggling and need help mobilizing them.	
Pastor		Help the young people to know that they are evangelists, help them to step out in bible studies, evangelism and take ownership. Converting the interest cards into bible studies.	
SAU-Religion/Evangelism Professor		How to move forward.	
Pastor			

Position	Evangelism Resources	Challenges	Additional Information
Evangelism Subcommittee			
Pastor			
Pastor			
GCC-Central Region Dir		How to keep pastors motivated in evangelism. Embrace evangelism as their mission.	
Pastor		As a pastor, time constraints of a multi church district.	
Evangelism Subcommittee			
GCC-General VP		Coordinating all the ministries to be fighting the same battle.	
Pastor			
Pastor			
Pastor			
Pastor			
Pastor			
Chaplain-Gordon Hospital			
Amen Ministries			
Wildwood President		Keeping health relevant.	
GCC-Hispanic Region Dir			
Pastor			
GCC-VP Admin/Exec. Secretary			
Pastor			
Pastor		Getting people excited about coming so far for conference events. Southern blast worked really well. Disconnect with the conference because it's so far. Additional financial burden on the/the small churches.	
SAU-SALT		Helping the students to focus on	

Position	Evangelism Resources	Challenges	Additional Information
Coordinator			
GCC-President		evangelism, battling schedules.	

APPENDIX B

B. Pre-Work Calendar Leading up to the Event

January/February 2017

- Revival
- ID Needs in Church
- ID Needs in Community
- NAD Compassion Ministry
- January 20-22 – Wildwood - Chattanooga
- February 17-19 – SALT - Knoxville

March/April/May 2017

- Local programming: _____
- Easter
- Mother's Day
- Memorial Day – Praying for soldiers and their families
- NAD Compassion Ministry
- March 17-19 – SALT – Chattanooga
- March 24-26 – Wildwood – Knoxville
- April 7-9 – Wildwood – Atlanta
- Area-wide Health Fair

June/July (Summer) 2017

- Local programming: _____
- VBS/Family Seminar
- Father's Day
- NAD Compassion Ministry
- July 12-16 – Summer SALT - Atlanta

August/September 2017

- Local programming: _____
- Back to School
- NAD Compassion Ministry
- August 11-13 – Wildwood – South GA
- September 29-October 1 – SALT – South GA
- Grandparents Day

October/November 2017

- Local programming: _____
- Fall Fest
- Thanksgiving
- Area-wide Health Fair
- NAD Compassion Ministry

December 2017

- Local programming: _____
- Christmas
- New Year's Eve
- NAD Compassion Ministry
-

January 2018

- Health Event
- Other final pre-event such as prayer
- NAD Compassion Ministry

February 2018

- February 10th -- *Whatif?* Outreach Event Begins

Categories of Events:

Goal – Fill in 3-4 of the above blanks with a selection from the following categories:

Revival:

- Prayer
- 10 Days of Prayer
- Bible Study

Bible Ideas:

- Door to Door Surveys
- Books of Daniel and Revelation
- Archeology Event
- Shadow Empire

Health:

- Expo
- Diabetes
- Stress
- Smoking
- Cooking
- Dinner with Doc
- Chair Massage
- Exercise Training
- Depression (good in December)

Finance:

- Budgeting
- Coupons
- Dave Ramsey

Family:

- Parenting
- Marriage
- Divorce
- Addictions
- Celebrate Recovery
- Movies in Park
- Family Fun Day

Children:

- Play Day
- VBS
- Pathfinders/Adventurers

Holiday Events:

- New Years
- Easter
- Mother's Day
- Father's Day
- Independence Day
- Thanksgiving

- Christmas

Music/Concert:

- Concert
- Night of Worship

Compassion:

- Homeless
- Friendship – Sharing items, especially around holidays
- Children

Additional Ideas:

- Gardening Classes (with local Master Gardner, contact county extension office)
- Tax Planning
- GED
- ESL
- Yard Sale

Other Events Ideas:

- GED
- Language

APPENDIX C

C. The Event Stage Planning Notes

UPDATED: June 30, 2016

The Event will be the opportunity to invite people to get to know Christ and his end-time

message and lead them to be a part of the Advent movement.

Theme – *Whatif?*

What event is designed to do –Reaping

Start February 10, 2018 in common, with a set of materials that would include:

    a. A sermon series (7-8 topics) using the *Whatif?* theme
    b. A small group series of Bible studies and discussion materials (This will be pre-work)

Allow flexibility or options for event adaptation to community (though flexible, will start

on the same date):

    1.   Traditional meeting schedule 4-5 nights per week
    2.   Double header schedule 2 times per week
    3.   Small group studies in homes
    4.   Lunch meetings in businesses

More discussion on:

    1.   Topics and themes to be included
    2.   Pre-work materials are designed to be integrated

Other Thoughts:

    1.   The pastors should be the speaker
    2.   Flexible in duration and format
    3.   Region of pastors can collaborate

Discussion of Possible Metanarratives:

    1.   Prophetic, end-times – What if there's no human solution to this world's problems, but God already has one planned?
    2.   Truth vs. Error – What if there is a right and a wrong? Can we know it?

3.   Character of God vs. Misconceptions – What if God isn't who you think he is?
4.   Sanctuary perspective – What if God's ancient holy places reveal secrets most haven't yet discovered?
5.   Felt need – "Steps to a New You" – What if there's a blueprint for your optimum life, for here and the hereafter?

It was expressed that there should be thoughtful care given to reach the millennial thinker.

Topics Suggested to be included in the larger series (17-18 topics narrowed to 8):

1.   Sabbath
2.   Second Coming
3.   Sanctuary
4.   State of the Dead
5.   Salvation
6.   Scriptures
7.   Sin-Origin of Evil-Great Controversy-Why Suffering
8.   True Church
9.   Change of the Sabbath
10.   Daniel 2
11.   Signs of the End (Matt 24)
12.   Mark of the Beast Stewardship
13.   Health
14.   Family
15.   Finances

While some "What if…" questions were suggested, there was not a focus on these as it relates to specific doctrinal or spiritual topics.

APPENDIX D

D. The Post-Work Planning Sheet

January 1, 2018

Hello Pastors,

The following are ideas of things you can do to follow-up on those who join your congregation/s or are interests following your *Whatif?* Event. You will note that the first section lists suggestions for Conference-wide activities. Many of these ideas can be best facilitated through your local pastors' meetings. Choose which one will work best for you.

Conference Sponsored Post Work:

a. **Arrange Conference-wide or Regional Convocation/New Believer Orientation**
   i. Testimonials from new members (This should happen throughout the evangelism process)
   ii. Orientation to Christianity and to the SDA Church
   iii. Multi-media report of evangelistic process and meetings
   iv. Displays of schools, healthcare institutions, etc. the SDA Church has to offer

b. **Debrief with Leadership Team and other Pastors**
   i. What worked well?
   ii. What worked partially well?
   iii. What didn't work?
   iv. What changes would you suggest for the next time around

c. **Invite New Believers to New Members Retreat January 18-20, 2018**
   i. Meet GCC Conference administrators and departmental leaders
   ii. Experience Cohutta Springs
   iii. Build network of new believers

2. **Local Church Sponsored Post Work**
   a. **Organize Nurturing Events/Activities for New Members**
      i. Develop curriculum, train, and assign "handpicked" spiritual friend (spiritual guardians) to each new believer/member/visitor
      ii. Establish Bible study/small group/ life group for new members
      iii. Initiate Bible marking meeting to acquaint new believers with Scriptures

    iv. Distribute *Sabbath School Bible Study Guides – New Believers' Edition: In Step with Jesus (1-4)* by Personal Ministries and Sabbath School departments of the General Conference

    v. Schedule monthly social events for new believers, their families, and church members

    vi. Share New Believers Welcome Kit

        1. Name and contact information of leadership

        2. Church calendar and website information

        3. Schedule of church services

        4. Resources available to assist members in crisis

    vii. Encourage new families to attend Family Camp or organize on locally

b. **Lead Integrated Discipleship Training for New Believers**

    i. Arrange spiritual gifts inventory (*www.spiritualgiftstest.com*)

    ii. Expose new believers to ministries opportunities in the local congregations (*www.ministrykits.adventsource.org*)

    iii. Organize discipleship training – prepare new believers to reach out to personal network for Christ – i.e. SALT and KIDS IN Discipleship

    iv. Expose to Adventists resources

        1. EGW materials

        2. The ABC Store

        3. 3ABN

        4. Hope Channel

        5. IIW

        6. Wildwood and other health-related resources

c. **Follow up on Other Interests**

    i. Keep track of names

    ii. Evaluate level of interest

    iii. Make phone calls, arrange visits, or send out email news letters

    iv. Continue Bible studies, small groups, prayer requests, maintain contact

    v. Hold occasional baptisms and celebrate

d. **Start Planning Pre-Work Ideas for New Evangelistic Series in 2019**

    i. Pre-work

    ii. Event(s)

    iii. Post work

Other thoughts:

    -Avoid burnout of active members by rotating their responsibilities
    -Possibly plant new churches from this endeavor

E. *SermonView* Letter of Agreement A

4221 NE ST Johns RD Suite F | Vancouver, Washington 98661
Phone: 360-567-3400 | Fax: 360-326-1671 | SermonView.com

October 2, 2017

Victor Maddox
VP for Pastoral Ministries & Evangelism

RE: Letter of Agreement for Georgia-Cumberland Evangelism

Hello Victor:

It was great speaking with you about the goals and program that you outlined for your early 2018 Evangelism. I believe that SermonView is perfectly suited to assist you on this project and meet your conference's goals.

SermonView has been serving local churches for over a decade. During that time we have worked with 1000's of churches, mailed out over 15,000,000 mailers, and learned many lessons about effective evangelism marketing. Today, besides our direct work with churches, we serve parachurch ministries and conferences to handle large-scale single date events—currently serving over 650 churches at one time for The Voice of Prophecies, A *Pale Horse Rides*.

Based on our experience, and your timelines, here are the ways we believe we can best serve Georgia-Cumberland for their February 10 synchronized date.

1. Develop Marketing Campaigns

Develop 5 unique evangelism themes.

1. SermonView will develop the art and a congruent marketing concept for up to 5 unique themes. Each theme will be customizable by the local church in the areas of event times, event location, unique offerings or freebies, speaker information, and opening night title and topic.

2. Each theme will focus on a single form of evangelism, i.e. health seminar or cooking class.

3. Each theme will be developed to match with Georgia-Cumberland's *What If* theme. We'll incorporate questions into the primary title of each campaign in order to develop an effective marketing message around each concept.

F. SermonView Letter of Agreement B

4221 NE ST Johns RD Suite F | Vancouver, Washington 98661
Phone: 360-567-3400 | Fax: 360-326-1671 | SermonView.com

Friday, November 17, 2017

Victor Maddox
VP for Pastoral Ministries & Evangelism

RE: Letter of Agreement for Georgia-Cumberland Evangelism

Hello Victor:

SermonView is committed to helping Georgia-Cumberland have a successful Single start-date evangelistic event across the conference. This document outlines the services SermonView is offering to help Georgia-Cumberland with this goal.

Develop a single-themed video   **$1,200 - $1,500**

1. This video will a maximum length of :70.

2. The video script will focus on the idea of Big Questions for God and the What If? Theme.

3. The intention of the video is for use in local churches, on registration websites, and as a tool for Facebook advertising, both paid and sharing.

4. The estimated cost of this video is $1,200, but can have up to an additional $300 in purchased footage to meet these needs.

5. The video will be scheduled for completion no later than Jan. 3—subject to any delays in the proof approval process.

Regional Advertising   **$3,500.00**

1. Ads will be placed in Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Google.

2. The exact combination of ad buys will be at the discretion of SermonView's marketing team, based on their proprietary algorithm.

3. All ads will direct traffic to the primary page of the BigQuestionSeminars.org website, or to a page that showcases the event locator for the events.

APPENDIX G

G. 2017 Evangelism Subsidy Request Form

EVANGELISM SUBSIDAY REQUEST 2017

It is that time of the year to submit your evangelism subsidy request form for next year, 2017. Most of you are aware of the conference-wide initiative which designates 2017 as a year for evangelism "Pre-Work." Pre-work involves activities which focus upon building relationships with nonmembers, networking with community agencies, making people aware of your church(es) in their respective communities. This type of work would revolve mainly around the "Love Quadrant." You may already have similar events planned for 2017. The idea is not to replace what you already have planned, but to enhance it with a number of monthly suggestions. A suggested calendar is attached to this letter with additional suggestions at the end. You will hear more about this initiative in your local PALS meetings. By way of summary, the Pre-Work stage of this evangelism initiative starts January 2017 and goes until February 2018. "The Event" (reaping campaign, evangelistic effort, seminar, etc.) will start February 10, 2018. "The Post-Work" will take place at the end of the Event and run until the end of 2018. Again, you will hear more about this initiative in your upcoming PALS meetings.

Ministerial is requesting for you to attach a printout of the distributions made from the 2016 Conference evangelism funds sent to your church(s). We simply want to note "how" and "if" these funds were used. If your treasurer is using the "Jewel" program the directions for printing out such a report is listed below. If your treasurer does not use Jewel, please generate some form of report which records how the Conference evangelism funds were used. Please DO NOT SEND in receipts.

The directions for pulling up this detailed account summary are:

- Go to "Reports & Graphs.

- Select "Account Journal"
- In the top left corner of the Account Journal, type or select the account that the Conference evangelism funds were paid out of.
- In the dates field, change the date to "This fiscal year-to-date (2016)
- Click the print button to print.

Once you have created this report, scan it to your computer. You will find a place to attach this report at the bottom of the online Evangelism Subsidy Request Form. If you have any remaining 2016 funds please include an explanation of how you intend to use these funds at the bottom of the report.

The Evangelism Subsidy Request Forms are due no later than November 15th.

2017 Evangelism Funds Application

MUST BE SUBMITTED BY NOVEMBER 15

Name of congregation: _____

				Aim
Total Baptisms / POFs				
Actual Membership				
Active Membership (attends 2x per month)				
Number of members involved in ministry				
Average weekly attendance				

Evangelism/Discipleship Plans

2018 PLANS	DATES	DESCRIPTIONS	IDENTITIES	COST
Evangelistic Campaign(s)			Evangelist's Name:	
Discipleship: LOVE QUADRANT Activities			Leaders' Names:	

Discipleship: LEARN QUADRANT activities			Leaders' Names:	
Discipleship: LIVE QUADRANT activities			Leaders' Names:	
Discipleship: LEAD QUADRANT activities			Leaders' Names:	
Total approximate costs:			$	
Church's budgeted contribution toward these costs:			$	
Date church board officially voted and recorded the plans and figures in this worksheet:				

APPENDIX H

H. *Whatif?* Event Email Reports

NOTE: All names, except Victor Maddox, have been removed and replaced with "GCC

Pastor" or "Conference officials."

Hello Victor,

     Our Brochure read "What If... we had the answers about: creation, dinosaurs, evolution and the age of the earth?".

     On February 10, we began our Creation/Evolution seminar at the Lookout Mountain Church with Jeff Snyder, an Elder from the North Knoxville Church, presenting messages on both Sabbath morning and evening. Even with bad weather, fog and soaking rain we had a faithful group of 28 to show up which included church members, a few visitors and some "not - yet baptized" regular church attendees. Jeff continued messages on Monday and Tuesday evening as well.

     We invited everyone to come to our "Love & Friendship" Banquet Wednesday evening and were pleased with the turnout which also included more members and community friends. Our Social Committee team did an excellent job of Banquet preparation and service.

     Our Speaker, Jeff, returned on Sabbath morning the 17th, with a message of how Creation and the Flood gives us hope about the Second Coming of Christ. (My favorite message of the series)

     We capped off the week on Sabbath evening with an almost packed out house attending a "Singspiration" led by Wesley Bradford. There was a lot of Congregational singing, a solo and a duet and music with a Brass Trio, Vibraharpist and even a "Saw" being played the highlight of the evening was our brand new digital baby grand piano which was delivered earlier in the week. The evening ended with the sharing of "favorite" promises and what makes each one special to us.

     Our little Church on the Mountain was very blessed and thankful to be a part of the *What if?* Campaign.

 GCC Pastor

GCC Pastor

Feb 19, 2018

I'm working through the data from this last week's Revelation 101 - Finding Jesus in the Book of Revelation series.

Here are some of the key highlights.

For the ten sessions, the average attendance was 99.5 people.

Over the 10 sessions:

108 - Peachtree City Adventist Church members attended.

10 - Adventists who as of yet are not members at PTC but attend church regularly

7 - Non-Adventists who are regularly attending church and some are considering becoming member

3 - Adventist from the area

11 - Community Guests

1 - Guest Speak (Steve Case)

Total of 140 individuals attended

104 attendees attended at least 5 of the 10 sessions.

As several of the long-time members shared with me on Saturday night, Peachtree City has never seen this kind of attendance, participation or unity in exploring a prophetic book like Revelation.

We are following up with:

1. a twelve-week study at Sabbath School time covering Revelation. This study is being led by the elders.

2. our annual Health Fair is taking place Mar. 25 from 11a-3p.

3. a Night of Worship - exploring the death and resurrection through music and word is taking place Mar. 31 at 7p.

4. I am beginning a sermon series on the book of Daniel in April.

5. a team of elders and I are constructing a 6-session class on being a member of PTC as a follow up for several new members as well as a couple of the non-members who are interested in joining the church. We hope to have this class ready at the end of the summer.

Elder Victor,

Fannin and Blairsville Church are aligned in this excellent conference-wide initiative.

This coming weekend, we will start with a 3 days "A Pale Horse Rides" as a training and session in Fannin Church.

It will be followed by a 10 days similar public seminar based on What If concept, beginning with April 13.

In Blairsville, we have rented one of the most known public places: United Community Bank - Brackett Room, and we will start a What If public seminar on March 15th.

We used the entire promotional kit provided by SermonView, and right know I am working with a billboard company in order to advertise the event on the largest and most visible digital billboard in Blairsville.

I would like the Conference to have this kind of initiative every year.

It would be helpful to create a pool of resources (uploaded on a certain website) where each pastor would be invited to share his materials, ideas, and ppt presentations with other pastors.

Up until now, we had a series of emails received, regarding What If ideas, and they were good, but a website where pastors can subscribe, upload and download materials would be more accessible.

Thank you for your prayers, and support.

GCC Pastor

On Thu, May 3, 2018 at 3:17 AM:

Elder Victor,

First of all, I have to tell you that I was amazed by the great results you have reported in your last email. I feel a holy envy. May God bless you and your leadership by example. What If? plans are not finished yet in my district.

In Blairsville:

During October - November 2018, we are going to have a full 8-week health seminar focused on weight loss. The seminar is led by our head elder Ron Westfall who is a physical therapist working with Union County Hospital. He has already done this Seminar for the Hospital employees in the Hospital with great success. This time he is going to do this for the entire community at the church. Seminar will be preceded by a large scale Let's Move Day.

We have done Let's Move Day almost every year with good results. This time it is going to be BIG. We are going to spread the wings and involve as official participants major entities like: Union County Hospital, Young Harris College, Union County High-

school, City Council and Commissioner's Council, the Police and Sheriff departments, and so on. Also Blairsville Church has made a breakthrough in the Prison Ministry, by becoming a member of the Drug Court Rehabilitation Program. (There is much more to say about this).

In Fannin:

During October-November 2018, we are going to have a complete Reverse Diabetes Program. God has sent this year to our church a new family who is completely trained, qualified and experienced in doing this Seminar. They have already done it twice with great success. This Program will be preceded by our third-year Health Expo in August. We have started this program using the model provided by the General Conference before the last General Conference Meeting in San Antonio Texas 2015. We have a number of doctors in our church, and we provide once a year free consultations and dental treatments for people without medical insurance. Fannin County Hospital has always joined our Health Fair, and they provide free blood tests for the people who come to our Health Expo.

In conclusion, I have to mention my "holy envy". Our churches in Blairsville and Fannin are working really hard for God. I am working hard along with them too. However, we still did not have more than one or two baptisms per year during the past few years.

Thank you for your leadership and guidance.

GCC Pastor

GCC Pastor

Greetings Brethren,

What a great time to be living, especially when you can see that God is working diligently through His Spirit to save people's souls.

Just an update on our "WHAT IF" activities. As you are probably aware over the last few weeks we have had 3 baptisms as a result of Membership Evangelism. Our members have caught the vision of what it means to win souls to Christ and to let Christ do it His Way. You remember when we baptized the two men in the Ocmulgee River in Macon, and that really turned on our congregation to realize how simple one on one soul winning is. A few weeks after that we had another baptism,

Then this past Sabbath we had 3 more baptisms, one a mother and her two sons. One son is a different story, he recently moved from Houston, Texas to take a job in Macon. When I asked him why he moved to Macon, he stated that, "because God does have a sense of humor, ha. He was a Pentecostal and when he was in Houston, an SDA lady met him and they had a relationship and began going to church with her. The things he was learning interested him, but he was not ready to accept the complete truth. Then

when he moved to Macon, he had no friends, but he did want to find a church. The first Sabbath he came to Macon, he showed up at the Macon Church. Our people have learned that no one visits our church without being welcomed and nurtured was a very strong positive for him. Later one Sabbath after church he was going to his apartment and while another member was coming out of his apartment and they realized they lived next door to each other, so God worked a miracle. Then I invited Omar to attend our Sabbath afternoon Prayer Time and he started to attend that and he began to share with the Prayer Team that he wanted them to pray for him. After attending Prayer Time for three times, he asked me if I would meet with him, because he had some questions. We did meet for about an hour and a half and he shared his life's story with me and he also told me about his experience with the SDA Church and its beliefs. I addressed the questions he had and at the end of our conversation he told me that he would like to be baptized like Jesus was and that he would like to become involved in the church, which we already have him working in our Feeding the Homeless and working with our youth.

SO, the real question is how did all this happen? It happened through the power of the Holy Spirit working with in our members to be responsive to people who come to our church and to reach out to them in love. So our WHAT IF? was about, WHAT IF our members begin to see what the Holy Spirit can do when they are surrendered and the answer is what you have just read and it will be continuing.

Our plan is to offer the Prophecy Series beginning late March and April and use this as a harvest series. We have also been working with Bible Instructor and the Bible Study Program and this has been very positive.

More to come.

God bless you guys and your families.

GCC Pastor

Mar 1, 2018

to Conference officials

We finished our what if meetings this past Sunday at Rock Spring. We did get one Bible study out of the meetings and possibly a second one. The Battlefield church finished Tuesday and had one visitor coming consistently. She said she would be interested in a once a week follow up that would cover the doctrines we went over. I would be doing that short series. Overall, we are glad we did the series it was good for the members and the visitors that came. GCC Pastor

---

Hi Victor,

Just a note to update you on our recent campaign that lasted from Feb. 9-17. We attempted to present the core Adventist message through the lens of the creation vs. evolution debate. One presenter spoke the first four nights before my presentations. On opening night we had 165 people show up. 55 of those were from the community! *SermonView's* Facebook advertising and billboards worked. Sadly, our numbers dropped quite substantially once the week nights rolled around. Still, the messages were presented and streamed online (average online attendance of 10) By the end we had five non-Adventists still attending. Two of the five have gone on to continue with Greeneville's series and may be nearing baptism. The wife had a connection to a Greeneville church member and attended Greeneville from the beginning. But the husband who grew up Catholic and hadn't gone to church in years wasn't interested in their topic as much as ours and so started attending at Riverview meetings. He came up to me thanking me profusely after learning the truth about hell for the first time. Glory to God! To me, their example is evidence that doing two concurrent series worked! I continue to study with two more from the meetings. We also have some follow up events planned with creation themed documentaries and presentations by our scientifically inclined church members. The series was a great bonding experience for our membership and many have shared that they see the connection between being a creationist and an Adventists in a whole new light. If you really believe the creation account of the Bible, you can't help but be a Seventh day Adventist!

Thank you for listening and for your support in making this event happen.

Blessings,

GCC Pastor

Feb 22, 2018

to Conference officials

Greetings,

Praying that all is well with you, family and ministry. All is well at Pillars of Faith.

Just want to give you a report on our meetings:
Our meetings were on the week-ends: Feb. 10--13 and 17--20 (Sat -- Tues.)
We had a great response from the congregation. The community was a little slow.

However, I was pleasantly surprised by our attendance especially by the occasional presence of our young and millennials. In total, we ministered to 383 attendees over the course of eight meetings. Visitors came from near and far because of our digital advertising. Our Bible worker has about six or seven Bible studies. At least one adult said she wants to join Pillars of Faith. We still have one person who wants to be baptized. Our lessons were on power point: ''Revelation Seminars''. The Elders asked me to present this lesson because they were very familiar with it.

All is all, we are expecting fruit and a harvest because of our meetings. We will follow up with calls, visits, mentoring and Bible Studies.

UPDATE: We now have expanded our men's bathroom to TWO urinals. Also, we pulled up the old carpet at the entrance and we are putting down fresh tile. We have a new gate at the entrance and we have new doors. God is moving.

Be blessed,

GCC Pastor

Feb 22, 2018

to me

Two more things I forgot to mention:

1. We had a children's program each night. We had four who made a decision for baptism. I am studying with them in preparation.
2. A number of our community guests were school age kids. I am exploring the possibility of enrolling several of them in our school.

Thanks again!

GCC Pastor

On Sabbath evening, February 17th, the curtain descended upon the Growing

Strong Individuals and Families Revival and Seminar Series.

The congregation battled the flu, power outages, and even an ill evangelist over ten days of preaching and sharing on issues relating to self-esteem, love, marriage, sexuality, dating, womanhood, manhood, domestic abuse, and communications.

Bucking the trend, services were held on Super-Bowl Sunday – more than 45 souls showed up.

During the explosive final Sabbath celebration, more than 15 individuals responded to the appeal for prayer, Bible studies, and recommitment.

Glory to God the meetings yielded the following:

7   Baptisms
6   Professions of faith
1   Rebaptism
8   Bible studies in progress

Sincerely, GCC Pastor

GCC Pastor

to Conference officials

Just an update on the conclusion of Athens *WhatIf?* Seminars.

We started off the year by encouraging the church to watch the three trainings by "It Is Written." A representative from IIW, came for a Sabbath Service and afternoon meeting. It was well attended.
The next prayer meeting we began studying the IIW Bible Studies so the members would be familiar with the material. We averaged 12-17 members for several weeks.
We planned a visitor Sabbath and 13 guest showed up! It was a fun Sabbath.
Our Christmas program and dinner, featuring a popular singing artist, packed our school with 115. Most were guests.
I presented a three-part sermon series "What if?" to prepare the church for new growth. The series concluded with a community cooking program.
In addition, we sent out 1000 IIW Bible study interest cards and updated our Discover Bible School.

The cooking school was a great hit and several people from the community came out. The Bible study interest cards are starting to come in and we currently have seven requests for Bible studies.

Hello Victor,

Rogersville just concluded their meetings and we had 3 baptisms with 2 more scheduled for Mar. 3. We still have 4 visitors as well that have not made a decision yet but are still coming. Praise the Lord for that. Morristown church will begin their meetings on Mar. 9 and will go into April.

Blessings,

GCC Pastor

Pastor of Rogersville & Morristown

Seventh-day Adventist Churches

GCC Pastor

Mar 2, 2018

to Conference officials,

It was our privilege as Gainesville Hispanic District to unite with most of the churches in Georgia Cumberland Conference to preach and get involved with our communities. We had three evangelistic campaigns going February 10 to 17 with guest speakers. Our churches were packed every night and finally we had the joy to see 12 new members being baptized on February 17 and 10 more getting prepared for baptism. Praise the Lord!!!!

Hello Victor,

Just a quick update so far. Last Sabbath it was my privilege to baptize three new members at the Kingsport Church. We are planning two more to join in April, one by profession of faith and the other by baptism. We are starting health related meetings at our church this week called "Vegan and Beyond", a monthly meeting to encourage healthier lifestyle, and on March 25 we are starting a Dave Ramsey Financial Peace

weekly seminar. Also, we have a huge focus on the children at the Kingsport church: 34 Adventurers, 18 Pathfinders, 70 children in our SS division, and we are already preparing for VBS in June!
Praise the LORD!

GCC Pastor

On March 3-10 in keeping with the What If theme the Atlanta All Nations church family was blessed to have Chaplain Claude Edwards preach and minister during a week of revival. As he spoke about the miracles of God in his life and the blessings that God desires to share with others, there was a true spirit of godliness and revival. Three young men decided to give their lives to the Lord in baptism on the final Sabbath with another seven sharing their desire to be baptized in the upcoming weeks. Average attendance on Sabbaths was 170 and 80 on weekdays with the youth pledging to come every night. Our guest singer has a wonderful singing ministry with 5 albums under his belt and a humor that is out of this world. We were truly blessed and we expect to continue this spirit of revival in the upcoming weeks.
GCC Pastor

Dear Victor,

The *WhatIf?* evangelistic series lasted five weekends from February 10 to March 10, 2018 for a total of 20 meetings. At the end of the meeting, everyone raised their hands revealing that they have accepted Jesus as their personal Savior. Then four persons have expressed their desire to be baptized so I'm doing a follow-up study with them. Let's give God the glory!
Statistics:
Average Local Attendees: 24
Average Online Viewers: 95
Total States: 29
Total Countries: 6 (Barbados, India, France, Australia, Canada, Germany)

Comments:
"Wow! My wife and I really enjoyed the series in ASL. We now understand the symbols in Revelation and Daniel." (Oregon)
"I look forward to the meetings this Saturday." (Pennsylvania)
"You have explained the prophecies clearly and I now understand. Thank you!" (California)
"I love to watch 'What If' program." (Texas)
"I really enjoyed watching your sermon of *WhatIf?*" (Arkansas)

"I watched all series of What If? seminar and I now understand the great controversy better…" (Indiana)

"I understood much more about Hell better…thank you very much for me to learn about truth." (New Jersey)

"Wow, what a wonderful study tonight…and every night! I have been watching each meeting from my computer at work. I have been so blessed." (Tennessee)

Thank you, Conference officials, for your continued support of the Deaf ministry. God Bless!
GCC Pastor

On Fri, Apr 20, 2018 at 2:58 AM:

Conference official,

When I gave you the report about our latest outreach at Fannin Church, I felt that the numbers I reported were not a proof of success. Fannin and Blairsville Churches are located within the stronghold of the most conservative Southern Baptist region. Last month we had The What If Event in Blairsville, and we used the entire arsenal in order to attract people. We used a public place, we advertised by all means. The main speaker chosen by Blairsville church and by me personally was Pastor who has a good past experience in holding public meetings.

As a matter of fact, for the past two years God has helped me to reactivate retired Pastor and inspire him to give his best in the ministry of Blairsville Church. His ministry is very well respected by Blairsville Church (whit my support and guidance) and it helps me to invest extra time and energy in Fannin Church, which is very different than Blairsville Church and has a different dynamism and personality). Blairsville Church and Fannin Church are like two different worlds. The What If Event in Blairsville has been held at very well-known public place, the United Community Bank Community Hall, and it was intensely advertised.

We had four meetings. The peak of non-Adventist attendance was 5, but only once. Nobody expressed any interest in following up with further Bible studies. Our What If Event in Blairsville died fast and painfully, in spite of the bells and whistles. Therefore, you may understand why I am so excited by the fact that our What If Event in Fannin Church has an attendance of about 30 people, and 10 people who are not SDA keep attending the meetings and they are willing to continue with a 24-week series of a Bible study. These ten people are actually 4 couples and two singles. Three out of the 4 couples are strongly dedicated Christians and they are giving Bible studies to others at their homes. (The fourth couple is a young one, already receiving Bible studies from an elder of our Church). If those three couples who attended our meetings every evening and who are willing to follow up with Bible studies will become SDA, all the people who receive Bible studies from them will be exposed to the Adventist Message. I am just praying, and waiting to see what God is willing to do. I have not done any public evangelism during my previous years in my district. I felt that my churches are not ready,

and I also believed (as I still believe) that personal evangelism is better than public evangelism. However, I want to thank our Conference for this What If initiative, and all the logistic support, and also for the "kick in the butt," we needed in order to actually do it. We did it. We did a public evangelism event in Blairsville, and we are almost done with the one in Fannin. And we feel good about it.

God has already manifested His presence through the Holy Spirit.

GCC Pastor

GCC Pastor,

May 15, 2018

to Conference official

Assuming that you may want information prior to our June meeting; here are some notes about how God is blessings Conyers through our "What If? Series."

Background:

Series went for 5 weeks.

Speakers were Conyers Pastors

Our church Clerk was the Administrative Leader- was extremely effective

Local Bible Worker was ineffective and did not assist with any follow-up.

Preached 26 prophecy meetings:

Made handouts (Note pages) of material to match the Sermons and distributed nightly

Church Staff and Members distributed about 40,000 handbills door to door in our community.

There were 94 Pre-Seventh-day Adventist who attended our meetings at least one evening; about 25 attended on a regular basis- We had a large increase of requests for transfer-in to our church from members of other Adventist Churches in the Atlanta area- Most common reason- "You guys are preaching what we believe and are not hearing in our current SDA Churches."

Thus far, we had 7 new baptisms, 1 profession of faith, 19 requests to transfer-in to the Conyers Seventh-day Adventist Church- directly attributed to the Prophecy Seminar- in addition I am studying with 2 folks from the meetings and they are scheduled for baptism in June and a re-baptism of one person. Pastor is studying with 1 individual from the seminar. We are going back through the 94 registration cards to sign up personal Bible Studies and to invite them to a small group Revelation Seminar.

Other benefits:

Our treasurer has just reported to our church board that among our adult membership (including newly baptized members) whom return tithe- we are seeing an average of 6% in local offerings! I attribute much of this to the fact that we teach all our

28 fundamental beliefs to our candidates prior to baptism- There seems to be a direct correlation between a strong pre-baptism foundation and future commitments to those beliefs. I have been compiling records and results over the years of doing evangelistic meetings- seeking to learn what has worked and what has not worked so well- if I ever get the chance to do a DMin- I plan to pull this all together for a research project- there is a lot to learn from trial and error.

Blessings...

I. *SermonView* Summary Email

Hi Victor,

Our team has been carefully looking over the data from our spring season and here are some statistics and thoughts regarding your *What If?* events.

A. On average churches that did themes relating to prophecy or apologetics did the best.

1. Prophecy Meetings

   Included artwork/themes: Prophecies of Hope, Prophecy Countdown, Unlocking
   Bible Prophecy, and Final Events
   Average Cost Per Registration: $181.93
   Note: Churches that did prophecy events were more likely to back it up with
   higher budgets, Facebook ads, and mailers

2. Felt Need/Apologetics Meetings

   Included artwork/themes: Creation, Health, Cooking
   Average Cost Per Registration: $89.30
   Note: cost per registration does not include churches that receive only the free
   $500 kit and received no registrations. Churches did well with Facebook
   on these styles of meetings.

3. Hope in Jesus/Questions for God

   Included Artwork/Themes: Living with Hope and Hope for a Better World
   Average Cost Per Registration: $274.35
   Note: 17 of the 49 churches chose these themes, but had the lowest results. Even
   when they invested in Facebook and mailings. This matches nation-wide
   data—meetings focused on Hope do not receive strong attendance from
   outside marketing. These meetings are best served only at churches with
   strong member participation, through personal invitation.

B. Churches that used Facebook had a substantially better cost-per-registration.

1. 17 churches did Living with hope. Those that used Facebook in their marketing
   mix had a cost per registration of $100.77 Vs. $262.10 for those who did not.

2. 2 additional themes showed similar trends. No campaign with identical theme saw a campaign do better without Facebook than with it. *Facebook always lowers the cost per registration.*
3.

C. Congruency is the biggest factor in success

1. Churches that did Prophecies of Hope saw an average cost per guest of $210, except for 2. Those meetings were run in Chattanooga (a town where we have seen success). Those meetings used the Prophecies of hope card with Jesus and the Beasts, but had non-prophecy related topics. Sample topics from those cards are: What if there is a God?, What if Satan Really Does Exist?, and Why Is There So Much Pain and Suffering. These topics led to worse results than churches using the less powerful "Hope/Questions" themes, who did similar topics. This illustrates what we have seen throughout the country—congruency between the offer and the subject matter is the biggest factor in the success of a campaign.

All of this information points to the answer that evangelism still brings people to meetings, but only if done right. With that in mind, I would love to get on the phone with you to discuss 2019, before the ideas move too far. I believe, based on what we learned, we can help GCC achieve its evangelistic goals and reach more people for the total budget.

Let me know if there is a time this month that works well for you.

By the way, your meeting followed our full SermonView approach and received a really solid response. If we can influence a few things early, I think we can accomplish that across the Conference.

Blessings,

SermonView

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Vita

NAME: Victor J. Maddox

BACKGROUND: I was born 1961 in Gainesville, GA and raised in Atlanta, GA. I am sibling to an older brother and sister and a younger brother and sister. We grew up in the United Methodist Church. I joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church December 25, 1982. I am married to Pauline James 1987 and have four children: Victor J. II (1995), Taylor J. (1998), Amber J. (2000), and Ethan J. (2004).

EDUCATION:

2010-Present	Doctorate of Ministry, Andrews University
1996-1999	Advanced Theological Studies, Barry University, Miami Shores
1988-1990	Masters of Divinity Degree, Andrews University
1985-1988	Bachelor of Arts Degree (Cum Laude) with Minor in Biblical Languages, Southern Adventist University
1979-1980	Marine Corps Electronics and Tactical Data Repair Schools
1975-1979	Northside High School, Atlanta, GA

ORDINATION: April 1994 Ordained to the Seventh-day Adventists Gospel Ministry

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

2013-Present	Vice President of Ministerial & Evangelism, Georgia-Cumberland Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
2008-2013	Ministerial Field Secretary for the Southern District, Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
2004-2008	Pastor of the Northwest Dade and the Advent Praise & Worship Center, Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
1999-2004	Pastor of the Advent Praise & Worship Center, Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
1995-1999	Associate Pastor of Miami Temple, Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
1990-1995	Associate Pastor of North Miami, Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
1983-1984	Product Support Representative for the Xerox Corporation
1979-1983	Sargent in the United States Marine Corps