



The General Conference
Sabbath School &
Personal Ministries



TO

PUBLIC EVANGELISM

SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH



Public Evangelism is created by the General Conference Sabbath School & Personal Ministries Department

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What Is Evangelism?

Evangelism is active, intentional preaching through words combined with loving actions, portraying God's good news to those who need Christ. Jesus came to earth to find us and to provide the good news of salvation through faith in Him to every creature. Before He departed to prepare a place for those who respond to His gracious provision, He did not merely suggest that His church should be a warm and friendly silent witness. He commanded the entire church not to wait for people to come to it, but to "go" to every one He purchased and "preach" the good news, seeking a response.

The Greek word *Euangelizō* means "to preach the gospel." We cannot just talk about anything we wish. The content of the message we preach must be the good news. Every aspect of the message must focus on Jesus and the Good News. Everything we preach has to have an element of, "How is this good for people?"¹

Five Reasons We Should Do Evangelism

1. It is God's means of saving lost people.

That is why He has commanded us to do it (Matthew 28:18-20). The church has the essential vaccine that when shared will bring life to those who accept it in a world doomed to death. Through the preaching of the gospel, God is trying to give people their best chance that they may have to accept salvation.

2. Evangelism is God's means for growing His church.

The book of Acts demonstrates how the church grew when the gospel was preached. If we want the church to grow we must do evangelism.

3. Evangelism is God's means for unifying His church.

Some in the church say, "Our church is not united, we can't do evangelism. We need nurture first." The best nurture

is witnessing-evangelism. At the time of Christ, which came first, the commission to go, or the unity of the church? Acts 1:8 shows it was the commission to go into all the world and witness. The goal was humanly impossible. When the church has such a big goal it forces unity to reach it. When members are focused on and doing outreach they have no time for fighting, disagreements, and disunity. They will unify around the mission.

4. Evangelism is God's means of personal spiritual growth.

Should members be allowed to do evangelism if they have failed the Lord? Who among the disciples failed the Lord and slipped the farthest, aside from Judas? It was Peter who denied Jesus with swearing. The first time Jesus met him afterwards, did He say, "Peter, you need about three years to pull yourself together and increase in spiritual growth. Then you can do evangelism." No, John 21:15-17 says that He told Peter to go to work. Within 50 days, Peter became the first public evangelist, and an extremely successful one.

God is calling us to do evangelism so that we can grow deeper and stronger in Him. Simply studying and praying every day without imparting will not bring about the spiritual growth Jesus desires. The Dead Sea is an example. It receives, but it does not impart. God could have sent the angels to preach, but He knows that "we can receive only as we impart to others. As we continue imparting, we continue to receive; and the more we impart, the more we shall receive."² We need to share our faith to grow in Him.

5. Evangelism is God's means for finishing His work.

Matthew 24:14 says the end will come when this gospel has been preached in all the world. There is no use praying for the end to come if you are not doing evangelism. It is God's means of finishing His work. The church is to go out

and tackle the strongholds of the devil and bring back captives for the Lord. God wants the whole church to work together in evangelism to finish His work.³

Evangelism Is a Cycle

“Evangelism is not just an event or even a process. It is actually a cycle. An event has a definite beginning and ending point. A process does too.” But “a cycle is never ending. That is what God wants us to do with evangelism.”⁴

Usually one thinks of a harvest as the end result of evangelism. But it is not. God wants a continual harvest. In a garden in the tropics certain produce becomes ripe and can be harvested at different times throughout the entire year. In evangelism it is the same. In addition to sometimes large harvests, there can be constant small harvests as people become ripe. But more than that, Jesus wants a harvest that “remains” in the church and is immediately engaged in reaching out to harvest others.

Let’s consider “remains.” Jesus does not want anyone who accepts salvation in a meeting to drift away and be lost. He says clearly in John 15:16, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain” (KJV, emphasis supplied). If your evangelism is concerned only with the harvest—with numbers—as many have been, you can be sure many will not remain. Here are some actual examples:

1. In one world division in one harvesting campaign 1,030 were baptized. One year later only 54 could be found. A loss of 976. Nearby, 730 were baptized. One year later only 26 remained. A loss of 704. At another location nearby 630 were baptized. One year later, diligent searching found that only 12 remained.

2. In another world division 10,000 were baptized in one year and 8,000 were disfellowshipped the same year. A loss of 80%. Only 2,000 remained.

Now the report in the church papers of the numbers baptized was exciting, but do you really think Jesus was excited? Our concern in evangelism should be to make Jesus happy—to see that His precious people “remain.”

One very experienced international evangelist said, in a personal communiqué: “We are coming to the conclusion that in almost every place, it is impossible to take a person off the street and baptize him in two weeks and have him stay productive in the church. . . . so (we) are giving as much attention or more to what must happen *before* the meetings by way of real preparation in order to have *reaping*, and then what should happen *after* the meetings so that we can have *keeping*.”

The evangelism cycle must include before, during, and after the actual meetings. Matthew 28:18-20 indicates there should be preaching, baptism, followed by teaching. We will now move to that, but before we do, we must insert some bad news and good news from the second division mentioned above where 8,000 people were disfellowshipped. New members need fellowship not disfellowship. To help meet that need the small group Sabbath School Action Unit[®] support system was introduced for follow-up of large baptisms. However, the simple plan was rejected in that place. That was bad news. However, in another place in the same division, the Sabbath School Action Unit outreach plan was introduced, accepted, and established. Baptisms jumped from 600 to 2000 the first year. One year later 1860 remained. The loss was only 140 out of the 2000, or 7%, compared to 80% in the first location. That is good news!

If you want to have success with evangelism, you need to follow Christ’s method: “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.’”⁶ Christ’s method was to be with the people, to mingle, to meet their felt holistic needs, before He engaged in proclamation.

The evangelistic cycle breaks down into five basic elements: (1) *Make friends.* (2) *Meet their holistic felt needs.* (3) *Win confidence.* (4) *Share the Word.* We often rush to sharing the Word first. (5) *Preserve the harvest.*

These elements of doing evangelism are illustrated in Christ’s ministry. For example, we find them in Matthew and Luke: Matthew 10:1, 5 shows that Jesus sent out His twelve disciples. Their work was to prepare the field. After the twelve He sent out the seventy. Luke 10:1 says that “The Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.” When these workers entered a town, they were to “heal the sick who were there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you’ ” (vs. 9, NIV).

What did Jesus’ message include? It wasn’t all about the land of milk and honey. Notice His sermon in Matthew 11:24: He says, “But I tell you that it will be more tolerable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you” (NIV). Jesus could only give such a strong message after the work of preparation had already been done by the twelve and the seventy.

Matthew 12 tells us that not only did Jesus preach, He talked about preserving the harvest.⁷ It is really vital to help the new convert to “remain.” We do a terrible disservice by neglecting those who respond to the call. Verses 43-45 indicate that they are worse off if neglected than before we made the appeal. “By neglect the soul is destroyed . . . There were many in Christ’s day, as there are today, over whom the con-

trol of Satan for the time seemed broken; through the grace of God they were set free from the evil spirits that had held dominion over the soul. They rejoiced in the love of God; but, like the stony-ground hearers of the parable, they did not abide in His love. They did not surrender themselves to God daily, that Christ might dwell in the heart; and when the evil spirit returned, with ‘seven other spirits more wicked than himself,’ they were wholly dominated by the power of evil.”⁸ It is a serious matter. After the harvest meetings, we must help them to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18, KJV). As mentors, we must help them to fill their lives with Jesus, to incorporate into their daily lifestyle the three essentials of spiritual food, breath, and exercise: Bible study, prayer and share. Yes, their growth in grace includes our helping them to reach out to their network of acquaintances.

Christ’s method and the cycle include this essential: If we are going to keep people in the church, we have to provide for them after we’ve preached to them.

Building on Christ’s method, before the “farmer” begins gospel-farming and reaping, he/she needs to understand everything that needs to be included in the farming operation. Gospel-farming and reaping operation phases include: 1. *Self preparation*, 2. *Soil preparation*, 3. *Seed sowing*, 4. *Cultivation*. 5. *Harvesting*, and, 6. *Preserving the harvest*. We will look briefly at each of these aspects and then show how this applies to the evangelism cycle in your church.

Phase one: Personal preparation.

Get revival and prayer ministry going in the church. Experience shows that where large numbers pray consistently over a long period of time for every aspect of the campaign and plead with God for individuals, God gives miraculous results. “It is a part of God’s plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask.”⁹

When people are revived and have a genuine spiritual walk with God they will naturally want to share. Focus the church on evangelism.

Phase two: Prepare the soil in the world.

Maximize our links with the community. Find out the holistic needs in the community by doing a community assessment. An important step in this process is to become acquainted with leaders in the community where you plan to reap. Interview them and ask them what are the community's needs and how can your church help. (See *Keys to Adventist Community Services*,¹⁰ pages 25, 26, for more details on community assessment.) Provide services that meet the discovered needs in the community. That could be programs such as health seminars, health fairs, stress seminars, family life seminars, vacation Bible schools, concerts, and other community service programs that are based on the specific needs that are revealed to you. However, don't only provide these services as a bait for the evangelistic meetings, but plan to have on-going, sustainable community services that meet real needs because you and your church really care about people. You will want to help them even if they don't currently have an interest in spiritual things—because that's what Jesus would do.

In all of these community programs do friendship evangelism. Make friends with those who attend. This will help them to not be afraid to come to the meetings. In all of these always make spiritual literature and Bible studies available. Advertise for Bible studies. When people become our friends, begin to appreciate our church, and stop by to see what else we have to offer, we can know the soil is being prepared.

Praying in people's homes is also one way to make friends. The following experience applies to both phase two and phase three: In a meeting where over 7,500 were bap-

tized, over half were from personal Bible studies given by members and many of these were started by the members going door to door offering to pray for people. They were given stickers to give away in the homes they visited. The stickers said, “Adventists prayed in my house today.”

The members were told to go out on Sabbath afternoon to 1,000 homes surrounding the future evangelism site, telling them that they were from the Adventist church, that they were visiting homes, finding out prayer requests, and praying in the homes. They left a sticker at each home where they prayed. Then, later, the last 40 days preceding the meetings were 40 days of fasting and prayer. One thousand people, different ones each day, prayed for the meetings, guests, and speakers, etc. The success was amazing.

Phase three: Plant the seed—the Word—in the people’s homes.

Months in advance, invite literature evangelists to work every home in the area. They will find many interests for Bible studies and the meetings.

Experienced evangelists say, “Nothing takes the place of Bible Studies.” It is at the personal Bible study where growing friendships and strong relationships with prospective members are formed. It is in that interactive scenario with questions and answers from the Word, where the members, directed by the Holy Spirit, build step by step on the students’ knowledge and needs; where they lead them gently to accept Christ as Saviour and Lord, and then step by step into what He asks them to do; where there is concern and help to make needed changes as truth is revealed; it is there that very effective preparation for the harvest is accomplished. The harvesting meetings review and reinforce the truths already studied in detail and the decisions made there will be much stronger.

Conduct a weekly on-the-job training class on giving Bible studies months in advance of the harvest. Utilize every means possible, including a church Bible school, to involve as many as possible in sowing the seed with Bible studies.

Start the studies early enough so you can finish the series just before the harvesting meetings begin. Plan a mass graduation the first night of the meetings. It is then easy to invite the graduates to return to the meetings every night and easier to obtain solid decisions.

Phase four: Cultivating the harvest.

It is sometimes difficult to bring people from Bible studies directly to an evangelistic harvesting meeting. If strong friendships are formed by providing community services or during the Bible studies, this problem is less likely. Often many will come to the meetings, but for those who are hesitant, continue to offer community services such as cooking schools, seminars at the church that are tailored to their needs, and other social events that may help them have a warm feeling towards the church and its members, and that help to eliminate their fear of attending. Assisting them with various needs in their homes is another way of cultivating for the harvest.

Phase five: The Harvest

The harvest itself is the focus of this leaflet, and this area will be discussed in more detail below. To have a large harvest there must be a large attendance. Following the four phases above will assure that. But remember harvesting is only one component of the cycle. When you put people in the baptismal tank the work is not finished. Genuine evangelism includes, not only the event, but the preserving of the harvest.

Phase six: Preserving the harvest.

As mentioned above, it is very vital that the church focuses on helping the new converts to grow. This can happen by

keeping close to them and leading them more deeply into a daily relationship with Jesus through assisting them to continue to study, pray, and share. There is an abundant potential for another harvest in the new members. The seed is in the harvest. From where do you plant a new harvest? You use the seed from the previous harvest. Which people in the church have the most non-Adventist friends? The people who were just baptized. The best way to preserve them so they will “remain” in the family is to assist them to share their new-found faith with their friends, family, work associates, and neighbors.

All six phases of the gospel-farming/ reaping evangelistic cycle are essential and should be tightly connected together for true and lasting success—producing fruit that “remains.”¹¹

Organizing For the Harvesting Meeting

Organizing is a key component of effective public evangelism. Evangelism is a team ministry, and that takes organization. Your evangelism will be most effective and fulfilling if you involve a team of leaders that are committed believers who have a living love relationship with God. It is the relationship your members and your team develop with people that will help them to decide to follow Jesus and join your church.

There are nineteen connected team ministries. The following ministry descriptions with their responsibilities and personnel will need to be adapted to your local circumstances:

1. Pre-Work Committee:

It is responsible to plan an effective friendship evangelism and outreach program prior to the meetings. It will seek to both train and involve church members in various forms of friendship, creative, and Bible study evangelism, including a Bible school, prior to the meetings. It should organize and train members to pre-register guests for the meetings.

The committee consists of the Personal Ministries Director or appointed chairperson, Personal Ministries Secretary, Interest Coordinator, Pastor(s), Bible workers, Bible School Director, literature evangelists, and energetic, excited, spiritual church members who have a passion for evangelism.

2. Prayer Coordinator:

He or she is responsible to

- a. Organize one or more prayer bands. Each prayer band should, well in advance of the meetings, meet regularly to pray for the meetings, for members' contacts, and for the church's spiritual readiness.
- b. Give at least one short presentation on the power and necessity of prayer before the meetings begin. A bulletin insert or other presentation would be appropriate.
- c. Have a special prayer session before the meetings begin. Some very successful campaigns do it for forty days. Another very successful and more specific approach is on a Sabbath a week or two before the meetings begin, have a day of fasting and prayer. After Sabbath School and church, start the prayer session and continue until sundown. Take sheets of paper, write down different categories of people, such as, backsliders, Bible Study interests, unbaptized children, family members, visitors to church programs, etc. Write down the names of specific people under these categories. Pray for them *by name*. Then, before you break up, divide those names among those doing the praying. Each of them need to be visited that week, given a personal invitation to come, but then the visitor must say, "I will come by your house. Will you come with me?"

- d. Set up a prayer request box or other system at the meetings for getting prayer requests from the attendees.
- e. During the meetings, set aside a private room and gather a group each night to pray during the meetings. (A sign-up sheet at church will probably be the easiest way to facilitate this.) The prayer agenda may include the speaker, the workers, the presence of the Holy Spirit, guests, those who should attend, problems, blessings, and requests.

This ministry is the foundation of all others. The person chosen to lead should have a great burden for the success of the meetings, be a great “prayer warrior,” and a good organizer.

3. Advertising Coordinator:

He or she is responsible to oversee advertising to the public and within the church, seeing that all deadlines are met. The person should

- a. See that handbill material such as the speaker bio, dates, topics, and the directional map to the location are taken to the press and all printing arrangements are made well in advance.
- b. Confirm which zip codes, if any, will receive your advertising.
- c. Make sure handbills are delivered on time by the Post Office.
- d. See that members receive the handbills in time to invite their contacts and are inspired and instructed on approaches to use. See that regular promotion is made in the church service, in bulletins, on bulletin boards, etc.

- e. Arrange for free or paid advertising in the newspaper, on radio, and television.
- f. Arrange for posters to be put up.
- g. Care for sign and directional signs at the meeting place.

4. Children's Program Coordinator:

This person is most vital. Children are often neglected at meetings when they have the greatest potential. When converted, they have a whole life to live for the Lord. The day of this writing the story was told of an old man who had been prayed for all his life and was finally baptized. Everyone was thrilled, but two weeks later he was dead. No one thought much of the eleven year old who was baptized at the same time, but, think of it, she has a lifetime to live for Jesus.

Many families simply cannot attend evangelistic meetings if there is no children's program. Children who are excited about the children's programs also tend to bring their parents to the meetings. And their hearts are perfect ground for sowing seeds of truth. The children's meetings are vital to the success of the overall campaign and to the future.

The coordinator is responsible to

- a. Organize child care for ages 0-10. If possible, have at least two separate programs, one for younger and one for older children.
- b. Plan an effective program either using generally available material or your own. Be sure to order it early. It is very helpful if the programs can be linked to the adult messages.
- c. Recruit at least two staff members for each program each night. Make sure they will be on time and will stay until all the children are picked up by their parents or another. For security purposes, provide

sign-in sheets where parents sign in and sign out with their names and their children's names. The same person must sign them both in and out.

- d. Organize follow-up for children who make decisions to follow Jesus. This may include offering rides to Sabbath school, church, Pathfinders, and baptismal classes.

5. Music Committee/Coordinator:

This person is responsible to

- a. Arrange a music schedule in coordination with the speaker, pastor, and platform chairman.
- b. Choose participants and musical selections that fit with the message and that bring the right spiritual atmosphere to the meeting.
- c. Arrange for instrumentalists/pianists to accompany or perform special music.
- d. Possibly plan a "music fest" of praise and worship at the end of the meetings.

6. Host:

The host begins the program each night with a welcome, opening prayer, and announcements. The host is responsible for making sure that

- a. The meeting starts on time.
- b. People feel welcome and comfortable. Smiles and enthusiasm are helpful.
- c. Announcements regarding the meetings are clearly made, such as upcoming topics, location of bathrooms, children's program, etc.
- d. The audience is thanked for coming and urged to return. Keep closing remarks gracious but brief.

- e. He or she is available to visit with people as they leave. People will appreciate visiting with the host-celebrity.

7. Greeter/Usher Coordinator:

This person is responsible to

- a. Arrange for the correct number of ushers and greeters.
- b. Prepare a seating chart of the venue, and assign ushers on the basis of one per four of five rows of attendees.
- c. Provide offering containers (one per row), quiz envelopes, pens, pencils, decision cards, etc. for ushers.
- d. Trains ushers to help people find seats; make friends; give a good impression; distribute and collect quiz envelopes, decision cards, and pens/pencils; handle possible disturbances; take up offerings (one bucket per row, so it will be quick); bring in extra chairs if necessary; and, if applicable, watch for need of climate control (people putting on sweaters or fanning themselves, etc.).
- e. Instruct greeters about registration process and making a good impression.
- f. Arrange for someone to be at the meeting place at least an hour early to get the building and other things that need to be cared for prepared.
- g. Arrange for decision cards to be provided for ushers when needed.
- h. Make sure that the appropriate people are ready in the front when a call is made for people to come forward, so that they can greet them, pray for them, and get their names and information.

Greeters and ushers must be pleasant and helpful and should be able to make each person feel at home, at ease, and welcome.

8. Row Host/Ushers:

These people befriend everyone sitting in their section of pews, distribute and collect decision cards, and take up offerings as they are directed by the Greeter/Usher Coordinator.

9. Registration and Attendance Tracking Coordinator:

It is highly recommended that you engage in a pre-registration and registration process to track your visitors. This process has been used very successfully to help create and maintain high attendance, and to facilitate effective follow-up. At the time of this writing, Amazing Facts offers to supply free software for those able to track attendance with a computer. Go to www.gospelharvest.org. The registration and attendance tracking coordinator is responsible to

- a. Print or order pre-registration cards for the congregation.
- b. Order ticket/registration books for the meetings or put together one's own registration process.
- c. Train registration team beforehand on registration process.
- d. Be at the meeting place an hour early every night.
- e. Oversee efficient and organized registration on opening night.
- f. Ensure that tickets are collected at the door and put into the computer or recorded each night.

10. Ticket Collection Coordinator:

He or she is responsible to recruit enough ticket collectors/literature distributors to have one, or preferably two, people beside each door, making sure, as much as possible,

in a pleasant way, that no one, including members, goes by without registering or giving their ticket on the way in.¹²

11. Bible School Coordinator:

The Bible School Coordinator is responsible to run a Bible school during the meetings. The Bible school should be high priority next to children's meetings. We are introducing it as number 11 so as to not confuse its activities with the work of the greeters, ushers, those who register and deal with tickets. These workers can work together with the Bible school workers.

In addition to assisting with a Bible school graduation the first night of the meetings, as mentioned above, the Bible school during the meetings will endeavor to have many students ready for graduation, and some for baptism, at the end of the series of meetings.

Here are six reasons why a Bible school should be operated during the meetings:

- a. **It is Very Successful.** Often more than half who finish the course during the meetings are baptized.
- b. **Reinforces the Message.** The Bible lessons review and reinforce the message heard from the pulpit, helping listeners to understand more clearly and retain more of the message, thus aiding them in making quality decisions.
- c. **Clarifies the Message.** The Bible lessons enable the Bible school workers to discover and clarify points in the sermon needing clarification in the minds of the students, and to pray with them.
- d. **Aids in Decisions.** The Bible lessons give participants an opportunity to respond through the answer sheets. Some of the visitors attending the reaping meeting will not fill out the decision cards; however, many of them will enroll in the Bible course

during the meetings and will record their decision on the answer sheets.

- e. **Aids in Visitation.** The Bible lessons help provide those calling for decisions in the homes with the vital response information obtained from the returned answer sheets and from conversations with the students.
- f. **Aids in Necessary Bonding.** The Bible School makes it easy for interests to interact, form friendships, and bond with local members running the Bible school, so they feel comfortable when they are invited to church.

Basically, here is how the Bible school operates:

Guests are invited to pick up a lesson on the way in or on the way out of the meetings. They study it, fill out the answer sheet, and bring it to the Bible school table at the next meeting, leave it, and pick up the next lesson. Their answer sheet is graded before the next meeting. When they return they receive their graded answer sheet and the next lesson. This procedure continues to the end of the course.

The lesson topic should not run ahead of the evening message but should correspond with it as much as possible.

Here are some helpful details on running the school:

- a. **Banner:** Place an attractive banner above one or two display tables in a highly visible location at the entrance of the meeting place. It should give the title of the Bible school and say, "Free Bible Guides."
- b. The greeters and ticket collectors mentioned above warmly welcome guests, make them aware of the free lessons by directing and pointing them to the Bible School tables, where they are again greeted warmly and handed the first study guide containing a welcome letter that explains how to do the course.

The worker should ask the prospective student to take the lesson, read it, fill out the answer sheet, return it to the table the next night, and pick up the next lesson, and then, add something like, "I'm sure you will enjoy this very much, as I did." (There should be enough workers at the tables so the students and prospective students are not lined up and delayed in entering or leaving the meetings.)

- c. When the students return their answer sheets they should be checked and returned to them by outgoing, radiant, caring, non-argumentative Christians, with a love and burden for people. They should be friendly and know how to compliment, encourage and answer questions tactfully in a way that builds bridges and not walls. They should be well organized and efficient.
- d. The person reviewing the answer sheets should write brief encouraging notes on the answer sheets, such as, "Terrific!" "You are doing great!" "Keep up the good work!" Everyone should receive a grade of "Good," "Very Good," "Excellent," or "Perfect." Mark them with red pens only. Responses should be recorded and the answer sheet attached to the next lesson. It is easiest to place these in a file numerically so that they can be found instantly, in seconds, to return to the student.

When returning and receiving study guides, the Bible school worker should ask how they enjoyed the lesson, if it was clear, and if there are any questions. A friendly discussion may follow. This will enable a close relationship to be formed. The worker will soon be able to determine the degree of interest, make the home visitation personnel aware of the good interests, and appropriately connect the two.

- e. If students fail to bring their answer sheets, you may need to encourage them. Keep them aware of the graduation planned at the close of the meeting.
- f. At the appropriate times prepare visitation cards from the answer sheet records, including decisions made, and give these to the pastor and the visitation team.¹³

12. Materials Coordinator:

He or she is responsible to see that materials to be handed out in the meetings are ordered, in place, handed out by volunteers at the appropriate times, and that people who missed past nights receive theirs. Materials also include pens, pencils, paper, etc.

13. Technical Committee/Coordinator:

This person ensures that sound and projector equipment is functioning correctly at all times. The equipment should be functioning two days before the meetings begin. Each person in charge should be there two hours before the opening meeting and thirty minutes on following nights. Spare projector bulbs should be there too. Sound levels, quality, and recordings need expert assistance throughout the series.

14. Visitation Coordinator/Committee:

This group under its leader is responsible to organize and lead out in the visitation of prospective individuals, as follows.

- a. First, invite people on the church interest list.
- b. First week of the meetings: Visit those who have stopped attending after the first three nights. The visit should be done by, if possible, a friend of the guest and should be informal and brief. Leave material missed or a gift and invite them back. Don't be pushy or manipulative.
- c. Second week of the meetings: Visit by phone or personally those who stopped attending after the first

week. Be prepared to answer objections on doctrinal issues by saying, "I'd like to hear what the speaker has to say about that. Why don't you put it in the question box?" Also visit those who have indicated an interest in baptism.

- d. Third week: Begin the clearing process for those who have been filling out decision cards. Answer objections.
- e. Continue to visit good interests and baptismal candidates following the meetings.

People who do the visitation should be totally dedicated, friendly, skilled in making friendships, and as much as possible, skilled in the art of helping people make decisions. The visitation team should consist of the pastor and may include the Personal Ministries Director, elders, Bible workers, literature evangelists, qualified greeters, and other church members.

15. Transportation Coordinator:

He or she is responsible to

- a. Make sure people who need rides get them.
- b. Have his or her phone number or contact details listed in the bulletin a few weeks in advance of the meetings so that he or she can be contacted by any church members who are aware of people who need rides but are unable to provide them.
- c. If possible, make a map of locations where church members live and work, in order to find convenient rides for contacts.
- d. Provide the phone numbers, names, addresses, and directions of the contact to the member picking them up. Call or visit both the contact and the member in finalizing the pick up arrangement and time.

16. Parking Coordinator:

He is responsible to organize parking attendants and ensure there are enough to direct traffic, especially on the opening night; provide umbrellas for rainy nights; and remove, each night, any unwanted literature that may be placed on cars.

17. Baptism Coordinator:

To make sure that this is a beautiful and unforgettable experience for each person baptized, the baptism coordinator is responsible to

- a. Ensure that the baptismal tank is attractive, clean, and that the water is warm.
- b. Ensure that there are sufficient baptismal robes in all sizes needed and that they are clean and pressed. There should be sufficient clean handkerchiefs and a few extra towels as well.
- c. Ensure that the changing facilities are clean, and privacy is available for changing clothes.
- d. Enlist sufficient deacons and deaconesses to assist candidates to prepare, and in getting in and out of the baptismal tank.
- e. See that there is a gift, such as a card, rose, book, etc. available as a memento of this most special occasion, to be presented by whom the pastor suggests, such as the one who led the convert to Christ.

18. Spiritual Friends Coordinator:

The on-going responsibility of this person is to

- a. Prepare a welcoming gift, such as Welcome to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- b. See that new believers are cared for, nurtured, and involved in evangelism and church activities. This

must be done immediately to avoid their becoming Laodicean.

- c. Match each new member or church attendee with a spiritual friend who can build personal contact and encourage them. If possible, maximize on already-built friendships and/or commonalities.
- d. Organize the church to support and get to know them. The Sabbath School Action Unit support system is ideal to assist with this and the above. (See *endnote 5*.)

19. Treasurer:

His or her responsibility is to oversee all financial aspects of the program, keep track of all receipts, and to prepare a final report for the board.¹⁴

Seven Characteristics of Great Evangelistic Preachers¹⁵

1. They are Spirit filled.

Paul said, “My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words, as with man’s wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Corinthians 2:4, KJV). “There is no limit to the usefulness of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God.”¹⁶ If the Holy Spirit does not have full control of your life, you cannot expect His power when you are preaching a sermon. “God can use the human agent just to the extent that he will be worked by the Holy Spirit.”¹⁷ You need to surrender all to be used by the Holy Spirit, claim His infilling, His wisdom, and power, and live in a state of constant submission to Him.

2. Their sermons are interesting.

Make them interesting by having the audience read the text with you. Ask questions and get them to respond. Read

the text wrong and let them correct you. Ask them to respond by raising their hands.

Use good illustrations. “As the crowds that followed Him [Jesus] increased, when He came to a favorable place, He would speak to them, simplifying His discourses by the use of parables and symbols.”¹⁸ In this way He awakened their imagination and got them to thinking. Christ’s parables were related to things his hearers saw in their daily living. They were so powerful that people remembered His message whenever they came in contact with those things. “By the use of charts, symbols, and representations of various kinds, the minister can make the truth stand out clearly and distinctly.”¹⁹

Use body language and voice variation. “The tones of the voice have much to do in affecting the hearts of those that hear.”²⁰ Use your voice to express pathos and feeling. Use appropriate facial expressions and hand gestures that correspond with the emotion and feeling of the message. Move away from the pulpit at times and walk back and forth as you relate a story. Maintain a good eye contact and watch their body language and gauge your emphasis and speed of speech to their receptivity.

3. They speak on the people’s level.

Take your deep theological thoughts and put them in the language of the people. Make your presentations simple. “Make your explanations clear; for I know that there are many who do not understand many of the things said to them. Let the Holy Spirit mold and fashion your speech, . . . Speak as to little children, remembering that there are many well advanced in years who are but little children in understanding.”²¹

4. They are enthusiastic.

“These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also” (Acts 17:6, KJV). This could not have happened

without enthusiasm. “In proportion to the enthusiasm and perseverance with which the work is carried forward, will be the success given.”²² The truth you speak is a reality. We will walk on streets of gold! Does that thrill you? Then express your excitement by speaking about it with great enthusiasm.

5. They speak with authority.

Preach with the conviction that what you have to say is the absolute truth. Be positive. Your whole message should solidly declare that strong conviction. If you are not sure or certain about what you believe, you’ll never be able to convince someone else. It is said of Jesus, “And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes” (Mark 1:22, KJV). Be crystal clear in your preaching. A mist in the pulpit is a fog in the pew. “In Christ’s teaching there is no long, far-fetched, complicated reasoning. He comes right to the point.”²³

We need to be truthful, but also tactful. We need to declare the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), but we should not hammer the people in a harsh unchristlike manner. Jesus spoke with authority but the people loved him, because they knew He loved them.

6. They call for decisions.

Make every sermon an appeal. When you preach, the intellect is enlightened. The mind responds, and that creates a need to make a decision. If the person is not invited to decide, the mind relaxes, the willpower is numbed, the heart is hardened, and soon the person is unreachable. At the close of every meeting decisions should be called for. If you don’t, the devil can steal the seed the Holy Spirit has planted.

7. They spend time with God.

“By earnest prayer and diligent effort we are to obtain a fitness for speaking.”²⁴ “He [God] will give us apt words to speak, communicating to us through the angel standing by

our side.”²⁵ What a privilege it is to spend time with Him, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and be blessed to share words He gives us!

Preaching Preparation and Presentation

The single most important topic of the campaign is “Righteousness by Faith.” If you and your membership do not understand and accept salvation in Christ, you have nothing to offer. There is no saving power in preaching the millennium, the state of the dead, etc., unless they are tied to the cross of Christ. The order of the sermons must lead the people to accept Christ as Saviour first. Then invite them to accept Him as Lord and step by step into what He asks. The evidence of their accepting Him as Lord is obedience out of love. When He is Lord, the Sabbath and other truths become clear. There is no argument, only loving obedience through His power. There is no power for behavioral change aside from this faith relationship with Jesus. Don’t call for a decision to keep the Sabbath until they have accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord.²⁶

In preparing, decide on the whole comprehensive list of topics you plan to cover. Start praying and working on them early. Set a goal with dates as to when each sermon needs to be prepared in order to have them all ready before the meetings begin. Some may take longer to prepare than others.

It is not within the scope of this pamphlet to deal with sermon preparation itself. Often lay and ordained preachers utilize and adapt tested evangelistic sermons.

The sermons usually begin with a captivating story to capture the attention. This leads to the main theme, which is followed by three or four logically arranged main points that are presented with key texts. There is then a summary and always an appeal for decision.

One must be careful not to wander but to adhere to the theme and key points. Use brief illustrations that drive the point home and don't use so many texts that it is confusing. Make it simple so that all can understand and yet be comprehensive and appealing.

Preach your sermon three times on the day you are going to preach. The first time go over your notes, reading them. The second time, ask yourself, *what are the points and texts I want to emphasize?* Highlight your main points with a highlighter. The third time, add the passion. Get excited! Raise your voice! Get people's attention. Put your heart into what you are saying. Ask yourself, "How can I say this so people will know what is in my heart?" Practice looking away from your notes and into the eyes of the audience, making contact with the people. This is essential in your presentation.²⁷

We will now move to making appeals:

Making Appeals

Making appeals is most important and it is biblical. "At the close of every meeting, decisions should be called for."²⁸ "In every discourse fervent appeals should be made to the people to forsake their sins and turn to Christ."²⁹ God made appeals: Genesis 3:9, Revelation 3:20, Revelation 22:17. God's servants made appeals: Joshua 24:15, I Kings 18:21. Paul made appeals: Acts 18:4.

It is not enough to proclaim the goodness of the Truth; we must persuade people to make decisions. A literature evangelist would go hungry if he just proclaimed how good his books are. He must appeal for a decision to buy. This is perhaps one of the weakest areas in public evangelism and yet its whole purpose is to get decisions to follow Christ and His Truth. People often don't know how and are afraid to make calls, but it isn't that difficult. Here are some helpful pointers:

- a. When you should call for decisions: When people have sufficient knowledge, when major objections have been answered, when they believe this is what God wants them to do and that He is leading them to make the decision.
- b. Appeals help people to confirm their decisions. Expression deepens impression. The whole message is really an appeal to the heart. Do all you can to treat each subject as such. Your own heart must be filled with the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. When you preach, an individual's intellect is enlightened, the heart responds, the Holy Spirit convicts, creating a specific need to make a decision. So they feel their need. The appeal is in accord with their felt need. Take advantage of it.
- c. The essential element in a call: Earnestness. The audience must perceive that you believe that God has given you the message, that you believe the call is significant and urgent, and that you are in earnest about it.

If you get close to them, and let them know that you love them, they will respond. Start with little decisions, then bigger ones are easier to get.

The call must also be clear. They must know what you are asking for, why they need to do it, and what blessings they will receive by doing it.

- d. The basic types of calls are: *Prayer call*, in which you have them raise their hand while praying; *standing call*; *altar call*; and *card call*. Some have found that a blank card or piece of paper on which they can write their decision is better than a printed one.
- e. Appeals are divided into two categories: The general appeal is an invitation to accept the truth of the evening message. The specific appeal is to reap the harvest

and includes: To accept Christ, to experience victory over some bad habit, to keep the commandments, to keep the Sabbath, and to join the church.

- f. Consider that people differ in the way they perceive truth. Try to include and appeal to all of them. Some are visual. Say, “Can you see Jesus coming in the clouds?” For the people who are auditory, say, “Can you hear the trumpet sounding?” and for the feeling, kinesthetic or sensory: “Can you imagine what it is going to feel like to see Jesus coming?”
- g. Try to reach people of different ages, occupations, etc., sitting in different places in the auditorium who are struggling with different doctrinal and lifestyle problems. Let each person feel that you are personally speaking to them.
- h. Example of an evangelistic appeal: “God has spoken to you tonight. You have heard His voice. He is calling you tonight. Tonight He is saying ‘Come.’ Picture the arms of Jesus. They are stretched out wide for you. He is beckoning for you to come tonight. Listen to His voice calling you now: ‘My child, I love you. Come tonight. Come with your sins. Come with your weaknesses. Come with your fears. Come with your doubts.’ Tonight, whoever you are—salesman, housewife, factory worker, business executive, student—come to Jesus. Tonight, where you are, in the front or in the back or on the side of this auditorium, come to Jesus. He will accept you tonight. He will forgive you tonight. He speaks to your heart tonight. . . .come—and come now [to the front].”³⁰

Home Visitation

“For years I have been shown that house-to-house labor is the work that will make the preaching of the Word a success.”³¹ “It is not preaching that is the most important; it is

house-to-house work, reasoning from the Word, explaining the Word.”³² There are three types of evangelistic home visits: The comeback visit, the Sabbath visit, and the Baptism visit.

The Comeback Visit

Visit those who have missed two nights in a row. This visit takes place at the door. Introduce yourself, identify with the meetings, thank them for coming and say, “I wanted to give you the material for the meetings you were unable to attend.” Tell of the next exciting meeting and ask if they will be there. If they say no, ask if the following meeting will be more convenient. If they are not home leave the material with a note on the door.

The Sabbath Visit

Make the visit following the Sabbath presentation. It is wise to arrange this visit by phone or at the meetings. The purpose is to discover if they understand the Sabbath truth, answer any questions, and invite them to keep it. If they are unwilling, don’t push. Keep them coming, but if they are in agreement with the Sabbath, invite them to keep it.

Key questions: *How have you been enjoying the meetings? Do you have any questions? Have you ever heard about the Bible Sabbath before? Is it clear to you that the Bible Sabbath is Saturday?* If the response is positive, say, *“Have you ever thought of keeping it?”* Whether the response is yes or no, respond, *“This Sabbath our church is having a special service. Do you think it would be possible for you to attend?”*

If the response is negative, never argue. Let the Holy Spirit convict. Listen carefully and encourage them to keep attending.

The Baptism Visit

Make it after the baptism presentation. The purpose is to ascertain if the person has accepted truth, to answer any

questions, and to encourage them to be baptized. If they have marked a decision card, confirm, thank, and encourage them. Set a date. If there are problems needing to be resolved before baptism can occur, work with them to resolve these and encourage them to trust in Jesus for strength. If they have not marked a decision card, tell them how pleased God was when Jesus, our example, was baptized, and ask if they have ever thought of being baptized. Whether the answer is yes or no, respond, “I believe that every time a person makes a decision to be baptized God is well pleased. In two weeks we will be having a baptism. Is there anything stopping you from following the example of Jesus and being baptized?”³³

“How can the great work of the third angel’s message be accomplished? It must be largely accomplished by persevering, individual effort, by visiting the people in their homes.”³⁴

Preserving the Harvest

Again, as expressed above, this is most vital to the real success of public evangelism. The newly baptized may look like mature adults but they are babies. They can fall. They need cleaning up, encouragement, and care.

We have been called to make disciples. Disciples are mature and grounded in the faith with a lifestyle of discipleship. This takes time. Studies show that new members need six close friends in six months to stay in the church. Close friends are not the ones that merely say, “Hi” at church. The new believers need to be put into the network of relationships in the church.

There are three phases of new believer experience.

- a. **Honeymoon:** People are passionate. Generally, church people are friendly and accepting. The message is clear to them. They experience victory over sin. Even family members are happy for their progress. They want to do everything in the church.

- b. **Disillusionment:** The “perfect” remnant has politics. It gossips. The new believer begins struggling with sins. Their family thinks the church is taking too much of their time. Former friends outside the church start rejecting their new faith. They feel isolated. They are not given jobs in the church, and are told they must wait for that privilege. They notice members not practicing their beliefs. They discover texts that trouble them. If we don’t give them special care they will be out of the church.
- c. **Integration:** Those who have been nurtured become integrated into the church and part of the relationship networks. While their early passion may diminish a little, they have a deeper love for Jesus. Even in their struggle with sin, they have an assurance of salvation. They tolerate inconsistencies of other members’ behavior. They become a little more mature in their approach to church; it’s not simply black and white. Most importantly, they start participating in the mission of the church.

For successful integration, new members must have spiritual friends. A successful evangelist says he gives the spiritual friends a charge, listing specifics: The first Friday night, visit the new members in their homes, and have sundown worship with them. Next morning, sit with them in Sabbath School. Show them the hymnal and Sabbath school Bible Study Guide (quarterly), etc. Take them home with you for lunch. Show them how to keep Sabbath, eat, etc. If they miss a Sabbath service, before you go home to eat, stop at their homes, find out why they missed, and encourage them. If a new member misses three Sabbaths in a row, he says, that person may already be a casualty.

Let’s discuss the “spiritual friends” concept in more detail. How do you start and continue?

Toward the end of the meetings, make a list of interest names who regularly attend and whom you anticipate to baptize. Call together active members that through the series have shown that they would be pleasant dedicated spiritual friends. Invite them to make a commitment to be spiritual friends to specific people for at least three months.

There is a specific process they must do every week and report what they have done. It may include:

1. Make weekly visits and/or phone calls.
2. Invite them home for Sabbath dinners once a month. Invite others along with them, so they can meet others besides yourself.
3. Do some social activities together.
4. Sit with them in church. Make church the place to be on Sabbath morning.
5. Introduce them to other members.
6. Help them to establish a daily devotional life. Have worship with them.
7. Get them involved in a small group study. It is important that they continue to study and pray to be strong.
8. Look for ways to involve them in church activities and in outreach. As mentioned above, they have a network of acquaintances. Help them reach out to these. Nothing can strengthen their faith more than giving Bible studies to others. If they are with you in a Sabbath School Action Unit all this is a natural.
9. Love them and tell them how much you appreciate them. Spiritual friends should not:
 - a. Let two weeks pass without contacting their new friends.

- b. Preach at their new friends or get into an argument criticizing the way they believe.
- c. Answer their questions with, “Ellen White says. . .” The meetings have utilized only the Bible. If you don’t know the answer, simply say it’s a great question and that you will study it. Follow through!
- d. Be shocked if they make suggestions or remarks not in harmony with the faith. Growth takes time.
- e. Speak negatively of certain members, leaders, or other denominations.

What works well: What do most people like who come into the church through an evangelistic series? Prophecy, music, and finding new information in the Bible. But at church, it is business as usual. To keep new members, plan to have a prophecy Bible class in the church. Make sure the pastor preaches on prophecy once a month.

New members will usually do whatever you tell them to do. They don’t know any differently. So if you involve them in a ministry in a small group, they will do it. If you tell them, “You have to hold an evangelistic meeting within the first year of being in this church,” they’ll do it. If you tell them that coming to this church means they have to attend a weekly Bible study and a prophecy seminar course and bring five of their non-member friends to church within the year, they’ll do it. Instruct them right at the beginning and they will be good church members at the end.

If you follow up faithfully, depending constantly on the Holy Spirit for wisdom, you will have success. Make public evangelism successful. Preserve the harvest.³⁵

Endnotes

- ¹ ShareHim Team, *The Harvest Is Ready: ShareHim Boot Camp Training Manual*, (Charlotte, North Carolina, 2005), Session 14: “Biblical Perspective of Evangelism,” pp. 1, 2.
- ² *The Desire of Ages*, p. 370.
- ³ ShareHim Team, *The Harvest Is Ready: ShareHim Boot Camp Training Manual*, (Charlotte, North Carolina, 2005), Session 14: “Biblical Perspective of Evangelism,” pp. 3-5.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, Session 3: “The Local Church and the Cycle of Evangelism,” p. 2.
- ⁵ For information on the Sabbath School Action Unit support system, see *Keys to Sabbath School Action Units*, (Lincoln NE: AdventSource, 2008). Or go online to [http://www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org/site/1/leaflets/Action Units.pdf](http://www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org/site/1/leaflets/Action%20Units.pdf)
- ⁶ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143.
- ⁷ ShareHim Team, *The Harvest Is Ready: ShareHim Boot Camp Training Manual*, (Charlotte, North Carolina, 2005), Session 3: “The Local Church and the Cycle of Evangelism,” p. 1.
- ⁸ *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 323, 324.
- ⁹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 525.
- ¹⁰ *Keys to Adventist Community Services* is part of the Personal Ministries Leaflets series, and is available from AdventSource.
- ¹¹ ShareHim Team, *The Harvest Is Ready: ShareHim Boot Camp Training Manual*, (Charlotte, North Carolina, 2005), Session 3: “The Local Church and the Cycle of Evangelism,” pp. 1, 2.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, Session 13: “Organizing for Evangelism,” pp. 1-23.
- ¹³ Dan Guild, Kurt Johnson, Calvin Smith, *Discover Bible School Manual*. (Simi Valley, CA: The Voice of Prophecy, 2003).
- ¹⁴ ShareHim Team, *The Harvest Is Ready: ShareHim Boot Camp Training Manual*, (Charlotte, North Carolina, 2005), Session 13: “Organizing for Evangelism,” pp. 1-23.
- ¹⁵ This section is adapted from *Ibid.*, Session 2: “Evangelistic Preaching,” pp. 1-3.
- ¹⁶ *Christian Service*, p. 254.
- ¹⁷ Nichol, Francis D.: *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 7*. (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1978, 2002), p. 969.
- ¹⁸ *Evangelism*, p. 203.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 666.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 175.
- ²² *Prophets and Kings*, p. 263.
- ²³ *Evangelism*, p. 171.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 175.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 172. See also Jeremiah 1:6-9 and Exodus 4:12.
- ²⁶ ShareHim Team, *The Harvest Is Ready: ShareHim Boot Camp Training Manual*, (Charlotte, North Carolina, 2005), Session 15: "Righteousness by Faith," pp. 1-4.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, Session 4: "How to Prepare for Preaching," pp. 1-3.
- ²⁸ *Evangelism*, p. 280.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰ ShareHim Team, *The Harvest Is Ready: ShareHim Boot Camp Training Manual*, (Charlotte, North Carolina, 2005), Session 10: "Making Appeals," pp. 1-3.
- ³¹ *Evangelism*, p. 433.
- ³² *Gospel Workers*, p. 468.
- ³³ ShareHim Team, *The Harvest Is Ready: ShareHim Boot Camp Training Manual*, (Charlotte, North Carolina, 2005), Session 8: "Home Visitation," pp. 1, 2.
- ³⁴ *Welfare Ministry*, p. 97.
- ³⁵ ShareHim Team, *The Harvest Is Ready: ShareHim Boot Camp Training Manual*, (Charlotte, North Carolina, 2005), Session 7: "Preserving the Harvest," pp. 1-4.

How to Make an Evangelistic Visit

by Geoff Youlden



Published by General Conference Ministerial Association.

Geoff Youlden discusses the principles of doing an evangelistic visit. He demonstrates the method that Jesus and Paul used when they did evangelistic visits and how we might use those methods today. To purchase this "Seminar in a Box" DVD, visit the Ministerial Resource Center at www.ministerialassociation.com.

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