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All Hands on Deck

“The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work, and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers.”¹

This quote reminds us that God is calling His people—every member, church, department, institution, and supporting ministry—to join together in finishing His work. Every level of the denomination has a role to play in proclaiming the “everlasting gospel . . . to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Rev 14:6, NKJV).

During the days of Nehemiah, the people of Judah had for many years failed in their mission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. But, inspired to come together under the leadership of Nehemiah, they rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem in only fifty-two days (Neh 6:15). *That’s* the power of unity.

As we unite, we must first seek the Lord earnestly in prayer. We can do so individually, with our families, and as a church. Let us join together in asking Him to pour out His Holy Spirit, bringing about revival and reformation among us. A living connection with Christ by His Spirit is what will mobilize us for mission at this time (see John 15:5).

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a vision for a global and united effort to share the Three Angels’ Messages with the world. At Annual Council in 2024, the executive committee of the church voted to continue emphasizing Global Total Member Involvement (TMI) in conjunction with the I Will Go Strategic Plan for 2025–2030. In addition to asking every church to implement an ongoing disciple-making

strategy each year, every division and attached union/field is also being asked to coordinate territory-wide evangelistic efforts for 2027 and 2029. While the themes and emphases for these efforts may vary, they will all be founded on the principles of Global TMI, which you will learn about in this publication.

Personal disciple-making efforts are essential to this evangelistic strategy. As you explore the principles of Global TMI, you will see how public efforts to win souls are only truly effective when combined with personal labor.

This means we need every member to engage in making disciples: (1) to prepare the soil of the heart with kindness, compassion, and fellowship; (2) to plant seeds of truth with literature, media, and spiritual invitations; (3) to cultivate spiritual interest by giving Bible studies; (4) to harvest decisions for Christ through personal appeals and encouragement; and finally, (5) to preserve the harvest by mentoring and discipling new members.

Truly, we need every man and woman in the church to “rally to the work,” as the Spirit of Prophecy says. This unity in soulwinning, empowered by the Holy Spirit, will bring the message of Christ’s love and righteousness to the world.

May you, a leader in your local church, be part of these efforts, training and mobilizing every member to make disciples for Jesus. As signs all around us show that Jesus’ coming is near, God calls us to press together in both personal and public evangelism efforts. Let us be faithful to this call and strive for Global Total Member Involvement!

ED



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¹ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915), 352.

Global Total Member Involvement

The task before us is clear. “Go . . . and make disciples of all the nations” (Matt 28:19).¹ “Go . . . preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

If we are to be faithful to these commands, we must think not only about *reaching* everyone, but *involving* everyone. This is the focus of the General Conference initiative Global Total Member Involvement (Global TMI).

THE TRUE MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Global TMI measures success differently than many evangelistic initiatives of the past. Success isn’t based on the number of new baptisms added to the church books, but on the number of church members engaged in personal effort for the salvation of others. “The real character of the church is measured, not by the high profession she makes, not by the names enrolled upon the church book, but by what she is actually doing for the Master, by the number of her persevering, faithful workers.”²

In fact, if those we baptize from our evangelistic efforts do not multiply their influence by sharing the truth with others, the church falls short of its intended goal. “When we are successful in the work of soulsaving, those who are added to the faith will, in turn, use their ability in giving the truth to others.”³

This principle is the heart of Total Member Involvement. It focuses not only on adding to the harvest, but on multiplying laborers. “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few” (Matt 9:37).

WHOSE JOB IS IT TO MAKE DISCIPLES?

When Jesus gave the Great Commission, was He speaking only to His original disciples? Only to those with special teaching and preaching abilities? “The Saviour’s

commission to the disciples included **all the believers**. . . . Whatever one’s calling in life, his first interest should be to win souls for Christ. He may not be able to speak to congregations, but he can work for individuals.”⁴

Notice that while we are not all called to “speak to congregations,” everyone “can work for individuals.” The most important work of the church is not large programs and events, but the individual soul-winning efforts of its members. “Your work may accomplish more real good than the more extensive meetings, if they lack in personal effort. When both are combined, with the blessing of God, a more perfect and thorough work may be wrought; but **if we can have but one part done, let it be the individual labor** of opening the Scriptures in households.”⁵

This “individual labor of opening the Scriptures in households” is the most important kind of preaching that can be done. The Bible’s command to preach was never meant only for pastors or those with special gifts and abilities. The members of the early church, scattered by persecution, “went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). They shared their love for Jesus and Bible truth naturally, in personal settings, and the church grew.

CHRIST’S METHOD OF MAKING DISCIPLES

Christ Himself emphasized personal labor as the primary way to win the hearts of men and women. “The Lord desires that His word of grace shall be brought home to every soul. To a great degree this must be accomplished by personal labor. **This was Christ’s method.**”⁶

Leading individuals to become disciples of Jesus takes love, tact, and patience. It is not unlike the tender care needed to help a plant to grow and bear fruit. Perhaps this

is why both Jesus and Paul likened the work of making disciples to the agricultural growth cycle (see Matt 9:37–38; Luke 8:11; 10:2; 1 Cor 3:6; 2 Cor 9:6). Using this biblical analogy, the process of making a disciple can be explained in five phases:

Prepare the Soil of the Heart

First, we mingle with people, sympathize with them, and minister to their needs. Kindness, compassion, and fellowship can open hearts to learning about God and the Bible.

Plant Seeds of Truth

Sharing truth-filled literature and media, as well as invitations to church services, events, and Bible studies, develops and finds people interested in Bible truth.

Cultivate Spiritual Interest

Going through a full-message series of Bible studies, led by you or someone else, can lead a person with spiritual interest into a fuller knowledge of Jesus, salvation, and present truth.

Harvest Decisions for Christ

Encouraging Bible students to make decisions to follow Christ and Bible truth, including baptism, can lead them to become members of God’s remnant church.

Preserve the Harvest

Nurturing spiritual habits in those who are newly baptized, integrating them into the life and mission of the church, and training them to win souls can help them to become and remain active disciples.

Church members are to “carry the burden that the Lord has laid upon them—the burden of leading souls into the truth.”⁷ In other words, we are to lead individuals through the successive phases of spiritual growth by preparing the soil of the heart, planting seeds of truth, cultivating spiritual interest, harvesting decisions for Christ, and preserving the harvest with ongoing nurture and training.

Pastors and elders can equip and assist church members in this work of making disciples. When developing evangelistic plans, they should ensure that their churches establish active and ongoing ministries in every phase:

- Health and friendship-building ministries (**prepare**)
- Literature, media, and invitation ministries (**plant**)
- Bible study ministry (**cultivate**)
- Evangelistic meetings (**harvest**)
- New member discipleship ministry (**preserve**)

SEEK AND SAVE

The ministry of Christ can be summarized in the statement, “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). We too are called to “to seek and to save the lost.”⁸

Making disciples begins with seeking, which involves developing or finding spiritual openness in people. We do this when we **prepare** the soil of the heart with kindness and compassion, and when we **plant** seeds of truth by sharing literature, media, and invitations to church services, evangelistic events, and Bible studies. These efforts require us to take the initiative, but we are encouraged to sow bountifully if we want to “reap bountifully” (2 Cor 9:6).

Whereas the activities in the first two phases of disciple-making are to be scattered widely to many people, the last three (**cultivate**, **harvest**, and **preserve**) involve going deeper with the relative few who are open to studying God’s Word. Consider Jesus, who scattered His kindness and truth-filled messages to the multitude, but reserved much of His labors for only a small number of willing disciples. “He had many hearers, but few followers.”⁹

THE BLESSING OF TOTAL MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

Involvement in the Great Commission brings blessings to every church and every member. God could have used angels to fulfill the mission if all He wanted was to reach everyone. Instead, He uses us, because through our efforts we grow stronger and become more developed in spiritual-

ity and devotion. By sharing Bible truth, we understand it more clearly.

“God could have reached His object in saving sinners without our aid; but in order for us to develop a character like Christ’s, we must share in His work. In order to enter into His joy—the joy of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice—we must participate in His labors for their redemption.”¹⁰

A DISCIPLE-MAKING GOAL FOR EVERY MEMBER

A worthwhile aim for every church member is to lead at least one person from friend (**prepare**) to spiritual interest (**plant**), to Bible study (**cultivate**), to baptism (**harvest**), and ultimately to becoming an active disciple (**preserve**). If some members don’t yet feel comfortable giving Bible studies themselves, they can still “lead souls into the truth” by supporting them as they go to a study or evangelistic meeting led by others.

Every member can be involved in disciple-making. Each one can play a role in seeking spiritually open people (**prepare** and **plant**), and in leading them into Bible truth and a saving relationship with Christ (**cultivate**, **harvest**, and **preserve**).

The good news is that when we accept the call to “make disciples” (Matt 28:19), we can also claim the promise of Jesus, “I am with you always” (Matt 28:20). ED

¹ All biblical quotations are from the NKJV.

² Ellen G. White, *Christian Service* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1925), 12.

³ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1909), 9:86.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 822, emphasis supplied.

⁵ White, *Christian Service*, 121, emphasis supplied.

⁶ Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1900), 229, emphasis supplied.


⁷ White, *Christian Service*, 69.

⁸ Ellen G. White, *Our High Calling* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1961), 301.

⁹ Ellen G. White, *Maranatha* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1976), 24.

¹⁰ White, *The Desire of Ages*, 142.

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Spiritual Preparation For Witnessing

Several years ago, I visited a woman struggling with evil spirits. I listened in amazement as she and her sister shared a shocking story. Her father, they claimed, had sold her soul to the devil when she was only six years old. For more than thirty-five years, she had been plagued by these spirits.

“This is why we’ve come to your church, Pastor,” they said desperately. “We need help. We’ve visited several churches, hoping to find relief for my sister, but nothing has worked. Can you please help us?”

I knew this situation was far beyond my strength or abilities. The only One who could deliver her was Jesus. So, I cried out to Him, asking for His power to free this woman from the enemy’s grip.

What followed was a spiritual battle. Jesus delivered her, but not without an intense fight. I prayed with a fervor I had never experienced before. Confronting someone tormented by evil spirits is one of the most challenging and sobering experiences a person can face—and the same is true of witnessing. The devil fiercely resists losing even one soul from his grasp. Whether you are ministering to someone possessed by an evil spirit or reaching out to someone who does not yet know God, spiritual preparation is not optional—it is essential.

A witness for Jesus will not be adequately prepared if they only fill their head with knowledge, theories, and methodology but do not pray. When prayer becomes a priority in the life of the evangelistic worker, it means God has become the priority in their life.

THE SPIRITUAL BATTLEFIELD

Winning souls is an open war against the forces of darkness. Therefore, it requires both spiritual and mental preparation. This was the lesson learned by Christ's disciples:

In order to succeed in such a conflict they must come to the work in a different spirit. Their faith must be strengthened by fervent prayer and fasting, and humiliation of heart. They must be emptied of self, and be filled with the Spirit and power of God. Earnest, persevering supplication to God in faith—faith that leads to entire dependence upon God, and unreserved consecration to His work—can alone avail to bring men the Holy Spirit's aid in the battle against principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and wicked spirits in high places.¹

WITNESSING REQUIRES DIVINE POWER

Leading a soul to Christ is as spiritual and delicate as casting out a demon. The soul-winner needs to be connected to Jesus: "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5, NKJV). We can never expect fruit from our labors if we neglect to abide in Christ.

The Holy Spirit is Christ's Representative. Before ascending to

heaven, Christ promised His disciples the outpouring of the Spirit. He said, "But you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NAB). When the Holy Spirit is received into the heart, it energizes the soul and gives us power for witnessing.

"This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty" (Zech 4:6, NIV). No well-organized plans or diligent effort will result in soul-winning success without the influence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. The promise of the Spirit made to Christ's disciples belongs to God's church today. God will give His Holy Spirit to all who desire it, ask for it, and are willing to follow His instructions (Luke 11:9–13). However, the Spirit will not be given to any idle person, but only to those willing to be used by Him to be diligent soul-winners.

Ellen G. White says, "After the descent of the Holy Spirit, the disciples were so full of love for Christ and for those He died for that hearts were moved by their words and prayers. They spoke with the power of the Spirit. Under the influence of that power, thousands were converted."² She also states, "There is no limit to the usefulness of those who put self to one side, make room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon their hearts, and live lives wholly sanctified to

the service of God."³ Just as the early Christians prepared to fulfill the mission of proclaiming Christ to the world, Christ's disciples today must also prepare. But how can this preparation be achieved? Here are two crucial spiritual disciplines.

KEY SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES FOR WITNESSING

1. Spend unhurried, meaningful time in communion with Jesus.

Prayer is an essential element in the life of the evangelistic worker. "A vital connection with the Chief Shepherd will make the under-shepherd a living representative of Christ, a light indeed to the world."⁴ "Prayer brings the heart into immediate contact with the Wellspring of life, and strengthens the sinew and muscle of the religious experience."⁵ A life without prayer is not a spiritual life, because it is through prayer that we connect with God.

The Bible says that Jesus rose early every morning to pray (see Mark 1:35). Jesus' disciples followed His example. After His ascension, they prayed fervently for ten days. Then they received the power of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:14). Prayer is the breath of the soul. Churches that grow quickly and impact their communities are those that have prayer as a central part of their ministry. A witness for Jesus will not be adequately prepared if they only fill their head with knowledge, theories, and methodology but do not pray. When prayer becomes a priority in the life of the evangelistic worker, it means God has become the priority in their life.

Jesus said, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt 6:33, NAS). Preaching the gospel is a sacred command; it is a spiritual command that only spiritual people

can undertake. That's why Jesus told His disciples that He would be with them "to the very end of the age" (Matt 28:20, NIV). He also said that without Him, they could do nothing (see John 15:5).

2. Deepen your relationship with Jesus by meditating on His Word.

The second spiritual discipline is meditation in Jesus' Word. Biblical meditation is a spiritual discipline almost lost in Christianity, even though it is a biblical concept. We live in a world that is rushing headlong toward destruction. Several Psalms speak of the importance of meditating on God's Word. Psalm 1 says that the child of God is one "whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night" (v. 2, NIV).

God provides us spiritual "bread" when we read and meditate on His Word. He lovingly imparts truth into our lives precisely

when we need it most. Meditate on the text throughout the day. As you engage with the text, contemplate its meaning. As the Psalmist says, those who meditate on the Word of God "day and night" will be blessed in all they do. When you wake up, start the day by filling your mind with the Word of God. This practice will bring mental peace and restfulness to your soul. Men and women who wish to work effectively for the salvation of souls must be both students of the Bible and men and women of prayer. The life of a Christian should be one of constant prayer and study of the Word. They must never forget that their power comes from Jesus.

READY TO LEAD

Witnessing is a sacred and spiritual calling that requires intentional preparation. By dedicating time to prayer and meditation on Scripture, we open ourselves to

the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Every believer is called to share the message of salvation. As we embrace these spiritual disciplines, we become instruments in God's hands, ready to lead others to Christ and glorify His name. ED

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 431.

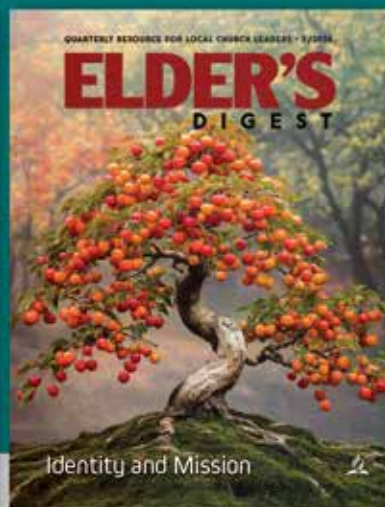
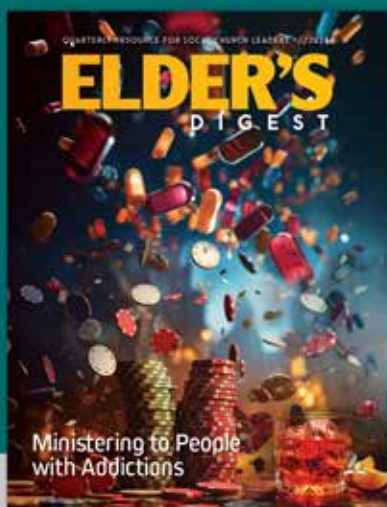
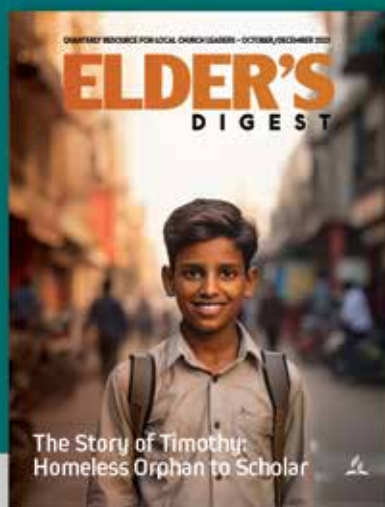
² Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 22.

³ Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1923), 346.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915), 142.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1930), 249.

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PREPARE: Gaining Confidence by Showing We Care

“Make sure the soil is fluffy and moist. And dig deep too.”

These were the wise words of my father, an avid gardener, when as an eight-year-old I wanted to grow carrots. In other words, before planting the seeds the soil needs to be dug and turned over repeatedly, so that there are no clods, any stones and clay removed, allowing plenty of oxygen in the soil and just the right amount of water. If this prep work is done well, those tiny vulnerable seeds will have the best chance to thrive.

And that's exactly what happened: planted just below the surface, those small carrot seeds soon sprouted green shoots upwards, toward heaven, and simultaneously the root was penetrating deep into the soil.

I'll always remember the pure excitement and thrill of seeing those vibrant orange, crisp carrots, with their leafy green fronds at harvest time. The smile on that eight-year-old's face was probably as wide as those carrots were long.

Sharing the Gospel Seed, Jesus, in our communities requires a similar intentional tilling of the soil. Our communities and individuals must be carefully prepared to enable the Precious Seed of the Gospel to be embedded in their hearts.

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

Jesus did this Himself. Luke shows how Jesus intentionally initiated a friendship with Simon Peter (Luke 4:31–41). One Sabbath Jesus was in Peter's hometown, Capernaum, and visited Peter's house. In the first-century context, Jesus was honoring Peter with that visit and developing a bond with him. Secondly, when Peter's household appealed to Jesus for healing, Jesus gladly obliged, curing Peter's mother-in-law. That Sabbath afternoon and “far into the night,” Jesus healed every sufferer who arrived at Peter's home.¹ Surely this touched Peter's heart.

On a subsequent visit to the area (Luke 5:1–11), Jesus chose to teach the people from Simon Peter's boat. This too was a privilege for Peter—high quality education was in short supply. Then, Jesus miraculously provided Peter and his colleagues with two boats filled with fish. And when Peter was completely overcome, falling to the ground with inadequacy and fear, Jesus gave him assurance and support. With these words, “they left everything and followed [Jesus]” (Luke 5:11, ESV), Luke captures how well Jesus had prepared the hearts

of Peter, as well as his relatives, and how deeply embedded the seed was in their hearts.

Jesus' method of kindly reaching the hearts of people is the foundational principle of Global TMI's first stage, **Prepare**. "When we come close to people in friendship and service, we show that we care and gain their confidence. Ministering to people's practical needs with kindness and compassion prepares their hearts to receive the truth of the gospel."²

REAL HEART-TO-HEART MINISTRY

Our Saviour's approach is also encouraged by Ellen G. White. She calls it "real heart-to-heart work."³ Speaking to *our* hearts, hands, and motives, she continues,

There is need of personal labor for the souls of the lost. In Christ-like sympathy we should come close to men individually, and seek to awaken their interest in the great things of eternal life. Their hearts may be as hard as the beaten highway, and apparently it may be a useless effort to present the Saviour to them; but while logic may fail to move, and argument be powerless to convince, the love of Christ, revealed in personal ministry, may soften the stony heart, so that the seed of truth can take root.⁴

COMING CLOSE TO INDIVIDUALS

Just as Jesus valued the good health of people, when we show interest in the health of individuals, they respond positively. When dental, vision, and general health clinics have offered treatment—whether in the United States of America, or Papua New Guinea (two very different countries)—an outpouring of appreciation always followed.

When I was a young intern, my supervising pastor showed me how growing large quantities of

vegetables and sharing fresh nutritious produce with the community can soften stony hearts. This gave us an opportunity to get to know people, to listen and understand their views, interests, and needs, paving the way to reach them with the Gospel.

In the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, prior to public evangelistic meetings, an army of church members will do a "clean-up" of the village, town, or city where the meetings will be conducted. Volunteers will dedicate a day or more to removing litter and weeds from public places, disposing of accumulated unwanted gravel, and even repairing roads. It's as though the community is prepared for an official visit of a head of state, and the people respond warmly.

WHAT YOUR LOCAL CHURCH CAN DO

Many types of church ministries give opportunities to connect with people and minister to their needs. Health seminars, cooking schools, clothing drives, and vacation Bible schools each provide excellent opportunities to make new friends and win people's confidence.

A community services leader and a health ministry leader are

invaluable in your church. Regular and frequent events, involving every church member in health and friendship-building ministries, provide priceless opportunities for that "heart-to-heart" ministry.

PRAYER IS ESSENTIAL

Pray for the Holy Spirit in your own life, and in the lives of church members and those within your community. Ask God to give you new ways to reveal His love and to show that you care, enabling the Seed of Truth to take root in human hearts. Yes, growing carrots from seed gave happiness to an eight-year-old, but the ultimate joy is witnessing the Seed flourishing in the hearts of your new friends in your community. **ED**

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 259.

² Global Total Member Involvement, accessed April 4, 2025, <https://www.globaltmi.org/>.

³ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1900), 57.

⁴ Ibid.

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Sharing God's Love and Care in the Midst of the War in Ukraine

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ukraine is a powerful example of preparing the soil—ministering to the needs of people in order to build relationships with them, win their trust, and share the gospel. As church members helped with evacuation efforts and the distribution of supplies during the war, they also had opportunities to minister to people on a spiritual level. Pastor Roman Prodanyuk, Sabbath School and Personal Ministries director in the Ukrainian Union, shares more about these outreach efforts in the following report.

The war tested our church's fidelity to God's mission. But our congregations immediately began responding to the needs of war victims and demonstrated their unwavering commitment to that mission.

Regular prayer meetings, held in pastoral and church groups every morning and evening, played an important role in these efforts for the community. Coming together in prayer not only inspired us but also ignited us with hope and a strong desire to save perishing souls.

EFFORTS ON THE FRONTLINES

When people's homes were destroyed by shelling, and ground operations were still far from these homes, Adventist congregations organized construction teams and sent them to repair the damaged buildings.

As the fighting drew closer, congregations with available buses organized evacuations. In doing so, they had to navigate through dangerous territories, often passing various checkpoints of both warring sides. On their return trips, the buses were loaded with supplies for those who remained and could not leave.

Meanwhile, in frontline communities, teams organized evacuation groups in the basements of Adventist houses of worship. While the groups waited for transportation, which could take anywhere from several hours to several days, local pastors conducted evangelistic programs. Many attended and grew spiritually.

SHARING BREAD—AND THE BREAD OF LIFE

When territories were liberated from active combat, people returned, and bread and other food products were brought to the houses of worship for distribution. The pastors organized teams of church members and other community helpers to share these supplies during spiritual programs.

Later, even when there was nothing left to distribute, people still came to the house of worship to listen to the Word of God. As a result, these houses of worship were full of people who were not yet ready for baptism but could no longer imagine life without the Adventist church community. They called each other brothers and sisters, served together, and participated in joint projects. Gradually, they began to dedicate their lives to God through baptism.

We created online messenger groups with these people for communication and announcements. By sending just one message in these groups, we could easily gather several hundred people. They sang psalms with us, shared life experiences, and simply listened to the pastor. Through it all, the Ukrainian communities learned that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is God's house for all who need help. As we sympathized with people and ministered to their needs, people began telling others about us, and hearts were opened to receive the everlasting Gospel!



PLANT: Finding and Generating Spiritual Interest

One day, a Muslim woman received a piece of literature discussing the Sabbath. Intrigued, she read the book and came under conviction. She decided to request Saturdays off from her workplace. Her employer denied her request, forcing her to choose between her job and the Sabbath. Courageously, she chose God's holy day.

When her husband noticed she was no longer going to work, he found out she'd lost her job because of the book. In an effort to convince her she was in the wrong, he began reading it. But it had the opposite effect! He too became convicted to keep the Sabbath and ended up losing his job when his employer denied his request for Saturdays off.

Despite the hardships, both joined God's family through baptism. And that one book has continued to circulate among their family members, resulting in nine more baptisms!

Such is the power of literature, an important aspect of the "plant" phase of the Global TMI disciple-making framework. After the soil of people's hearts has been prepared, we can begin to plant seeds of truth by sharing literature and media, or by giving personal invitations to church services, evangelistic events, and Bible studies.

SOWING BOUNTIFULLY

We wouldn't expect a harvest of wheat without planting seeds. Likewise, if we wish to see a harvest of souls, we must plant seeds of truth—far and wide. Ecclesiastes 11:6 exhorts us, "In the morning sow your seed, And in the evening do not withhold your hand; For you do not know which will prosper, Either this or that, Or whether both alike *will be good*" (NKJV).

The principle here is volume, spreading the truth wherever and whenever we can—with those we know and those we don't. If we expect to reap bountifully, we must sow bountifully (2 Cor 9:6).

It's important to remember that we don't know the hearts of people. Those whom we think are least open to truth may be the most ready. Many people's hearts have already been prepared by life experiences and God's work in their lives. They "are on the verge of the kingdom, wait-

ing only to be gathered in.”¹ By planting seeds of truth, we can find where the Holy Spirit is already at work.

INVITATIONS TO CONSIDER SPIRITUAL TRUTH

Those who hear Jesus say, “Come!” are told to invite others in the same way (Rev 22:17). After building friendships, we can introduce people to spiritual truth by inviting them to attend church services and events or by offering Bible studies.

Another simple way is by introducing spiritual themes into your conversations or by sharing a personal testimony. You might share how your life has changed since you’ve started following Christ. Or you might share something you’ve learned recently in the Bible or a way God has helped you through a difficult time.

Keep in mind that it doesn’t have to take months or years before you can take this step. Sometimes, opportunities may present themselves more quickly, as they did in Jesus’ case with the woman at the well (John 4:1–26). The only way to truly know if someone is open to spiritual things is to test the soil by planting!

LITERATURE AND MEDIA

Literature has been a crucial part of Adventist evangelism since its beginnings. Ellen G. White wrote, “If there is one work more important than another, it is that of getting our publications before the public, thus leading them to search the Scriptures.”² In another place, she said that “many minds can be reached in no other way.”³

Sharing literature is as simple as choosing truth-filled tracts and books and looking for ways to share

them. Keep them with you—in your pocket, purse, or car. Pray for God to lead you to people who would be open to receiving the literature, or simply leave them in places where they will be noticed and picked up.

WHAT THE LOCAL CHURCH CAN DO

Church leaders should highlight the importance of personal invitations. Make regular appeals to the members to invite others to Sabbath School and church, evangelistic events, and Bible studies. Provide flyers for upcoming events, as well as tracts and cards offering Bible studies.

A local church literature ministry should be established to ensure that members have access to high-quality literature with Bible study offers in them. It is helpful to appoint a literature ministry leader to ensure that literature is well-stocked, to organize distribution projects, and to promote literature during Sabbath services.

In addition to literature, we must also utilize digital media—videos, DVDs, TV, radio, websites, and social media. While our message remains the same, tools for communication change. Technology can be very effective in finding and generating spiritual interest.

As we scatter the truth widely and generously, we can claim the promise given in Isaiah 32:20, “Blessed are you who sow beside all waters” (NKJV). God’s living and powerful Word will accomplish its purpose. ED



Pray for God to lead you to people who would be open to receiving the literature, or simply leave them in places where they will be noticed and picked up.

¹ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946), 292.

² Ellen G. White, *Christian Service* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1925), 145.

³ White, *Evangelism*, 160.

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Christ's Method: It's Personal

INTRODUCTION

When we think of the word *evangelism*, we often think of an evangelistic series or other outreach programs of the church. While these are important, Christ gave us a more comprehensive model of evangelism. His work was focused on people, not just programs. This same focus should characterize the work of every church member.

The book *Ministry of Healing* says, "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'"¹ It's hard to miss in this description of Christ's method just how personal it is. The next paragraph emphasizes this point: "There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen."

It's true that Jesus followed a clear process, or steps, when making disciples. But the fundamental characteristic of Christ's method is that it was *personal*.

I. CHRIST'S METHOD WAS PERSONAL

Have you ever met someone who took a deep interest in you? You're having a conversation when they mention an important detail about your life, such as the names of your children or a situation you told them about. You feel surprised and touched. There is perhaps nothing more impactful than when someone takes a genuine interest in knowing you.

Jesus was the master of this. It was the secret to His effectiveness in reaching hearts.

Think of Nathanael, who was initially skeptical, until Jesus caught his attention by calling him "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!" (John 1:47).² Nathanael's response revealed his surprise. "How do You know me?" (v. 48). Jesus replied, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Because Jesus took notice of the personal details of Nathanael's life, it persuaded him—not only of Christ's divinity, but of His love.

Another one-on-one conversation was with a woman of Samaria (see John 4). Here Jesus spoke about lofty theological themes such as living water, worship, spirit, and truth. Yet at one point, He turned the conversation and addressed perhaps the greatest weakness in this woman's life (read John 4:16–18). When she later told the townspeople about her encounter with Jesus, she didn't mention the theology Jesus shared. Instead, she said, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did" (John 4:29). Jesus' knowledge and interest in her personal life had touched her heart.

"The Lord desires that His word of grace shall be brought home to every soul. To a great degree this must be accomplished by personal labor. This was Christ's method. His work was largely made up of personal interviews. He had a faithful regard for the one-soul audience."³

II. CHRIST'S METHOD: STEP BY STEP

Having established that the foundation of Christ's method was personal labor, let's explore the process, or steps, that He followed to make disciples.

A. Christ Befriended People

As we learned in *The Ministry of Healing*, Jesus mingled with people, sympathized with them, and ministered to their needs. In other words, He intentionally *befriended* people. Jesus came to this earth to seek and save the lost (see Luke 19:10). He took the first step. He came to be "God with us" (Matt 1:23).

Jesus showed His interest in people by mingling with them, listening to them, and empathizing with their struggles. Acts 10:38 also tells us that He "went about doing good." He noticed and met people's needs (see Matt 9:35–36). Through each act of kindness, He was building relationships and gaining trust.

We too can win people's confidence, but we can't do it unless we take the initiative. We need to take a genuine interest in people, listen to them, pay attention to the details of their lives, and befriend them.

B. Christ Proclaimed the Truth

Jesus was never fully satisfied with addressing only temporal needs. He longed for the salvation of every soul. For this reason, after gaining people's attention, He always shared eternal truth. "From Christ's methods of labor we may learn many valuable lessons. . . in various ways He sought to gain the attention of the multitude; and then He proclaimed to them the truths of the gospel."⁴

Jesus not only befriended people, but He shared the gospel with them. While kindness and love are vital to our Christian witness, sharing the truth through spiritual invitations, literature, and Bible studies is at the heart of leading people to eternal salvation through faith in Christ.

C. Christ Trained His Disciples

Jesus boldly promised, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). He didn't say "you will become" fishers of men, but "*I will make you*" fishers of men. Jesus took responsibility, as the Master disciple-maker, to *train* His disciples to win souls. "In all His work, He was training them for individual labor."⁵ This is the third and final step of Christ's method.

Jesus trained His disciples in three essential ways: (1) instruction, (2) observation, and (3) participation. In the same way, we should not only give instruction, but provide opportunities for newer members

to observe those of greater experience and to participate in witnessing activities themselves (see Luke 9:1–2).

Unlike befriending and proclaiming, training occurs primarily *after* baptism. New members need experienced mentors who will help them establish good devotional habits, teach them to share their faith, and help them become integrated into the life and mission of the church.

Jesus befriended. Jesus proclaimed. And Jesus trained.

III. GLOBAL TOTAL MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

Global Total Member Involvement, or Global TMI, is an evangelistic initiative of our worldwide church that is based on Christ's method and illustrated by the agricultural growth cycle (read Luke 8:11 and 10:2 for references to the "seed" and "harvest"; see also Matt 9:37–38; 1 Cor 3:6; 2 Cor 9:6).

The harvest cycle is a perfect illustration of Christ's method, because making disciples like Jesus did requires the same patience and tender care as nurturing the growth of a plant. **Preparing** the soil of the heart requires *befriending*. **Planting** spiritual truth with literature or invitations, **cultivating** spiritual interest with Bible studies, and **harvesting** decisions to follow the truth are each components of *proclaiming*. Finally, **preserving** the harvest can only happen with nurture and *training*. In each disciple-making phase, Global TMI emphasizes the importance of combining personal labor, the heart of Christ's method, with public programs and events for the best results.

CONCLUSION

Everyone can follow Christ's method. It's about coming close to people—befriending them, patiently guiding them into Bible truth, and being an ongoing friend and mentor. *The Desire of Ages* encourages that "whatever one's calling in life, his first interest should be to win souls for Christ. He may not be able to speak to congregations, but he can work for individuals."⁶

Will you commit to making disciples of Jesus?

ED

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1905), 143.

² All biblical quotations are from the NKJV.

³ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1900), 229.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946) 123.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Christian Service* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1925), 11.

⁶ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 822.

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Christ's Method: Making Friends for Eternity

INTRODUCTION

Global Total Member Involvement, or Global TMI, is an initiative that calls on every member to make disciples using Christ's method. Only when we follow *His* method will we find true success.

This sermon is the second of a four-part series on Global TMI and Christ's method. In the first sermon, we discovered that the predominant characteristic of Christ's ministry is that it was personal. But we also discovered a consistent process: First, Jesus befriended people. Next, He proclaimed the truth to them. And lastly, He trained them to become disciple-makers themselves.

Over the next three sermons, we will explore these three areas of Christ's method, beginning today with how to befriend others. The Global TMI disciple-making framework, which is based on the biblical harvest analogy, refers to this component of Christ's method as **preparing** the soil of the heart.

I. SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

God Himself is relational, and created us as relational beings. It is therefore unsurprising that He designed witnessing to be relational. Jesus often shared the gospel through friendship, and He has instructed us to do the same.

But making friends for Jesus is not the same as making friends for merely social reasons. It has an eternal and deeply spiritual purpose, and therefore requires spiritual preparation. This preparation isn't about knowing the Bible inside and out or being able to speak with eloquence. It starts with knowing Jesus ourselves. How can we persuade people to follow Jesus if we aren't walking with Him?

Jesus reminds us, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5, NKJV). A vine provides nourishment to the branches so that the grapes become full and sweet. Likewise, Jesus through the Holy Spirit transforms our characters so we can be effective witnesses.

As Galatians 5:22–23 points out, the Spirit produces in us the love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness that allow us to effectively befriend people and share truth with them. This way, we will be sweet Christians with whom people *want* to be friends. Remember, "The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian."¹

Another critical part of the foundation for effective witnessing is to pray for those we seek to befriend. The advantage gained from prayer for others is so great that the prophet Samuel considered it a sin to neglect doing so (see 1 Sam 12:23).

Jesus also prayed for those He was laboring for. John 17, the longest recorded

prayer of Jesus, is largely about those He was seeking to reach or train. Even now, in heaven, He still makes intercession for us (see Heb 7:25)!

If it was important to Jesus to pray for those He sought to reach, how much more important should it be to us! Prayer is essential because we're in a spiritual battle (read Eph 6:12). Ellen G. White affirms, "Through much prayer you must labor for souls, for this is the only method by which you can reach hearts."²

II. TAKE THE INITIATIVE

Having discussed the vital role of abiding in Christ, we're ready to explore the first and perhaps most challenging part of making friends (read Matt 28:19). When the Great Commission begins with the word "go," it implies that we must be active and intentional. Or, as Ellen White puts it, "We are not to wait for souls to come to us; we must seek them out where they are."³

In Mark 1:17, Jesus promised His disciples that He would make them "fishers of men." If you know anything about fishing, you know that in order to catch something you have to go where the fish are. Nobody puts a bucket on the lakeshore and waits for the fish to flop out of the lake and into the bucket! No, you have to go fishing to catch fish.

Similarly, to follow Christ's method, we must take the initiative to reach out to those around us. Making this initial effort is perhaps the greatest hurdle to winning souls.

Ellen White explains: "Some who engage in missionary service are weak, nerveless, spiritless, easily discouraged. They lack push. They have not those positive traits of character that give power to do something—the spirit and energy that kindle enthusiasm. Those who would win success must be courageous and hopeful. They should cultivate not only the passive but the active virtues."⁴

If we want to make disciples, we must take the initiative to make friends. Being like Jesus isn't just about being gentle and kind. We need His *active* virtues of character, too, such as boldness, courage, energy, and determination. Only then will we step out of our comfort zones to say hello to a neighbor or to invite a church visitor home for lunch.

III. MINGLING WITH PEOPLE

Jesus spent time with people and took an interest in them. He was never so absorbed in His own interests that He didn't have time to think about the interests of others. *The Ministry of Healing* tells us that "the Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence."⁵

Jesus found many different ways to mingle with people. He spent time with them at the seaside, went to their homes for dinner, attended feasts, and taught in the synagogue. He looked for ways to be *with* people so that He could listen to their stories and gain their friendship. Jesus loved people.

So, who should we mingle with? When Jesus gave His disciples the promise of the Holy Spirit, He taught us how to prioritize our labors (read Acts 1:8). The disciples were in Jerusalem, so Jesus asked them to start in the area closest to them. Then, they were to expand to neighboring Judea and Samaria, and eventually to the whole world. The lesson for us is that witnessing should begin with those nearest to us—those in our homes and our families. From there, we can reach out to our neighbors, visitors at church, and others in our sphere of influence. The Parable of the Good Samaritan serves as a reminder that our neighbor is anyone we encounter who needs our help (see Luke 10:29–37).

To mingle with people means to draw close to them and take an interest in them. As you get to know someone, ask questions about their lives and listen carefully to the details they share. Do small favors to lighten their burdens. You might bring them a pot of soup, care for their property or animals while they travel, or run errands for them. On their birthdays or holidays, consider giving them a thoughtful gift. And don't forget the impact of an invitation to share a meal together.

CONCLUSION

Before we can plant seeds of truth in the hearts of people, we must first prepare the soil of their hearts. We do this by befriending them and showing we care. As we take the initiative and mingle with those in our sphere of influence, we will find many opportunities to minister to their physical, emotional, and social needs. By doing so, we will prepare the way to also minister to their spiritual needs.

Take a moment to think about the people you know who need salvation and Bible truth. Make a list and start praying for them every day. Then, ask God to show you how to more intentionally mingle, sympathize, and make friends for eternity. As a friend of God, will you go, and make friends *for* God?

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1905), 470.

² Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946), 342.

³ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1900), 229.

⁴ White, *The Ministry of Healing*, 497.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 143.

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Christ's Method: Sharing the Truth

INTRODUCTION

Today we will explore the heart of Christ's method—proclaiming the gospel. If you're like most people, you're probably a little nervous about the idea of proclaiming or preaching. But stay with me, and let's find out what the Bible says about it.

I. THE CALL TO PREACH

There are seven verses in the New Testament where the global mission of the church is commanded or described. Let's start with the most well-known (read Matt 28:19–20).

When people read the command to “make disciples,” they sometimes overlook the fact that the heart of this command is to share the gospel with others. To “make disciples” is to lead people to accept the gospel and to follow Christ and His Word. Acts 14:21 affirms that it was the preaching of the gospel that resulted in new disciples. There is no way to make disciples without sharing the truths of the gospel and the message of Scripture.

Now let's consider the other six passages that describe or command the church's mission to the world.

“And **this gospel of the kingdom will be preached** in all the world” (Matt 24:14).¹

“And **the gospel must first be preached** to all the nations” (Mark 13:10).

“Go into all the world and **preach the gospel** to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

“And that **repentance and remission of sins should be preached** in His name to all nations” (Luke 24:47).

“**You shall be witnesses to Me** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, **having the everlasting gospel to preach** to those who dwell on the earth” (Rev 14:6).

Do you notice the common thread? Five out of these seven passages plainly say that we are to preach the gospel, while the other two imply it. There's no getting around it, friends. Preaching is at the heart of our mission as Christians.

As Paul says in Romans 10:14, “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”

People need preaching because people need the Word. It is through the Word that people are born again (see 1 Pet 1:23). Therefore, Paul says that if we want to reap a bountiful harvest, we must sow Bible truth bountifully (read 2 Cor 9:6).

The early church lived by this principle, sowing the seed of God's Word wherever they went.

II. WHAT IS PREACHING?

(Read Acts 8:1, 4.) In the early church, when persecution arose in Jerusalem, the believers were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. That is, everyone except the apostles. But these church members weren't carrying around pulpits or raising up tents. Since they were scattered, you get the clear sense that they were sharing with individuals and families. You see, in the Bible, preaching is primarily *personal*.

Such as when Philip met the Ethiopian eunuch. The Bible says that Philip “preached Jesus to him” (Acts 8:35). This was biblical preaching, but there was no crowd. It was just one person sitting down and studying the Bible with someone else.

Paul, though he gave his share of public sermons, also went “house to house” teaching people about God's Word in their homes (Acts 20:20).

Now listen to what Ellen G. White has to say about the importance of sharing the truth with *individuals*:

“Everyone who hears is to repeat the invitation. Whatever one's calling in life, his first interest should be to win souls for Christ. He may not be able to speak to congregations, but he can work for individuals.”²

“If we can have but one part done, let it be the individual labor of opening the Scriptures in households.”³

Did you catch that? Individual members sharing Bible truth is even more essential to the mission of the church than public preaching!

And the good news is, you don't need a special gift to share your faith. Which is why you won't find witnessing on the biblical lists of spiritual gifts (see Rom 12:3–8; 1 Cor 12:4–10; Eph 4:11). Rather, sharing our faith in personal ways is something everyone can do.

Not only *can* we do it, but it's essential to our spiritual growth! Ellen White makes this point in the book *Christian Service*: “Let ministers teach church members that in order to grow in spirituality, they must carry the burden that the Lord has laid upon them—the burden of leading souls into the truth.”⁴

III. HOW TO PREACH

So how do we do it? How can a church member lead souls into the truth?

The Global TMI disciple-making framework divides this area of Christ's method—proclaiming the truth—into three steps. First, we **plant** the seed of God's Word. We do this by praying with our neighbors and friends, having spiritual conversations, inviting them to Sabbath School or a Bible study, or sharing literature or audio sermons with them. When we do this, we are testing the soil.

If someone shows an interest after the seed is planted, we can now **cultivate** that

interest by going through Bible studies or evangelistic meetings. You might lead the study, or it may be led by someone else. Either is okay. But don't rule out giving a Bible study yourself. Elder Stephen Haskell, the originator of the Bible readings movement in the Adventist Church, referenced only two things you must be able to do to give a Bible study: (1) tell what God has done for you, and (2) read the Scriptures.

After **planting** the seed and **cultivating** spiritual interest, the third component of sharing the truth is the **harvest**. This is where you encourage your Bible study students to make decisions to follow what they've learned, and ultimately to be baptized.

So proclaiming the truth is about introducing Bible truth (**planting**), studying Bible truth (**cultivating**), and making appeals to follow the truth (**harvesting**). As we engage in this work, which is at the heart of disciple-making, we ourselves and blessed. Notice: “The more one tries to explain the word of God to others, with a love for souls, the plainer it becomes to himself.”⁵ And Proverbs 11:25, “He who waters will also be watered himself.”

CONCLUSION

Debbie was a faithful Seventh-day Adventist who felt a burden to share the message of salvation with others, but she was extremely shy. Despite her fears, she decided to leave tracts at every door in her neighborhood. After doing so, she prayed for the blessing of God on every home she had visited.

A woman in one of the houses read the tract Debbie left and the Holy Spirit impressed her with the truth. Soon this woman was attending Sabbath School and church until, several months later, a visiting minister made an appeal at the end of his sermon. The woman sprang from her seat and came forward to commit her life to Jesus. Imagine the joy that filled Debbie's heart that day!

As you accept the call to be a personal preacher, you too can experience that joy. Will you choose today to lead someone into the truth of God's Word?

¹ All biblical quotations are from the NKJV. Emphasis supplied.

² Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 822.

³ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915), 337.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Christian Service* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1925), 69.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1900), 354.

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Christ's Method: Nurture and Training

INTRODUCTION

You've probably heard concerns raised about church member retention. Evangelism leads to baptisms, but before long, the new members are nowhere to be found.

What is the answer to this problem? How do we close the proverbial back door of the church? Perhaps we need to reconsider our goal. Closing the back door may not solve the problem. We don't want members to stay merely because we're giving them attention or creating a wonderful environment for them—as helpful as these things may be. We want them to stay, because they are persuaded by the love of Christ and the power of our biblical message. The answer is not merely to focus on keeping members in the pews, but to focus on training members to be active disciples! Thus we are told, “Every church should be a training school for Christian workers.”¹

Today, we will look at the final step, training, which corresponds to “**preserving the harvest**” in the Global TMI disciple-making framework. We'll see that the Bible offers a powerful solution for keeping members in the church: train them to be disciple-makers.

I. DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING IN CHRIST'S MINISTRY

When Jesus called His disciples, He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men” (Mark 1:17).² When He said, “I will make you,” He was promising to train them how to win souls. As they spent time with Him, they would learn effective ministry.

Every disciple is to be a disciple-maker. (Read Luke 6:40.) Here Jesus makes it clear that the way we make disciples is by training. He also describes the goal of discipleship—to be like Him. Every disciple must be trained to win souls using the same methods that Jesus used.

The Great Commission also established the importance of training by saying we are not only to baptize new disciples, but to teach them to “observe all things” that Jesus has commanded us (Matt 28:19–20). We are to teach people until they are equipped to teach others.

II. DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING IN THE EARLY CHURCH

We see many examples of discipleship training in the early church. Acts 2 records over three thousand people being baptized into the church. Notice what these new members did (read Acts 2:41–42). They continued to grow spiritually under the mentorship of more experienced believers. This discipleship involved teaching in doctrine, fellowship, prayer, and eating together!

Later, Paul would describe an important principle of discipleship in 2 Timothy 2:2 (read). Notice the sequence: Paul taught

Timothy, who then taught faithful men who were able to teach others also. That's four generations of disciple-makers in one verse!

We are not just to make adherents of the faith, but carriers of the faith; not just believers, but missionaries. Training is an essential step in Christ's method to equip the next generation to carry forward God's work. We must stop merely adding members, and start multiplying them. “One soul, won to the truth, will be instrumental in winning others, and there will be an ever-increasing result of blessing and salvation.”³

III. IN WHAT AREAS SHOULD NEW MEMBERS BE TRAINED?

One key element of new member discipleship is to nurture them in devotional habits. Many newly baptized members have learned to rely on someone else to “feed them” spiritually. They must be trained that the only way to maintain spiritual life is through their own communion with God. Providing plans and ideas that encourage daily Bible reading and prayer is essential for their future success as disciples of Jesus.

Another important aspect of new member training is to integrate them into the life and ministry of the church. They should be made to feel part of the family and taught that attendance is not only a personal blessing, but also a ministry to others (read Heb 10:24–25). Discipleship should include helping new members develop habits of attending Sabbath School, church, and prayer meeting or midweek Bible study. The relationships they build will form strong bonds that will be hard to break.

Finally, as emphasized by Jesus, new member discipleship should include training in how to win souls. Our job is not complete until the consumer becomes a producer; until the one caught by the gospel net becomes a fisher of men.

IV. HOW TO TRAIN

Jesus' example of training includes three components: instruction, observation, and participation.

First, He instructed His disciples. He sat with them and taught them. He explained to them what the Kingdom of Heaven is about and what kind of attitude, character, and approach is needed to win souls.

Second, they observed His example (read John 14:12). The disciples saw firsthand how Jesus served, ministered, and blessed others. They watched Him share the gospel. Note how important this example was: “In the training of the disciples the example of the Saviour's life was far more effective than any mere doctrinal instruction.”⁴

Third, after instruction and observation, they *participated* in Jesus' ministry. Luke 9:1–2 records how Jesus sent the twelve

disciples out to “preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.” Later, He also sent out the seventy so that they could have the same experience. Jesus modeled the importance of hands-on training. As Ellen G. White so beautifully stated, “Skill is gained in the work itself. . . . It is in the water, not on the land, that men learn to swim.”⁵

New members might feel like they don't know much and therefore aren't prepared to share the gospel, but the only way to know more is by sharing what they do know. Like the healed demoniac in Mark 5:18–20, new believers should be trained to share what they know with others. The book *Evangelism* puts it this way: “When souls are converted, set them to work at once. And as they labor according to their ability, they will grow stronger.”⁶

CONCLUSION

Making disciples is not complete without nurturing new members in spiritual habits, helping them to become integrated into the church, and training them to win souls. Jesus and the early church modeled the discipleship of new believers.

The book *Evangelism* tells us, “After individuals have been converted to the truth, they need to be looked after. . . . These newly converted ones need nursing—watchful attention, help, and encouragement.”⁷

How can you follow this counsel and support someone who is new in the faith? Consider mentoring a new member with the help of the *Discipleship Handbook*, a Global TMI resource for **preserving the harvest**.⁸ This handbook, or a similar resource, can provide you with a simple format for meeting once a week with new members, connecting with them, and helping them to become active disciples of Jesus.

As we come to the end of this sermon series, how many of you will say, “I will go,” and be part of Global Total Member Involvement by striving to make disciples using Christ's method of befriending, proclaiming, and training? ED

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1905), 149.

² All biblical quotations are from the NKJV.

³ Ellen G. White, *Christian Service* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1925), 121.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 349–350.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1903), 268.

⁶ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946), 355.

⁷ Ibid., 351.

⁸ *Discipleship Handbook: A Resource for Seventh-day Adventist Church Members* (Review and Herald, 2018), Sabbath School & Personal Ministries, accessed April 14, 2025, <https://www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org>.

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The Power of Invitation in the Central California Conference

The Central California Conference is home to ten million people who need to hear the gospel. It has been the goal of Pastor Dan Serns, president of the Central California Conference until just recently, to mobilize every member to share Jesus. Through literature, media, and personal invitations, church members across the territory are finding and generating spiritual interest.

SHARING THE GREAT CONTROVERSY

The Central California Conference (CCC) has a thriving literature ministry, encouraging members to give away GLOW tracts and involving young people in literature evangelism programs. Another exciting aspect of this ministry is the CCC's partnership with Streams of Light International to hand out *The Great Controversy*.

Oleg Lotca, the director of Streams of Light, with the encouragement of CCC, has sent teams throughout the CCC to help church members get organized in sharing this book. He has also planned mission trips to places like Silicon Valley and San Francisco, where volunteers go door-to-door. During just one of these trips, thousands of books go out, and many people sign up for Bible studies.

PRAYER ADS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The CCC was the first pilot conference to try out a new digital evangelism strategy of the General Conference. The first phase involved picking six churches to film short social media ads that offered to pray for people.

The second phase involved even more churches and focused on training members to respond to the messages people sent in. Church members built relationships with these people, some of whom even started showing up to church and getting baptized.

During the third phase, Adventist schools in the conference did something similar, targeting families with school-aged children and offering to pray for them.

NEIGHBORHOOD PASTORS

Every church member has a sphere of influence, and Pastor Serns encourages everyone that "God has put you in your neighborhood for a reason. You are the pastor of your neighborhood. Keep your eyes open, pray for divine appointments, and let people know you're here to serve and bless them."

Around five hundred church members have put up signs in their front yards that say "Community House of Prayer" and provide a phone number for sending in prayer requests.

Pastor Serns and his wife go for a walk every day and pray for their neighbors. When they see people, he shares GLOW tracts with them and sends them off with "God bless you!"

One time, he handed a GLOW tract to a man, who then asked, "Can you pray for my father-in-law Reuben? He just had a stroke." They prayed together right there. The next day, Pastor Serns walked by the same home and saw a woman in the driveway. He called out, "How's Reuben? We're praying for him!" She responded, "Thank you so much! You're the one who talked to my husband yesterday. He's doing much better. Come on in." Pastor Serns began a friendship with the family that has developed into weekly Bible studies, church attendance, and decisions for baptism!

Every member can be involved in inviting people to consider spiritual truth. It may be sharing literature or connecting with people who've responded to social media ads. It may be praying with people, inviting them over for a meal, or asking them to begin Bible studies. In this way, seeds of truth are being planted far and wide.



CULTIVATE: Giving Bible Studies Is the Heart of Evangelism

Pam was the first person who said, “Yes!” I met her while going door-to-door looking for neighbors who were interested in receiving Bible study guides. I had asked my pastor how I should witness and his response was, “Give Bible studies!”

After preparing the soil of the heart and planting seeds of truth, the next step in disciple-making is to cultivate those interested in spiritual truth by giving a full-message series of Bible studies. Sharing the message of Scripture with others is essential to helping people find a better life on this earth and eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Now there are certainly other ways to share one’s faith, but every Seventh-day Adventist should be willing to give a Bible study. Everyone has friends and work associates. What if one of them asked you what you believed about a Bible topic, such as the Second Coming of Jesus? When you write down several Bible texts to share, you are preparing to give a Bible study!

WHY SHOULD CHURCH MEMBERS BECOME INVOLVED IN BIBLE STUDY MINISTRY?

The purpose of the church should be the same as Christ’s purpose on earth—to seek and to save “lost” people (Luke 19:10). It is through the Bible that people learn about Jesus as Saviour and discover the will of God for their lives. Brought into contact with divine power, they are “born again . . . through the Word of God” (1 Pet 1:23).¹ That’s the power of Bible study ministry! It’s why we must “preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

Just as Jesus sought to rescue people from the clutches of the world through the Word of God, He now calls us to this same ministry. “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world” (John 17:17–18). Jesus has sent us into a spiritual battle for the souls of men and women, and the Bible is our sword.

It's true that our personalities, backgrounds, and abilities are all different. But the good news is that we can all share God's Word. It doesn't require a special gift of teaching or evangelism. Early Adventist pioneer Stephen Haskell described two basic abilities needed by those wanting to give Bible studies: they must be able to "tell what God has done for them, and read the Scriptures."²

Ellen G. White concurs: "Whatever one's calling in life, his first interest should be to win souls for Christ. He may not be able to speak to congregations, but he can work for individuals."³ *Everyone* can work for individuals. And so effective are these *personal* Bible studies that they should be considered more important than the larger, more extensive meetings. "If we can have but one part done, let it be the individual labor of opening the Scriptures in households."⁴

So, giving Bible studies is powerful, simple, and effective. But there's another reason every member should get involved in this vital ministry. "The more one tries to

explain the Word of God to others, with a love for souls, the plainer it becomes to himself."⁵ Giving Bible studies helps the one giving the study to grow spiritually.

Ellen White once saw a vision of a mighty reformation among God's people. Notice her description: "Hundreds and thousands were seen visiting families, and opening before them the word of God."⁶ Will you be one of the "hundreds and thousands" seen by Ellen White in vision? Are you willing to be part of this Bible study reformation?

WHAT THE LOCAL CHURCH CAN DO

1. Elect a Bible School coordinator⁷ who organizes a plan to train church members, order Bible study guides, organize materials, establish interest tracking, and develop a budget.

2. Encourage various methods of Bible study, such as personal in-home, personal drop-off, small group, online, or correspondence.

3. Advertise Bible study offers using online ads, social media, and mass mailings.

4 Provide tracts and cards offering Bible studies for personal distribution (include one with every piece of literature) and at church events and programs.

5. The Bible School coordinator works with church leaders to lead each student from Bible study (**cultivate**) to baptism (**harvest**), and then to share their faith with others (**preserve**). ED

¹ All biblical quotations are from the NKJV.

² S. N. Haskell, *The Signs of the Times*, October 18, 1883, 465.

³ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 822.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Christian Service* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1925), 121.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁷ See *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 20th ed. (Silver Spring, MD: Secretariat of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2022), 107.

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So, giving Bible studies is powerful, simple, and effective. But there's another reason every member should get involved in this vital ministry. . . . Giving Bible studies helps the one giving the study to grow spiritually.

A Bible School in Every Church of the Euro-Asia Division

In 2021, the Euro-Asia Division (ESD) launched an ambitious initiative with the goal of establishing a “Bible School in Every Church” across its territory. Zhan Taraniuk, Sabbath School and Personal Ministries director, reports that as of December 2024, Bible Schools have been established in 697 local churches of the ESD (73% of churches).

WHAT IS A BIBLE SCHOOL AND WHY SHOULD IT BE IN EVERY CHURCH?

The *Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Handbook* of the ESD defines a Bible School as “a missionary ministry in the local church, the purpose of which is to seek new people (students), introduce them to biblical truth, and bring them to Christ through the study of Bible lessons.”

There are a thousand different ways to make friends with people and gain their trust, but there is only one way to lead people into Bible truth and prepare them for baptism—through Bible study! This is why every local church should establish a thriving Bible School ministry. And it is why Ellen G. White refers to the plan of giving Bible studies as “a heaven-born idea.”¹

The Bible School can use many different forms of Bible studies, such as:

- Individual studies (in-person or over video calls)
- Small group Bible studies
- Correspondence studies
- Online Bible studies
- Special Sabbath School studies (pastoral class)
- Bible lessons during evangelistic programs

Each church determines for itself the best ways for its members to conduct lessons. Usually churches use several forms.

Significant work has been done to develop the ministry of the Bible School in the Euro-Asia Division: We compiled and published resources to equip churches for ministry, including a manual titled *Guide to the Work of the Bible School in the Local Church* and various Bible lessons. All pastors in the ESD territory attended a three-day training at one of twenty-six different locations over a period of six months, and each pastor preached an eight-week sermon series in their church on the topic “The Bible Speaks Today.” Additionally, we created or adapted four different platforms for online Bible lessons.

Each church was encouraged to elect a Bible School coordinator, appoint Bible teachers, prepare materials, and conduct regular training for church members. In short, the ministry of the Bible School is to be permanent and systematic.

After the training of pastors and leaders, in 2024 we moved on to the next goal—recruiting and training five Bible teachers in every church. For this purpose, twenty-six missionary congresses were organized, where missionaries shared their experiences of ministry, discussed topical issues, and received inspiration.

The ministry of Bible Schools in the ESD is an integral part of the GROW disciple-making cycle used as the framework for Global TMI. This is the third (central) phase of the cycle—**Cultivate**. It is only as all phases work together that the best success can be achieved. That’s why today we print invitations to study Bible lessons in every missionary book. Every evangelistic project and event of the church includes an invitation to Bible studies. Bible Schools also use online advertising and social media promotion to enroll new Bible students. All evangelistic activity should lead to finding new students interested in Bible studies.

We believe this integrated approach will make it possible to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ:

- **Go** to search and find people.
- **Teach** them by giving Bible studies.
- **Invite** them to evangelistic programs and **baptize** them.
- **Continue to teach** them how to grow in Christ, lead others to Jesus, and give Bible studies. “And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen” (Matt 28:20, NKJV).

¹ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915), 191.



HARVEST: Making Effective Appeals

The goal of Bible studies and evangelistic meetings is to present the Christ-centered truths of the Bible so plainly and powerfully that people surrender their lives to Christ, accept His truth, and become prepared for His soon return. Every pastor and lay person can make powerful personal and public appeals that will lead to a rich harvest of souls.

THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD

Success in soul-winning is based on the transformative power of the Bible, and the working of the Holy Spirit, as we make appeals to follow the truth. There is life-changing and creative power in God's Word (Heb 4:12; Ps 33:6–9). "The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life. . . . It transforms the nature and re-creates the soul in the image of God."¹ When we share the Word of God, creation takes place all over again (see 2 Cor 5:17). This is why Ellen G. White counsels, "One sentence of Scripture is of more value than ten thousand of man's ideas or arguments."² When you share the Word of God, believe that somebody is going to make an eternal decision for Christ.

WHY MAKE APPEALS?

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict people of their need of Christ and to reveal the truths of His Word. However, we can limit the power of the Spirit if we fail to make heartfelt appeals. Ellen White explains:

If there is not a decided application of the truth to their hearts, if words are not spoken at the right moment, calling for decision from the weight of evidence already presented, the convicted ones pass on without identifying themselves with Christ, the golden opportunity passes, and they have not yielded, and they go farther and farther away from the truth, farther away from Jesus and never take their stand on the Lord's side.³

If interested people are not given an opportunity to respond, the impressions of the Holy Spirit may be ignored, the impact of truth of Bible truth neutralized, and the heart hardened. “When persons who are under conviction are not brought to make a decision at the earliest period possible, there is danger that the conviction will gradually wear away.”⁴ By calling for a decision at the right time, the faithful disciple-maker can see seeds of truth come to fruition.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF MAKING EFFECTIVE APPEALS

When you give a Bible study or visit an individual in the home after an evangelistic meeting, ask questions such as:

1. Is this subject new to you? Have you studied this subject before?
2. (Early on in a series) Have you always been a committed Christian?
3. Do you have any questions on this topic?
4. Is it clear to you?
5. Do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to follow the truth we’ve been studying?
6. Is there any good reason why you could not begin keeping the Sabbath (or follow biblical health practices, choose to be baptized, etc.)? *Note: This question is only asked if the individual appears to be convinced of the truth by the Spirit.*
7. (After presenting baptism) Have you sensed the forgiveness

and freedom from guilt that only Jesus can bring? Have you considered being baptized like Jesus?

After each sequence of questions, and after ascertaining the level of commitment, always offer to pray that the Holy Spirit will provide wisdom to know God’s will and strength to follow it.

WHAT THE LOCAL CHURCH CAN DO

Local churches should hold regular evangelistic meetings (reaping meetings) where appeals to follow Christ and Bible truth, including appeals to be baptized, are made. Sermons must be prepared with the definite purpose of giving attendees an opportunity to respond to Bible truth.

There are many types of appeals, or calls, you can incorporate into evangelistic preaching. These include a hand raising call, a kneeling call, a standing call, a response card call, an altar call, a combination call (stand and come forward, come forward and fill out a card, etc.), and a prayer call in which people remain after the meeting for prayer.

As you make Christ-centered, biblical appeals, people will respond and be saved into Christ’s Kingdom. You will meet those in eternity who have responded to the Holy Spirit’s prompting through your appeals! ED



If interested people are not given an opportunity to respond, the impressions of the Holy Spirit may be ignored, the impact of truth of Bible truth neutralized, and the heart hardened.

¹ Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1903), 126.

² Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1902), 7:71.

³ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946), 283.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 298.

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PNG for Christ—Public Proclamation After Much Preparation

Perhaps you've heard about the amazing results in Papua New Guinea from PNG for Christ—an evangelistic event that surpassed all expectations in 2024. Elder Duane McKey, President of Adventist World Radio, reports that it resulted in more than three hundred thousand baptisms, with another three hundred thousand people attending baptismal classes throughout the country. By the time the event was over, all the Bibles in all the bookstores of PNG had sold out!

How was this bountiful harvest possible? The answer is simple: prayer, preparation, and Total Member Involvement. In March 2020, as our team from Adventist World Radio (AWR) returned from a successful planning trip to Papua New Guinea (PNG), we received news that the world was shutting down due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We were forced to cancel the PNG evangelism plans for later that year. It was a huge disappointment at the time, but we can now see how God used this apparent setback for an even better comeback!

That initial delay resulted in four more years of planning, praying, and working together. By the time the event took place, the churches in PNG had been working together for four years. This preparation resulted in more than thirty thousand small groups and six thousand new branch churches, causing a shortage of trained pastors—all before the public evangelism even began!

Here are a few of the miracles and highlights from this historic event:

- We launched PNG for Christ with a mega medical clinic. Most people in PNG have limited access to healthcare given that 85% live in rural areas. Our hearts were moved by their suffering, and the gratitude they expressed. We provided twenty-six thousand services, including three thousand cataract surgeries, 1,400 dental extractions, diabetic screenings, and a host of other medical services. Hundreds of medical volunteers were involved, donating their time and resources.

- More than 2,300 evangelistic meetings were held simultaneously across PNG, with a huge attendance at every site. Guest speakers from all over the world participated. General Conference President Ted Wilson opened his meetings with seventy thousand people filling the stadium.

- AWR's radio network in PNG, which transmits from eleven different locations across the country, broadcasted the meetings 24/7. Most people in PNG have no cell phones due to the poverty level, but they have radios!

- Entire evangelical churches made the decision to become Seventh-day Adventist. By the time the meetings ended, sixteen churches had performed “changing of the sign” ceremonies.

- AWR sponsored a group of twenty-four seminary students and four professors from Andrews University who participated in the event, each holding their own evangelistic series.

- A group of young men who were marijuana growers gave their lives to Jesus and uprooted and destroyed all their marijuana plants in a special ceremony before their baptism.

- One morning, the members of a local Adventist church were called to a prayer meeting a bit earlier than normal. The horn was heard at 2:00 a.m.! Someone had made a mistake, but they proceeded to the church for prayer anyway. They were still there at 3:00 a.m. when a massive landslide descended on the village. It was a terrible tragedy where hundreds lost their lives. Yet our church building, and all our members, were spared. This made such an impact that the whole village became Seventh-day Adventist.

- At one preaching site, when a baptism call was made, nobody moved to come forward. Then a lone dog walked to the front, as if responding to the call. When he reached the speaker, he turned around to face the crowd and sat down. Upon seeing the dog, the tension was broken and people began to surge forward!

The rich harvest experienced at PNG for Christ was not merely due to the preaching event itself. It was the result of much prayer, planning, and personal labor (preparing the soil, planting seeds of truth, and cultivating spiritual interest) by church leaders and members alike. “Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them” (Ps 126:6, NIV).



PRESERVE: New Member Discipleship and Training

Adventist churches often struggle to retain church members who are baptized as a result of evangelistic efforts. In extreme cases, there are people who never attend church again after attending on the day of their baptism. Others attend longer but eventually fall away after failing to become integrated into the church and grounded in the faith. Improving evangelism retention rates is not complicated, but it does take a strong commitment to the essentials of disciple-making.

Let us consider important keys for preserving the harvest:

BAPTISMAL PREPARATION

Individuals preparing for baptism need to be given the opportunity to ask questions and clarify their understanding. This includes listening to each baptismal candidate's concerns, helping them with their struggles, affirming their decisions, and praying for them. Those who are rushed into baptism without proper preparation are more likely to be confused and leave the church later. Sometimes, people feel deceived when they unexpectedly discover key aspects of Adventist doctrine or history that were not explained to them before they were baptized. The first key to church member retention is to give personal attention and careful instruction to each person who desires baptism.

"Too much hasty work is done in adding names to the church roll. Serious defects are seen in the characters of some who join the church. Those who admit them say, 'We will first get them into the church, and then reform them.' But this is a mistake. The very first work to be done is the work of reform."¹

CHURCH INTEGRATION

Too many churches consider their work done after the harvest, but making disciples does not conclude with baptism. Churches need an intentional strategy that will help newly baptized members become integrated into the life and mission of the church. The three thousand who were baptized on the day of Pentecost were "added to the church" (Acts 2:47, NKJV). New Testament believers were "baptized into one body" (1 Cor 12:13).² Baptism involves a commitment both

to Jesus (the head) and His church (the body). New converts need to be connected to a healthy community of believers who will “exhort one another daily” (Heb 3:13). Christians who isolate themselves, “forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,” can never thrive spiritually (Heb 10:25). The work of disciple-making is unfinished until new believers feel at home with their church family. Without a sense of belonging, many will drift away over time and give up their faith.

NEW MEMBER DISCIPLESHIP

New believers also need experienced mentors who will help them become firmly established in the faith. Mentors should teach new believers good devotional habits, train them how to share their faith, connect them to church resources, and help them adjust to new lifestyle choices. There should be no delay in involving new converts in the work of the church. “When souls are converted, set them to work at once.

And as they labor according to their ability, they will grow stronger.”³ Each new member should be taught to engage regularly in personal witnessing and to have at least one church ministry where they assist.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Churches that reduce the Gospel Commission to achieving a baptismal goal do not recognize the importance of new member discipleship. It is important to remember that Jesus commanded us to “make disciples” (Matt 28:19). Making disciples begins before baptism and continues after baptism. A disciple is one who is “perfectly trained” to “be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40). A disciple is a worker. For this reason, Ellen G. White makes this comment: “The real character of the church is measured, not by the high profession she makes, not by the names enrolled on her books, but by what she is actually doing for the Master, by the number of her persevering, faithful workers.”⁴ When the church begins to measure its

success not merely by the number of baptisms, but by the number of workers, it will shift the culture of the church towards a more biblical model of disciple-making.

WHAT THE LOCAL CHURCH CAN DO

Like every other phase of disciple-making, preserving the harvest does not happen by accident. Churches must be intentional about establishing a new member discipleship ministry. To do this, first appoint a discipleship ministry leader. Next, make plans to assign experienced members to serve as mentors to those who are newly baptized. Provide a systematic plan or curriculum that mentors can follow to disciple new members. This plan should include weekly meetings of the mentor and new member in which in-depth study takes place and spiritual habits are nurtured.

The plan should also include hands-on activities and soul-winning training under the guidance of the mentor. Opportunities for instruction, observation, and participation are essential components of any new member discipleship plan. The church board should approve a budget for new member discipleship. Seeking the Lord in prayer, making a plan, and taking action will go a long way in retaining new members who join the church. **ED**



Churches must be intentional about establishing a new member discipleship ministry.

¹ Ellen G. White, “The Need of a Spiritual Awakening,” *The Review and Herald*, May 21, 1901, para. 7.

² All biblical quotations are from the NKJV.

³ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946), 355.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915), 200.

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North England Conference Discipleship Revival

The mission statement of the North England Conference for the period 2017–2021 was “Extending God’s Kingdom: Nurturing Each Other & Winning Another.” Taking this theme seriously, Pastor Daniel Ebenezer led four congregations in the Manchester area to implement a discipleship strategy to better nurture members and improve their ability to win new believers.

When 131 church members were anonymously surveyed, nearly 50% were found to be struggling with their spirituality. Survey questions were guided by 1 John 3:18: “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth” (NKJV). Accordingly, the questionnaire measured love in both action and truth in four key areas: a loving relationship with God, loving relationships with family, loving relationships with church family, and loving relationships with neighbors. Only 29% of the respondents had regular devotions, 13% practiced family worship, 48% experienced loving family relationships, 18% experienced loving fellowship with the church family, and 7% were confident about sharing their faith with others. The responses also indicated that there was a degree of fear of public evangelism. Though not verbalized, members presumed the Gospel no longer appeals to or changes people. Local churches were engaged in many things, but the *main* things were lacking.

The elders and church board members sensed that a transformation was needed to move people from being church members to disciples, from consumers to contributors, from spectators to participants, from passive worshippers to active laborers. Looking for ways to make a major paradigm shift, the leaders made a radical decision. They decided that every member of the church would either be a mentor or a mentee. *The Discipleship Handbook* was chosen as the primary resource that would be utilized by the churches. Six months were set aside for discipleship ministry training. Small groups were formed and mentors assigned. Progress reports were reviewed monthly in church board meetings.

As a result, personal devotions were revived among many members. Sabbath School and prayer meeting attendance increased. Spontaneous and intentional personal witnessing increased. The number of Bible studies given by members substantially increased. Members gained confidence in public evangelism. They also gained a clear understanding of Adventist identity and mission. There was an increase in baptisms and tithe among the churches. Every person, including youth and children, became involved in either giving or receiving Bible studies. One church member recently wrote, “The impact was immediate and long lasting. The results are still being seen and recognized now.” The churches that prioritized discipleship became the fastest growing churches in the conference. Training was offered across the conference so that the strategy could be replicated in other churches.

Even the most stagnant congregations in the toughest territories of the world can grow spiritually and numerically when we make the radical decisions needed to follow Christ’s method of making disciples. Following His example of ministry, the harvest will not only be gathered, but also preserved.



"So when they had eaten breakfast,
Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon,
son of Jonah, do you love Me more
than these?'"

He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know
that I love You.'

He said to him,

'FEED MY LAMBS.'"



"He said to him again a second
time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you
love Me?'"

He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You
know that I love You.'

He said to him,

'TEND MY SHEEP.'"



"He said to him the third time, 'Simon,
son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was
grieved because He said to him the third
time, 'Do you love Me?'"

And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all
things; You know that I love You.'

Jesus said to him,

'FEED MY SHEEP.'"

JOHN 21:15-17 (NKJV)

**PASTOR
APPRECIATION DAY
SABBATH, OCTOBER 11, 2025**





United in a Common Mission

In Acts 4:32, we read that the believers of the early church “were of one heart and one soul.” This unity gave power to their witness, and as a result, about three thousand souls were added to the church in a single day. The church didn’t grow through isolated effort—it grew because believers worked together in unity under the Holy Spirit.

The beauty of Global Total Member Involvement is that it brings together every department, ministry, initiative, institution, and member of the church. The key is to remember that we all have the same basic mission—to make disciples and winning souls. Whether it’s **preparing** hearts through friendship and service, **planting** seeds through literature and media, **cultivating** interest through Bible studies, **harvesting** decisions through evangelistic efforts, or **preserving** the harvest through mentorship and training, we all play a part in the disciple-making journey.

When we labor together to win souls, God will work through us in ways that go far beyond what we can accomplish on our own.

EVANGELISM TAKES EVERYONE

Imagine your church has an active ministry that helps people improve their health while building relationships. Is this evangelism? Well, yes and no. Yes, because it plays a crucial role in evangelism—preparing the soil. But no, because it’s only one phase of the process. Likewise, your church may conduct a public prophecy series each year. Is this evangelism? Yes and no. Yes, it helps to cultivate and harvest, yet it alone is not enough.

Our church can be packed with evangelistic events and programs, but without personal ministry, vital parts of the disciple-making process will be neglected. **Planting** seeds of truth with literature and spiritual invitations, **cultivating** interests with Bible studies and personal relationships, and **preserving** the harvest by mentoring new members are not just additions to evangelism—they are foundational.

STRONGER TOGETHER

The point is, we will fall short of making disciples if we fail to coordinate and collaborate. Imagine a local church with five active ministries, each working independently, but all focused on friendship-

building that prepares the soil. While commendable, there will be no real growth if no one is sharing the truth.

Likewise, a church that holds regular evangelistic meetings but fails to serve the community, build friendships, or engage in personal witnessing may see occasional baptisms. But without mentorship and training, how long will those new believers remain, let alone become active soul-winners?

If we neglect to develop coordinated plans, we could be full of activity and potential, but have little to no fruit to show for it. Therefore, every church, ministry, and department should evaluate its effectiveness in each of the five phases of disciple-making. If it is lacking in a particular area, it should make plans to strengthen, add, or collaborate with ministries in that area.

THE LOCAL CHURCH AND EVERYONE ELSE

The Adventist Church operates

through ministries and departments at the conference, union, division, and General Conference levels, alongside institutions, media outlets, and supporting ministries. Yet, the disciple's home is the local church. Ultimately, every interest or newly baptized member must come under the care of a local congregation.

For this reason, every other entity exists to support the disciple-making work of the local church. A conference Health Ministries Department can provide resources and training to help local members prepare the soil. A division Publishing Department can equip members to plant seeds of truth. General Conference resources on revival and reformation can help churches nurture spiritual habits to preserve the harvest. Media ministries can plant seeds to find and generate spiritual interests, and then connect them with local churches.

In turn, local churches can utilize the training and resources pro-

vided by departments and entities and implement the initiatives of higher levels of the organization. And they can follow up promptly with interests received from other ministries.

THE JOY OF MAKING DISCIPLES

Global Total Member Involvement reflects the church's commitment to united labor in winning souls. As we take part in this mission, we become recipients of its blessings. Ellen G. White wrote that "there is no greater bliss on this side of heaven than in winning souls to Christ."¹ In making disciples, we are drawn closer to Jesus and share in His work of redeeming love. **ED**

¹ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946), 333.

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