



BUILDING SPIRITUAL HOMES
LIVING *our values* **TOGETHER**





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6 VERY MUCH HAS BEEN LOST TO THE CAUSE OF TRUTH BY A LACK OF ATTENTION TO THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF THE YOUNG... WHY SHOULD NOT LABOUR FOR THE YOUTH IN OUR BORDERS BE REGARDED AS MISSIONARY WORK OF THE HIGHEST KIND? IT REQUIRES THE MOST DELICATE TACT, THE MOST WATCHFUL CONSIDERATION, THE MOST EARNEST PRAYER FOR HEAVENLY WISDOM. 9

Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, p. 207.2–3

Sister White aptly calls for us to care for the spiritual needs of young people. Young people need the church and the church needs young people. They are dynamic, creative, innovative and capable of great things. From a spiritual point of view many of the Christian revivals and reformations are rooted in the mobilisation of young people. It is no coincidence that Jesus chose the young to be his disciples. Given how important they are for the church, it is disturbing that we often

lose more than half of our young people. Their reasons for leaving the church are relational and not doctrinal in general. Relationships are key to a healthy church!

Churches where young people feel they belong, and where they can actively participate in shaping church life, vision, and mission, are generally passionate communities. Churches that include young



people are also much more likely to reach the contemporary society with the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ (Revelation 14:6–12).

The same can be said for churches that bridge other gaps between people. Sister White wrote: ‘In loving sympathy and confidence God’s workers are to unite with one another... He who says or does anything that tends to separate the members of Christ’s church, is counterworking the Lord’s purpose. True religion unites hearts, not only with Christ, but with one another, in a most tender union.’

(*Gospel Workers*, p. 484.1).

A church that is effective for mission is a church that has united hearts. Effectively doing this means bridging gaps: age gaps, cultural gaps, and social gaps. A church that can truly share the Three Angels’ Message, is a church that focusses on relationships across gaps. They are intergenerational, intercultural and inter-social-class.

HOW CAN WE REACH MORE PEOPLE WITH THE GOSPEL?

Worldwide we are facing challenges and questions confronting our church. We want as many people as possible to belong to God’s people. We want to reach people and we want to keep people in the



“THE OLD TESTAMENT CITIES OF REFUGE SERVE AS A METAPHOR FOR THE CHURCH OF REFUGE FRAMEWORK... CHURCHES OF REFUGE FOLLOW THE TRADITIONS AND IDEAS OF THESE BIBLICAL CITIES OF REFUGE AND APPLY THEM ESPECIALLY TO BEING A SAFE PLACE. A CHURCH OF REFUGE IS A FAITH COMMUNITY THAT IS PURPOSEFUL IN PROVIDING A SAFE PLACE AND SANCTUARY FOR EVERYONE.”

church. These two are related. A church that keeps their members and their young people is often the best at reaching people.

So, how do we reach the world with God’s message, and what can we do to keep our youth in the church? Or how can we win them back? The Center for Youth Evangelism (CYE), a research institute at Andrews University, developed the Church of Refuge (COR) concept. The Old Testament cities of refuge serve as a metaphor for the Church of Refuge framework (Deuteronomy 19:1–13, Numbers 35:6–15). Churches of Refuge follow the traditions and ideas of these biblical cities of refuge and apply them especially to being a safe place. A Church of Refuge is a faith community that is purposeful in providing a safe place and sanctuary for everyone. Churches of Refuge are intentional about young people, ensuring that they feel protected, valued and they can get involved.

The iCOR framework takes Jesus’ commission to his followers to ‘go and make disciples’ seriously (Matthew 28:16–20). It is designed to promote and foster true discipleship. Churches following the iCOR principles are committed to developing safe but challenging environments as well as inclusive faith communities for mission, where all members are empowered to experience and strengthen their faith. The iCOR framework is part of a worldwide Adventist network: a cooperation with the Church of Refuge initiatives at the Center for Youth Evangelism (Andrews University), the Trans-European Division, the



Inter-European Division and the General Conference Youth Ministries. In close cooperation with these partners, iCOR develops new ideas, strategies, and resources to support the congregations.

THE FAMILY OF GOD

We believe in a relational God: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is a completely united being, and the Bible uses familiar terminology to describe God. At creation, God declared that a person should not be alone. Together humans are responsible for each other. The church is the community of God's children. As God's family the church is a loving, caring, and nurturing community that empowers and supports its members to connect with each other, and live up to their full potential in Christ. Just like a family, the church must be *intergenerational*, with young and old working together for God's glory. The iCOR emphasizes an inclusive approach that welcomes all generations,

cultures and social backgrounds. This is rooted in the conviction that we all need each other in order to grow spiritually. The 'i' in iCOR therefore stands for *intergenerational*: we welcome all generations. But it also stands for *intercultural and inter-social-class*: God is the father of His children from all cultures and backgrounds. No matter who you are, you are a disciple of Christ. And a church that takes Jesus's teachings seriously, fosters true discipleship among its members.

TRUE DISCIPLESHIP

Christ's great commission to his followers was to go and make disciples. Discipleship is not simply a programme in the church—it is the reason the church exists. True, holistic discipleship is much more than simply teaching the gospel. Following Jesus' example, the church is called to focus on four areas of discipleship: relational, spiritual growth-oriented, missional, and empowering.



Relational Discipleship

Jesus called his disciples personally and had an ongoing relationship with them. They travelled, spent time together and got to know each other. True discipleship focuses on relationships, and is developed through connecting to one another, caring for one another, and participating in mission together.

Spiritual Growth-Oriented Discipleship

Jesus focussed on the spiritual growth of his disciples. He worshipped and prayed with them. He led them in their development of independent faith and challenged their thinking. Similarly, true discipleship should aim at spiritual growth through faith development, worship with relevance, and relevant teaching.

Missional Discipleship

Jesus introduced his disciples to ministry, first by sending them out in service for a short while, and later letting them devote their lives to service, mission, and the training of other disciples. If we follow Jesus's example, true discipleship should be focussed on this mission. Disciples should be constantly involved in serving others, and they should be involved in Jesus's ministry of healing and reconciliation.

Empowering Discipleship

Jesus gave his disciples a commission, but he didn't send them out without the proper equipment. He gave them the power to move

mountains and the Spirit to comfort them. He frequently prayed for them. True discipleship should empower the disciples. It should focus on mentoring, training and coaching disciples into leadership. It should encourage ownership of the vision, and most importantly, there should be constant prayer for empowerment.

THE CHURCH OF REFUGE FRAMEWORK

The Church of Refuge framework is a method for implementing Christ's discipleship in local churches. Based on the four areas of discipleship, there are ten values that should be continuously applied and discussed in the life of the church. These values will help the church to grow as a safe place for all people—especially youngsters.

The ten iCOR values are not programmes that need to be run. They are life-changing, faith-nurturing values that are vital to true discipleship and Christ's mission. They are indispensable in meeting the spiritual needs of young and old alike.

The ten iCOR values provide a framework that focuses on true discipleship. They empower a church to set realistic goals and create effective programmes. The ten iCOR values allow a church to become a true spiritual home for all peoples and nations of all ages.

RELATIONSHIPS



CONNECTING → Connecting churches strive to form authentic and loving relationships across generational, cultural and social boundaries.



CARING → Caring churches foster a loving attitude that reaches out to others with empathy and accepts them the way they are. They actively serve their good and support them in all areas of life.



PARTICIPATING → Churches that encourage participation value the gifts and skills of their fellow human beings and create room for them to take part in forming all aspects of church life. In this way, they foster a sense of belonging and identification with the church.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH



WORSHIPPING → Churches understand worship as the daily practice of making the Gospel reality. They search for creative opportunities to celebrate worship in everyday life and are committed to making the Sabbath a meaningful experience.



TEACHING → Churches that teach the Word of God communicate in a relevant, creative and practical way.

MISSION



SERVING → Mission and ministering always require an attitude of service. Serving churches follow the example of Jesus by ministering to the needs of others and seeking to discover new ways to serve.



RECONCILING → Reconciling and reconciled churches actively foster reconciliation and healing in the name of Jesus, both in the relationship to our heavenly Father and to each other.

EMPOWERMENT



MENTORING → Churches that care about personally accompanying their children and youth in particular, but also adults in their walk of faith are committed to fostering spiritual mentoring relationships.



TRAINING → Churches that are open for learning provide training opportunities for their members to develop individual gifts and skills and promote services and ministries in the church.



LEADING → Strategic and purpose-driven churches lead with a vision and passion, integrating the younger generation in the leadership activities of the church.

How to use this Guide

THIS GUIDE IS PART OF A PROCESS TO HELP YOUR CHURCH IMPLEMENT iCOR. THIS PROCESS HAS FIVE STEPS.

1. DISCUSSING THE iCOR PRINCIPLES AT THE CHURCH BOARD

Understanding the iCOR principles is the first important step. Every church is unique and there is no such thing as one size fits all. The best way to move forward is to set aside time at each church board meeting to discuss a iCOR value. There are ten principles, which means you can go through all the principles and discuss their implementation in a year or two. This training guide is set up so that the devotional moment organically leads to this discussion.

2. THE SET-UP

The *Church Board Guide* has been set up in a way, so that it is practical. You will find both discussion questions and implementation questions. Make sure you use both. Through conversation you will get to know the other members on the board better. You will have greater understanding for each other, and this will also make the implementation much easier. The thoughts that go along with each principle can be used as the devotional on the board. There are also



videos available, which you can watch with the board, and can also be used as a discussion starter for your Sabbath school class or as a fresh new item during your worship service. Discuss how best to use these.

3. iCOR-SPIRAL

As you discuss each iCOR principle in the guide, you will be surprised to discover how much you are already doing. In this discussion, you will also see the potential you have to implement this value even

more. Don't forget to delegate and take responsibility for how your plans are to be implemented. iCOR is holistic, and that means including the entire church. In implementing these principles, be sure not to make the young people of the church your 'project.' They are to be involved in this process from the very beginning.

Do not misunderstand iCOR as a programme that can be completed once and stop. It's rather an ongoing experiential learning process

3. STEPS

What is our strategy and concrete action steps?

4. IMPLEMENTATION

Starting the experiment and implementing concrete action steps.

5. EVALUATION

What has been the impact?
What went wrong?
Which successes can we celebrate?

1. REFLECTION

Reflection of the current situation. What is already there? What is needed and what do we mean by it?

2. GOALS

What are the possibilities for improvement, if we take into account our resources?
Setting the goals.





that starts over and over again. To give you an understanding of what we mean by that we have developed the iCOR spiral on the left. This manual will guide you through this spiral value by value.

4. COMMUNICATION

As a church implements the ten principles it is vital that they communicate these clearly. Be sure to regularly communicate decisions and initiatives to all of the church, possibly in different ways for different target audiences. Transparency and accountability are important, and especially with something new, it is more likely to be well received if people understand the reasoning behind what is done.

5. CHECK IN YEARLY

Once you enter the iCOR network and begin working with this you have sent a powerful message to your brothers and sisters, your community and to your conference/union that your church believes in and prioritises intergenerational and intercultural discipleship. In order for accountability to exist as well as follow up and an ongoing dialogue we have developed two evaluation tools: The iCOR church test and the iCOR barometer. This is not an audit. We simply want to ensure that you regularly evaluate what you are doing; a yearly check up is a great idea. This also helps the iCOR leadership to regularly evaluate the iCOR framework so that it continues to meet the needs of the local church.

Let's get started!

IF YOU FEEL THAT YOUR CHURCH NEEDS TO BE MORE FOCUSED ON DISCIPLESHIP, YOU CAN START NOW. AT YOUR NEXT BOARD MEETING, PICK ANY VALUE AND START READING.

There is just one more thing you should know: each value has additional Bible texts—these are optional—depending on how much time you have set aside. The Bible is important, but so is the discussion! Make sure you have time for discussion and implementation.

If you plan ahead, all the board members can read the additional Bible texts ahead of time, pray on their meaning and even discuss them with other members. This will bring the power of the Word, prayer and fellowship to the board meeting and your plans.





CONNECTING

1



CONNECTING CHURCHES STRIVE TO FORM AUTHENTIC AND LOVING RELATIONSHIPS ACROSS GENERATIONAL, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL BOUNDARIES.

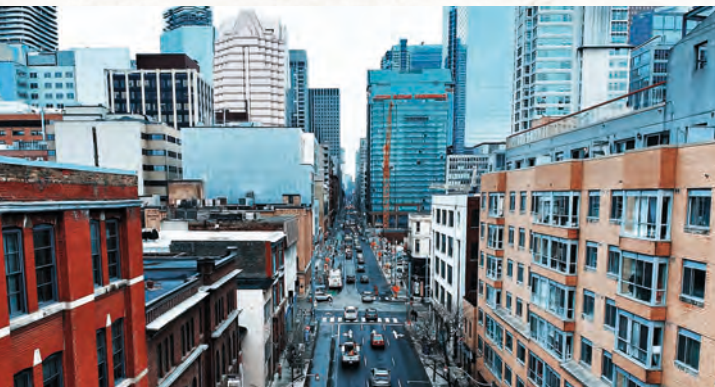
For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:26–29)

ADDITIONAL BIBLE TEXTS

- › Acts 2:45–47 / Daily fellowship
- › Acts 15:1–21 / Discussion
- › John 15:1–17 / Jesus and love
- › Philippians 1:9–10 / Love and discernment

WHAT DOES 'CONNECTING' MEAN?

God is love, and as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is a relational God—and his church should also reflect this nature. Building healthy relationships is one of the most important and urgent tasks of the Christian church. The love lived out among the followers of Jesus is a central characteristic identifying them as belonging to God. It makes their faith authentic. It is fundamentally impossible to love God and ignore one's fellow human beings. Christian fellowship must be built up and lived out; it is more than the mere gathering of several people in the same place to attend a spiritual programme. Connecting churches make conscious efforts to form authentic and loving relationships across generational, cultural and social boundaries and come in contact with people both in and outside the church. This is particularly important for the young people in the church, because it is essential for their spiritual growth that they have relevant relationships not just with their peers, but also with adults.



THOUGHT

More than half of the world's population live in cities. We come in contact with people all the time, and often we are in contact with so many people that we do not have very many close relationships. We don't connect. We don't have many good friends that we know we can always count on. And that's dangerous, because it means that we lose touch with each other because we try to keep in contact with everybody. The Bible reminds us how important connecting is: 'Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help.' (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)

Many people leave the church, not because they choose to, but due to the unfortunate fact that we lose contact with them. We do not stay in contact nor do we get in contact with new people that move to our area. We either lose the connection or never make it. How can we be better at getting in contact? In your church, be in contact with neighbouring churches. Be in contact with your area coordinator or youth director. Let them know, that this is a church that values connections and wants to be sure that nobody moving into your area is dropped. How about when people move away? Do you stay in contact? And how?

The New Testament is full of letters. Many of them from Paul, and when you read his introductions, you can just hear how he wishes he could be right there with them. 'I am writing this in big letters,' he says. 'When I come visit you,' he promises. And most importantly, you can tell that he genuinely cares about the members' well-being and their salvation.

When you look around in your church, who do see? Who do you not see? Maybe you have had a pathfinder club for years, but many of those pathfinders are long gone, and they are no longer part of your church family. Maybe some elderly members no longer find it easy to come to church. Maybe you have seen numerous students move to your city, but they are not staying in church? Have people emi-

grated to your area, but cannot speak your language well? How can you get all these people involved in the church? Are you creating relationships across generation, social and cultural boundaries?

DISCUSSION

- › Have you lost contact with any close friends over the years? Why?
- › Do you have any authentic relationships across boundaries? What do these relationships bring you?
- › Do you know of any members that you have lost contact with?
- › What contributes to you not making relationships across boundaries?



IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS

- › What do we already do to form authentic relationships?
- › Are there elements of our church's culture that need changing to achieve authentic relationships in your church?
- › What is achievable to make more relationships within the next 12 months?
- › What practical ideas can we implement before the next board meeting? (Choose one or two, either from the suggestions below or from your own discussion.)

IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS

- › Develop a welcome pack for new members.
- › Assign a 'buddy' to each new member.
- › Organise a home-coming Sabbath.
- › Use social media to stay in contact with members who have moved away.
- › Create an intergenerational prayer ministry, where people pray for others across boundaries.
- › Organise Sabbaths that intentionally mix up groups, putting young and old together in Sabbath School classes.
- › Create a system so all members can learn the names of all members (a 'facebook').



CARING

2

CARING CHURCHES FOSTER A LOVING ATTITUDE THAT REACHES OUT TO OTHERS WITH EMPATHY AND ACCEPTS THEM THE WAY THEY ARE. THEY ACTIVELY SERVE THEIR GOOD AND SUPPORT THEM IN ALL AREAS OF LIFE.

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,’ and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? (James 2:14–16)

ADDITIONAL BIBLE TEXTS

- › Deuteronomy 19:1–14 / Cities of refuge
- › Romans 14:1–15:7 / Differences and acceptance

WHAT DOES ‘CARING’ MEAN?

Genuine nurturing care fulfils most of the fundamental human needs. Those who experience that they are loved and accepted develop trust and become more open and receptive. Caring churches take care of their fellow human beings and build a supportive com-

munity because they see it as their mission to love as Jesus loved and to bring healing to others. Young people in particular need to experience a loving, caring and supportive faith community. Nurturing care draws people into the mutual responsibility of taking care of each other. It doesn’t matter to other people how much good and correct knowledge we have, they need to experience it!

Caring churches are committed to supporting those who have been entrusted to them in their spiritual growth so that one day these can say: ‘This is my church!’ Authentic nurturing care includes both prayer and practical help of all kinds. A caring attitude makes churches sensitive to the spiritual and other diverse needs of their fellow human beings.

THOUGHT

Wouldn’t it be great if your local Seventh-day Adventist church was known as the most loving place in town! Jesus told his disciples that

people would recognise his followers by the love they had for one another. Many people, however, do not feel loved or accepted in churches. I'm sure you will agree that this is very sad and together we want to do something about it.

A church following iCOR, however, is different. It follows Jesus's example of unconditional love and acceptance. Jesus modelled full acceptance to those who were true seekers after faith. In Matthew 6 we can see Jesus's example. Just after He had fed the five thousand, with five loaves and two small fish, the disciples got into a boat and went across the lake to Capernaum. Others followed in

search of Jesus. They found him, and among other things, asked for another sign that they may 'see and believe.' Jesus talked further about bread from heaven and then declared: 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never go thirsty.' (Matthew 6:35)

Jesus promised that everyone who comes to him and believes will never be hungry or thirsty. A wonderful promise. But he was not done, he continues with another promise: 'All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.' (Matthew 6:37) The words are so inclusive—Jesus welcomes 'anyone.' Not some, not the good, not the perfect, not the elect. Anyone. These are universal words that invite all to come to Jesus with the assurance that they will never be driven away.

Many churches and Christians struggle to follow Jesus's accepting example. Yet, if we can accept people and include them in the Holy Spirit's work, they have the opportunity to develop and mature in faith, in a safe and accepting environment. Just like plants grow best in a caring and nurturing environment, so can our brothers and sisters thrive in our love, acceptance, support and care.

How can our church be more accepting and loving? What can we do to allow people to feel more welcomed and supported?



DISCUSSION

- › Have you ever heard of someone in your church not feeling accepted? Why weren't they accepted? What contributed to them not being accepted?
- › Why is it hard to accept others who are different from ourselves? What type of people do you have a hard time accepting, and why? What makes you feel cared for in your church? What makes you feel the opposite?

IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS

- › What do we as a church already do to reach out to each other and accept people as they are?
- › Are there elements of our church's culture that need changing to be caring, accepting and loving?
- › What intentionally can we do to be more caring, accepting and loving?
- › What practical ideas can we implement before the next board meeting? (Choose one or two, either from the suggestions below or from your own discussion.)

IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS

- › Create a greeting team that welcomes everyone.
- › Implement a plan that encourages the members to invite people.
- › Contact a local home for elderly and plan regular caring visits.



- › Foster an environment that supports new ideas.
- › Create a system so all members can learn the names of all members (a 'facebook').
- › Regularly reflect and discuss whether members are feeling welcomed and create a system of pastoral follow-up.
- › Plan a sharing service where everyone can talk about moments where they were accepted and when not.
- › Create small groups to foster acceptance and care.
- › Make a list of people in the church that need extra care (e.g. elderly members) and invite the church to pray and care for them.



PARTICIPATING

3



CHURCHES THAT ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION VALUE THE GIFTS AND SKILLS OF THEIR FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS AND CREATE ROOM FOR THEM TO TAKE PART IN FORMING ALL ASPECTS OF CHURCH LIFE. IN THIS WAY, THEY FOSTER A SENSE OF BELONGING AND IDENTIFICATION WITH THE CHURCH.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. (1 Corinthians 12:12–14)

ADDITIONAL BIBLE TEXTS

- › Acts 20:7–12 / The dangers of not being included
- › Ephesians 4:11–16 / Gifts in the Church
- › Exodus 18:13–18 / Moses could not do everything by himself

WHAT DOES ‘PARTICIPATING’ MEAN?

Helping shape church life strengthens the feeling of belonging and identification with the church and its mission. This is particularly true for young people. They are filled with ideas, opinions and energy, but too often they are not given opportunities to apply these in the church. Studies show that youth consider the church to be relevant, but does the church consider the youth to be relevant? Essentially, a feeling of belonging is fostered where one is included and can contribute. With young people in view, the Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership issued the following statement in 2007: ‘The reasons most frequently cited by persons who leave local church fellowship are found in the realm of relationships, the absence of a

sense of belonging, and the lack of meaningful engagement in the local congregation and its mission' ('Conserving Membership Gains,' General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Executive Committee, 2007, paragraph 5). Churches would therefore be well-advised to encourage their members, young and old, as well as guests to actively participate in shaping the vision and mission of the church.

THOUGHT

In Acts 20 there is a shocking story with a good ending. Paul is in Troas and is engaged in a discussion through the night. Many people are there including a young man named Eutychus. Eutychus is sitting on the windowsill. Why is this young man there? Why not on a chair, why not near Paul? If he had come specifically to hear Paul surely, he should have sat near him. Eutychus is on the windowsill, right on the edge of the church, figuratively as well as literally. He is not part of the proceedings, he does not participate in the discussion.

So ... he falls asleep, falls off and dies. Some might say that's his own fault, but is it? What if Eutychus was part of the conversation? What if someone had invited him to participate? What would have happened? We don't know, but what we do know is that this young man is not part of the meeting, not part of the proceedings, not part of the church.

Have you ever thought of how many people are on the windowsills of our church? People who don't belong, who are right on the edge. People who are not part of the conversation. Anonymous and unnoticed. You probably can't think of many, because you probably don't notice them that much. Eutychus is a tragic case that beautifully illustrates the dangers of people not participating: we often don't notice people until something terrible happens. Think about this, would we have read about Eutychus in our Bibles if he had not fallen? Would we have noticed him? Would the people in that room have noticed him? Often, only after someone falls off, do we notice him/her.



Now, Eutychus is a young person, but this applies to much more than young people. Churches push many people to the edges. Some churches push women, others men. Often people of a certain nationality or background are pushed to the edge. In some churches ‘liberals’ don’t participate, in others it is ‘conservatives.’ This pushing to the edge is exactly what Paul is talking about in 1 Corinthians 12: In Christ there is no more male, female, no more nationalities and backgrounds, no more conservatives and liberals. In Christ there are only Christians.

So, think about your ‘windowsills.’ Who sits there? Who does not participate? Why don’t they participate? What can you do to include everyone? And remember, that of everyone Paul ever met, the Bible only says that he hugged Eutychus: the boy who sat on the edge. Who do you need to hug?

DISCUSSION

- › Who can you think is sitting on the edge? Why do you think they are there? Why don’t they participate more?
- › Why is it hard to get everyone to participate?
- › How could you encourage people to participate? What could you do?

IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS

- › What do we already do to ensure everyone can participate?
- › Are there elements of our church’s culture that need changing to encourage more people to participate?
- › What can we intentionally do to encourage more participation?
- › What practical ideas can we implement before the next board meeting? (Choose one or two, either from the suggestions below or from your own discussion.)

IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS

- › Organise a day for everyone to discover their spiritual gifts.
- › Create a list of aspects of church life, and actively ask people to engage with that aspect.
- › Foster an environment that supports new ideas.
- › Hang up a sign-up sheet for tasks the church needs, don’t turn anyone down who applies.
- › Challenge a group of people on the edge to take over one aspect of church life, one week. Then challenge them more often.
- › If a position is vacant, don’t fill it until someone new steps forward—trust God that someone will.
- › Organise the church around teams and always include someone new in each team.
- › Pair members on the edge with experienced members and let them participate together.



WORSHIPPING

4



CHURCHES UNDERSTAND WORSHIP AS THE DAILY PRACTICE OF MAKING THE GOSPEL REALITY. THEY SEARCH FOR CREATIVE OPPORTUNITIES TO CELEBRATE WORSHIP IN EVERYDAY LIFE AND ARE COMMITTED TO MAKING THE SABBATH A MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCE.

‘For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.’ (Matthew 18:20)

ADDITIONAL BIBLE TEXTS

- › Colossians 3:16–17 / Everything should be worship
- › Genesis 4:1–16 / Conflict about worship
- › John 4:19–26 / Spirit and truth
- › Revelation 4:1–11 / Worship in heaven
- › Revelation 14:6–13 / Call to worship

WHAT DOES ‘WORSHIPPING’ MEAN?

Worship is not an event or programme, but a way of life. It trusts that God is present and lets the biblical truth become reality in everyday

life. The ‘children of God’ do not just proclaim the Gospel, but also celebrate and live it out wherever they come together. Studies show that experiencing corporate worship, joy and reverence in singing, music, prayer and preaching has a positive effect on the spiritual life of an individual that extends into everyday living. Churches that desire to grow in corporate worship are actively committed to making the Sabbath a meaningful experience and shaping worship in such a way that young people can also contribute and feel addressed by the services. ‘The religious exercises should be so planned and managed that they will be not only profitable, but so pleasant as to be positively attractive.’ (Ellen G. White, *Testimony Treasures* Vol. 2, p. 440). Corporate worship can be oriented on spiritual needs and concrete situations and purposes. But a loving, joyful and thankful attitude among those celebrating the worship service is more important than individual programme elements.



THOUGHT

When we open our Bibles it does not take long to discover that worship is at the centre of our human experience. Even the very first conflict is about worship. Often worship can turn into a matter of conflict in our churches, but what if our focus was not on each other, but rather on God?

Throughout the Bible we read how a worship experience leads people to God. It is not meant to divide and to make people question each other. Look at the story of Solomon building the temple. When in awe they stand and look at the temple filled with the presence of God, Solomon prays, and when he prays the people are reminded that God is a God who hears and forgives.

One of the things that pains the Jews during the Exile is being separated from their centre of worship—the temple. But during the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, Jesus explains how the time is coming when it would not be about where we worship, but how we worship—in spirit and in truth. That time is *now*. What does that mean? It means that worship should not be limited to just the Sabbath morning service but extend to our every living moment. We no longer have a temple, we are living temples, and so when people meet us, do they experience people who hear them, who forgive them, who love them? Just like Solomon reminded the Israelites when he built the original temple.

It also means that when we worship on Sabbath morning, we must be relevant in our teaching, expression and application. How do we do this? That is up to you to figure out in your local church. Think about why people come to church. Think about why some people do not come to church:

- › Has what we do become irrelevant? Are we no longer leading people to God?
- › Why do we sing the songs we do? And do we understand the songs that we sing?
- › Are we just going through the motions? Or are we thanking and praising God?

- › Why do we pray? Do we come before God with thankfulness in our hearts? Or are we full of requests of what we want Him to do next?

Have you ever invited friends to church? Often it takes a long time to pluck up courage. When you finally ask them to join in the worship service, do you sit in constant fear of what might happen? Will the sermon be good? Will the worship be holy? Will my friends be touched by the Holy Spirit? Or will our worship service be absolutely meaningless to them. Too often the latter is the case.

How do you worship? And why? How would young people in your church answer that question? What can you do to truly worship in spirit and truth?

DISCUSSION

- › Discuss some of the questions raised in the thought above.
- › What types of worship can you name *(music is not the only type worship)*?
- › What does Jesus' words 'worship in spirit and in truth' mean?
(John 4)
- › What does God ask of us when it comes to worship?
- › Is your worship relevant to all your members, young people, children *and* visitors?

IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS

- › What do we already do to worship God relevantly?
- › Are there elements of our church's culture that need changing to achieve relevant worship in your church?
- › What can you do to make the worship of your church more relevant for everyone?
- › What practical ideas can we implement before the next board meeting? *(Choose one or two, either from the suggestions below or from your own discussion.)*

IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS

- › Intentionally include as many people as possible in the worship of the church.
- › Create a varied worship experience that appeals to wide audience.
- › Be intentional in choosing the lyrics in song selection, make sure the members can understand what they are singing.
- › Appoint an elderly and a young person to organise an intergenerational worship service *(or two people of different cultures or social groups)*,
- › Create a worship committee that is responsible for leading the church in worship.
- › Involve young and old people in planning your teaching plan and its evaluation.
- › Instruct preachers to remain relevant and include practical teachings.
- › Involve young people in planning visitor services.



TEACHING

5

CHURCHES THAT TEACH THE WORD OF GOD COMMUNICATE IN A RELEVANT, CREATIVE AND PRACTICAL WAY.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:5-9 NKJV)

ADDITIONAL BIBLE TEXTS

- › Ecclesiastes 12:9–12 / Solomon was a great teacher
- › Matthew 4:23–2 / A summary of Jesus’s ministry
- › Matthew 28:18–20 / A command to teach those who have become disciples
- › Romans 10:13–17 / Someone can only believe if they have been taught

WHAT DOES ‘TEACHING’ MEAN?

People are looking for sound biblical teaching and preaching that is relevant for their lives. The Value Genesis Europe study shows that preaching that reaches young people is very important for their church experience. When they experience preaching that touches their hearts, they are eight times more likely to stay in the church compared to youth who do not make that experience. Relevant preaching is possible when one is sensitive and open for the realities and spiritual needs in the lives of the people and talks with them about these issues. Because faith in Jesus comes from ‘hearing’ (Romans 10:17), it is essential that Christian values and biblical teachings are communicated in a practical, authentic and creative way with Jesus as the focus. Churches that make this a priority are also more likely to be relevant for guests. However, communicating faith is not limited to the sermon or one-sided preaching in a church context. Equally important are personal conversations and the creative communication of our faith in everyday situations (Deuteronomy 6:6–9).

THOUGHT

Jesus was a master teacher. Besides healing, the largest part of his ministry was spent teaching. We read that he taught with authority, unlike the scribes. We read that he taught new teachings. We know that even his enemies called him ‘Teacher.’ We also should realise that Jesus taught much more than we read about in the gospels. For three years he toured the country teaching his disciples, his followers and the people. He must have taught a lot more than the nuggets that the gospel writers were inspired to share with us. If we look at Jesus’s teaching, we can see that much of it is very relevant, creative and practical. Consider the many times Jesus sees someone in need. He always helps them, and then often uses this practical example for his teaching. Think about when someone asks Jesus a difficult theological question, how does he answer? When the Pharisees asked him about taxes and tithe, Jesus asks for something practical: a coin. Using that simple example, he helps the crowd discover their own answer. When the rich young man asks who his neighbour is, Jesus tells him a story of a man, bandits, a Levite, a priest, and a Samaritan. Using that creative story, he helps the young man find the answer himself.

Jesus’s teachings were profound and life-changing, but they were also relevant, creative and practical. When Jesus teaches about the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 13, he first tells a parable of the



kingdom being like a seed planted by a man. The seed grows and grows, until birds come to perch on it. This is practical and creative teaching, but only relevant for the people who work in the fields. So, Jesus teaches about the kingdom again, through another parable. This time it’s a *woman* who puts yeast in flour, the yeast expands: it is the kingdom. Another practical and creative teaching, but this time its relevant for people who work at home.

Think about the teaching in our church. Is it relevant? Is it creative? Is it practical? Think about last week's sermon, do you think it applied to the lives of everyone who heard it? Think about the sermon before that, can you even remember it? Did it communicate the Word of God in a creative way? Think about the sermon from a month ago. Was it so practical that you have applied it in your life? Hopefully you answered 'yes' to all of these questions, but realistically, our church's teaching can probably be more like Jesus's. What can we do to make our teaching more like Jesus's?

DISCUSSION

- › Can you remember a sermon that changed your life? What was so special about that teaching?
- › Was it a life changing experience? Why was it so powerful?
- › What teaching options does our church have besides the sermon?

IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS

- › What do we already do to teach in a relevant, creative and practical way?
- › Are there elements in our church's culture that need changing to teach more relevantly, creatively and practically?
- › How can we as church teach more relevant, creative and practical?

- › What practical ideas can we implement before the next board meeting? (Choose one or two, either from the suggestions below or from your own discussion.)

IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS

- › Intentionally include as many young people as possible in the teaching of the church.
- › Create a plan to equip members to teach about their faith in everyday situations.
- › Create a varied worship teaching plan that appeals to wide audience.
- › Create a worship committee that is responsible for leading the church in planning teaching and worship.
- › Have a brainstorm session with all your members thinking of practical ways that they can share their faith. Try to think of what it means to teach without 'teaching' and to preach without 'preaching.'
- › Involve young people in planning your teaching plan and its evaluation.
- › Instruct preachers to remain relevant and include practical teachings.
- › Involve young people in planning visitor services.
- › Ask your conference to train your lay members to teach in creative, relevant, and practical ways.



SERVING

6

MISSION AND MINISTERING ALWAYS REQUIRE AN ATTITUDE OF SERVICE. SERVING CHURCHES FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS BY MINISTERING TO THE NEEDS OF OTHERS AND SEEKING TO DISCOVER NEW WAYS TO SERVE.

But Jesus called them to him and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.’ (Matthew 20:25–28)

ADDITIONAL BIBLE TEXTS

- › Isaiah 10:1–3 / Call to serve
- › Micah 6:8 / God’s requirements
- › John 13:1–17 / Foot-washing as an example
- › Ephesians 5:21–33 / Service within marriage

WHAT DOES ‘SERVING’ MEAN?

‘The church is organized for service.’ (Ellen White, *Education*, p. 268.6). It is a caring and serving community. When young people are asked what they feel is important for the church to be, many of them say it should make an impact in society. Particularly young people are ready to get involved in meaningful outreach activities that make a difference in the lives of their fellow human beings. Therefore, they should not just be invited to help carry them out, but also be included in developing and planning these activities. Those who are actively involved can better identify themselves with the church and the Adventist faith. Today it is easier for people in the church to invite friends and acquaintances to help in ministries serving the community than just to come to worship services. When church and faith are relevant to society, young and old will also be more willing to talk

with their friends and other people about their faith. The life of Jesus demonstrates how much proclaiming the Good News depends on a positive, open and serving attitude towards others.

This is particularly important for the young people in the church, because it is essential for their spiritual growth that they have relevant relationships not just with their peers, but also with adults.

THOUGHT

Is your church a talking church, or a doing church? Or is it both? Many people, and especially young people, are tired of talking churches. ‘We spend too much time talking!’ they say. We need to ask ourselves, is church a theoretical or a practical exercise? Do we *think* church, or do we do church?

Francis of Assisi said, ‘Preach the gospel, and—if necessary—use words!’ We have preached the gospel, but we have used far too many words. So many words, in fact, that our members, our children, and our friends are tired. They have become tired of church and tired of Christianity. How can we go back to preaching the gospel without words?

What can we do so that everyone in our church starts serving others? What can we do so that everyone we know works to make

the world a better place? Peter talks about this in his first letter. He says, ‘Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.’ (1 Peter 4:10). When Peter talks of using our gifts, he talks about much more than we often do. Are we faithful stewards, good managers of God’s grace? God has asked us to manage his grace by serving others, are we doing that?

Many Adventist churches are completely separated from the community they serve—sometimes the church is even anonymous. Have you ever thought about what would happen if your local church one day totally disappeared? Would anyone notice? Would people worry? Would someone go to the police to report us missing? Would anyone complain: ‘The Adventists just disappeared and we need them back, because our community doesn’t work without them?’

Serving the needs of others is probably the best way to show Jesus Christ to this world. Serving others is exactly what we are called to do. So, why don’t we follow Jesus’s example by ministering to the needs of others? Why don’t we look for new and better ways to serve? Try to think of some very practical ministries: feeding the poor, giving the homeless a place to sleep, visiting the elderly, you name it. Think of ministries that are useful. Ministries that touch lives and make the world around us a better place.



How can we follow Jesus's example? What ministry can we do for others? What needs does our community have that we can help with? What new ways are there to serve?

DISCUSSION

- › Have you ever experienced someone sharing their faith through service?
- › How did Jesus serve people?
- › What can we do to foster a serving spirit in our church?
- › What hindrances do we experience when we serve others?
- › What steps can be taken for church members to better serve each other?

IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS

- › What do we already do to serve the needs of others?
- › Are there elements of our church's culture that need changing to minister to the needs of others better?
- › What can we do to serve better?
- › What practical ideas can we implement before the next board meeting? (Choose one or two, either from the suggestions below or from your own discussion.)

IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS

- › Take part in Global Youth Day. See GC material for more ideas.
- › Organise a mission day where you serve your community.
- › Discuss the symbolism of foot-washing, and couple it with an opportunity to serve.
- › Get informed about your ecological and slavery footprint.
- › Partner with ADRA to organise an event.
- › Create a committee to plan regular serving opportunities.
- › Create opportunities to share experiences of serving others.
- › Contact the local county office and enquire what you can do in your city/community. Be practical.
- › Have a car wash or tyre change service for the neighbours of your church.
- › Visit an old peoples' home and socialise with the residents.
- › Read the article from Janos Kovacs-Biro for more ideas (see iCOR website).



RECONCILING

7



RECONCILING AND RECONCILED CHURCHES ACTIVELY FOSTER RECONCILIATION AND HEALING IN THE NAME OF JESUS, BOTH IN THE RELATIONSHIP TO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER AND TO EACH OTHER.

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:18–20)

ADDITIONAL BIBLE TEXTS

- › Matthew 5:23–25 / Reconciliation in the sermon on the mount
- › Romans 5:9–11 / Jesus reconciles us to God

WHAT DOES ‘RECONCILING’ MEAN?

Mission work in the ‘ministry of reconciliation’ keeps Jesus at the focus, is respectful towards other people and takes them seriously.

As ambassadors of reconciliation, we are ‘bridge builders’ who as representatives of Jesus invite others to be reconciled with God. Under the banner of reconciliation, everything involved in our outreach and evangelisation is subordinate to the mission of healing. The same applies to rebuilding a lost or broken relationship with God and helping people to find their own individual way to connect with our loving Father.

Churches committed to the ‘ministry of reconciliation’ are aware of the fact that the invitation to be reconciled with God is only credible when they live out the experience themselves. It’s about the restoration of relationships. Ultimately, mission in the context of reconciliation makes it clear that the Good News is inseparably linked to the messenger and the Gospel as lived out practically in the church. Therefore, all members are called to be ambassadors for Jesus and let the Gospel become reality in their lives.

THOUGHT

Probably the most famous usage of the term reconciliation in recent memory is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. In 1996, after decades of gross human rights violations, the country had started taking steps towards an equal and democratic society. Naturally, the horrors of the racist apartheid era could not be forgotten, and the country needed some way to deal with its past. Led by Desmond Tutu, an Anglican archbishop, the decision was made not to focus on retribution, but on reconciliation.

In doing this Tutu was looking at post-war Europe and how it dealt with the terrors of the Second World War by instituting the Nuremberg Trials. These were proceedings that focussed on retributive judgement. Tutu felt that this type of proceedings might make the victims feel better, but would not bring the country together. Punishment would not lead to forgiveness, and the country needed to be reconciled. So, thousands of people were heard, both victims and perpetrators. Their stories were recorded and shared, and where appropriate, forgiveness was available. Admittedly, like many human plans, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission did not work out as well as it could have—specifically as many victims wanted punishment rather than forgiveness. All the same, it is a strong example of how Christian love can overcome human hatred, anger, and broken relationships.

Reconciliation and love go hand-in-hand. Jesus famously taught his followers how to deal with anger during his sermon on the mount. In his strongly worded sayings on anger, he portrays reconciliation as a *prerequisite* to worship. Jesus says: ‘So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift’ (Matthew 5:23–24). In other words, if we want to worship God, we need to first reconcile ourselves with others.



If we think about this clearly, we have to admit that this is a challenging and difficult commandment of Jesus! Think about this for a moment, is there anyone who has something against you? Have you hurt someone? Is there someone that you need to reconcile with before you worship God? How can you create reconciliation between that person and you?

Or the other side of the story, do you have something against someone? Has someone wronged you and never apologised? Do they want and need to be reconciled with you? Is there anything standing in the way? What can you do to help reconciliation happen?

God sent his only son to reconcile us with him. We stepped away, we hurt God, yet he did everything in his power to reconcile us with him. His only Son commanded us to reconcile ourselves with one another. What can we do to make our church a place of reconciliation?

DISCUSSION

- › Is there someone that you need to reconcile with? What can you do to arrange that?
- › Has someone ever gone out of their way to reconcile themselves with you? How did that work out, how did that make you feel?
- › How can our church become a place of reconciliation?

IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS

- › What do we already do foster reconciliation and healing?
- › Are there elements of our church's culture that need changing to allow for more reconciliation and healing?
- › How can our church become a place of reconciliation?
- › What practical ideas can we implement before the next board meeting? (Choose one or two, either from the suggestions below or from your own discussion.)

IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS

- › Organise a workshop on sensitive topics that relate to power, such as cultural diversity, white privilege, or minorities.
- › Organise a dialogue café with the local group that is under-represented or stigmatised in society. See what you can learn about values and reconciliation.
- › Organise a marriage seminar, possibly using "Laugh your way to a better marriage" with Mark Gungor.
- › Organise a sermon series or a dialogue on: Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Healing. What do these concepts really mean?
- › Create a vulnerability Sabbath, where the members learn to make themselves vulnerable to others.
- › Invite a speaker to discuss shame and shaming, and how to deal with it.



MENTORING

8

CHURCHES THAT CARE ABOUT PERSONALLY ACCOMPANYING THEIR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN PARTICULAR, BUT ALSO ADULTS IN THEIR WALK OF FAITH ARE COMMITTED TO FOSTERING SPIRITUAL MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS.

Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

(Philippians 4:9)

ADDITIONAL BIBLE TEXTS

- › Genesis 13:1–9 / Abraham and Lot
- Luke 9:10–17 / Following Christ
- 1 Timothy 4:11–16 / Counsel to Timothy
- Philemon / Mentoring and reconciliation

WHAT DOES 'MENTORING' MEAN?

Jesus was a mentor for his disciples, just as Moses was for Joshua and Barnabas for Paul and Mark. Apart from their parents, young

people in particular need adults who are relevant in their lives and serve as living role models. Therefore, churches not only foster informal intergenerational relationships, but specifically train mentors to be able to accompany others on their spiritual journey. 'The classic definition of mentoring is that of an older experienced guide who is acceptable to the young person and who can help ease the transition to adulthood by a mix of support and challenge. In this sense it is a developmental relationship in which the young person is inducted into the world of adulthood.' (Kate Philip, 'Mentoring and Young People' in *Encyclopaedia of Informal Education*, August 2000). Youth who have relationships with caring adults are less likely to engage in at-risk behaviour, are more self-confident and more likely to help others compared to those who do not have such relationships. Consequently, mentors in the church can help children, teenagers

and youth, as well as newly baptized members and interested guests to grow spiritually and master the challenges of life. In the same way, young people can also be mentors for older people.

THOUGHT

*Tell me and I forget,
Teach me and I may remember,
Involve me and I learn*

These are the words of Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers, of the USA, scientist, inventor, statesman, and diplomat—an influential figure in the development of the western world. What he said 300 years ago still holds true today. That's why churches who subscribe to iCOR values take mentoring seriously.

Many churches are struggling to find good leaders to take on the baton. How often do we hear “Why don't the young people take responsibility, where is the next generation?” We all want that, don't we: A new generation rising up, taking on the baton? But where are they? I'll tell you where they are. They are right in front of you waiting for you to give them the baton.

The problem is that many young adults are not interested in taking the baton if it means they are locked into doing things in the same

old way. Perhaps older people don't want to let go until they are sure the youth can be 'trusted' to do things the way they should be done.

Mentoring is like relay races at the Olympics. These races are won and lost at the changeovers. Sometimes a runner lets go of the baton too early and the baton is dropped. Or the changeover has happened too late—one runner has gone too early. Or even worse, a runner has held on to the baton for too long. Clearly, a good changeover is vital! In a church setting, mentoring is about managing that changeover. There are 3 important lessons we can learn from the analogy of the relay race.

First of all, you need to draw up alongside the one you are mentoring. Walk the walk, together. Get to know the person. Be interested in the young people in your church. Look for their potential, their gifts, their passions. Affirm them in these, challenge them to use them, and look for the positive in what they come up with.

However, (and here is the second point) do not hang on to the baton too long. Mentoring is not controlling. Every generation needs to discover the relevance of faith in a way that works for them and their culture. As mentors, our job is to support them in this process and when the time is right, to let go. So, we want to run alongside for a while, we don't want to let go of the baton too late nor too

early. Volunteers in church often work too hard that as soon as they have the possibility of giving the responsibility to someone else, they give it to them and walk away. This kind of sudden transition means that a young person is most likely to fail. Yes, they will have their own ideas, but they need your experience.

Solomon was right when he wrote: 'Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens the wits of another.' (Proverbs 27:17) We need our young people to succeed, and it could just be your encouragement and experience that will make the difference between excellence and failure. So, let's not drop the baton. Let's get alongside, be willing to let go when the time is right—not too early nor too late.

Be a mentor! Pass on the baton.

DISCUSSION

- › Who has been a mentor for you? How did that work?
- › How are you mentoring someone today?
- › How did Jesus mentor people in his ministry, what elements could we copy?
- › Part of mentoring is letting go, how can you do that?
- › Consider how young people receive various licences and certificates in your country, what role does mentorship play in that system?

IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS

- › What do we already do to foster spiritual mentoring relationships?
- › Are there elements of our church's culture that need changing to allow for more mentoring?
- › What can we do to foster mentoring relationships in our church?
- › What practical ideas can we implement before the next board meeting? (Choose one or two, either from the suggestions below or from your own discussion.)

IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS

- › Pair every leader with someone who they mentor.
- › Create a system where young adults mentor younger members.
- › Encourage young members to lead out in children's Sabbath School, pathfinders etc.
- › Assign a mentor to every baptismal candidate.
- › Create a charter that intentionally communicates what young people can expect in your church in this and other areas as well.



TRAINING

9

CHURCHES THAT ARE OPEN FOR LEARNING PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINING FOR THEIR MEMBERS TO DEVELOP INDIVIDUAL GIFTS AND SKILLS AND PROMOTE SERVICES AND MINISTRIES IN THE CHURCH.

A scoffer who is rebuked will only hate you; the wise, when rebuked, will love you. Give instruction to the wise, and they will become wiser still; teach the righteous and they will gain in learning. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. (Proverbs 9:8–10)

ADDITIONAL BIBLE TEXTS

- › Deuteronomy 6:4–9 / The Israelites were instructed to train their children
- › 1 Timothy 4:6–10/ Paul instructs Timothy to train his churches

WHAT DOES 'TRAINING' MEAN?

Learning is a fundamental principle of life, and where there is no more learning, there is stagnation. Jesus was respected as a Rabbi,

that is, as a teacher, and his disciples can be considered his students. The Greek word for disciple (*mathētēs*) comes from the world of education. Followers of Jesus are people in training, and training promotes growth. The real goal in the school of Jesus is actions and not just words and knowledge. Because training empowers people to develop and grow, the church should be a place of learning for all generations. Young people are not the only ones who need structured, continuous education and support in the environment and daily life of the local church. Churches that place great importance on education are therefore committed to providing all members with the opportunity to grow in understanding, improve their individual gifts and continue to develop in service for God. They therefore encourage and support their members in the participation in internal and external training opportunities. The progress of a living community of faith thrives on the awareness that one is never finished learning.



THOUGHT

One of the very first things Jesus did in his ministry was to call His disciples. Twelve young men who he called to follow him: twelve disciples, twelve students. They left everything behind and went with him to be trained. In Jesus's ministry, a large part of what he did was training his followers. He taught them, he demonstrated ministry to them so that they could discover their gifts.

After a while Jesus sent them out, not alone, but two-by-two. He told them 'As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near'. Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the 'lepers, cast out demons' (Matthew 10:7-8). What they were told to do was nothing new, Jesus had been training them to do it all along. These were Jesus's first trainees.

But twelve were not enough, more students soon followed. Jesus trained seventy-two others, and they too went out to do the same things. When they came back they were amazed. 'Lord,' they cried out, 'in your name even the demons submit to us!' (Luke 10:17). Jesus spent most of his ministry training people. After his ascension, Jesus's disciples took over Jesus's preaching and healing ministry: they proclaimed God's grace to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Yet, training did not stop with Jesus. In Acts we hear about Paul meeting a young disciple, a young student, named Timothy. Paul takes Timothy with him to train him. As the two travel together, Paul sees Timothy's gifts. For years Paul trains Timothy and gives him space to develop his gifts. Slowly Timothy gets more responsibility, until we see that Timothy is left in charge of the church in Ephesus. At that time, Timothy was still a young man (1 Timothy 4:12). Yet, though Timothy might have been well-trained, Paul still trains him more by writing two letters to him.

Jesus and Paul's ministry focussed on training young people to take up positions of service and ministry. Young people were taken by the hand, slowly given more responsibility and finally sent out into the world to serve others. How does our church train people? Are we intentional in allowing young people to discover their gifts? Do we give people more and more responsibility, allowing them to grow? What opportunities does our church provide?

DISCUSSION

- › Would you consider yourself to be open to learn new things? When was the last time you were learning something new? In daily life? In the church?
- › Were you trained to develop your gifts, or did you have to ‘sink or swim’?
- › How did Jesus or Paul train people in their ministry, what elements could we copy?
- › Part of training is trusting students to take over, how can you do that?
- › Who are you training right now? Who could you train?



IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS

- › What do we already do to train members to develop their gifts?
- › Are there elements in our church’s culture that need changing to allow more training in various ministries?
- › How can we foster a learning attitude in our church?
- › How can we help our people to get more of the training they need?
- › What practical ideas can we implement before the next board meeting? (Choose one or two, either from the suggestions below or from your own discussion.)

IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS

- › Organise a day for members to discover their gifts. Use the out-comes to stimulate people to serve with their gift.
- › Create apprenticeship positions next to current leaders.
- › Create a system of support and supervision, where people are trained by others.
- › Set a goal of how many positions should be filled by young people and new members. Aim high.
- › Create a personal development plan—with an end vision—for each person in your church.



LEADING

10

STRATEGICAL AND PURPOSE-DRIVEN CHURCHES LEAD WITH A VISION AND PASSION, INTEGRATING THE YOUNGER GENERATION IN THE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES OF THE CHURCH.

You should also look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set such men over them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Let them sit as judges for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to you but decide every minor case themselves. So, it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. If you do this, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their home in peace. (Exodus 18:21–23)

ADDITIONAL BIBLE TEXTS

- › Numbers 8:23–26 / Roles of young and old
- › Exodus 18:13–27 / Delegating
- › Acts 15:36–41 / Disagreement and training
- › Romans 16 / Greetings from Paul

WHAT DOES ‘LEADING’ MEAN?

A strategic and goal-oriented church does not limit its attention to administrative processes. It is much rather intentionally missional and oriented on continued development, progress and growth in all areas. It has or develops a vision and a mission for its local community and is constantly seeking to involve all members—including the youth—in the continuous development, analysis and evaluation of the vision and goals. It constantly reminds all in the church of the vision and actively includes young people in the leadership activities of the church. Just how seriously a church takes its young people is often revealed by how much youth are included at all levels of the leadership processes. When young people take part in the leadership, they will perceive the church as their church and actively shape the activities and the mission of the church. Value-oriented leadership is also marked by continuous and forward-looking consideration

of the iCOR values and ways to actively promote and evaluate them in the daily activities of church life.

THOUGHT

Our church is run on vision. The visions of the Old Testament prophets, foretelling the coming of Christ. The visions of the New Testament authors, showing us more about the end-time events. The visions of one of our founders, Ellen White, which still guides the church in various ways.

The Adventist church is a visionary church. A church that looks towards a future, that is wonderful. Yet at the same time Adventist churches are often not very good at creating a vision for their own mission. Our vision is so focussed on the wonderful future that we all await, that it's hard to create a vision for the local church here and now.

The problem is that, without a good vision for here and now, we will be less effective in reaching every nation, people and tongue. However, this is not a recent development. Hebrews seems to discuss the same problem: 'Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.' (Hebrews 10:24–25)



The day approaching is our ultimate vision. It was the ultimate vision of the Hebrews. But at the same time, we must consider how to provoke one another to love and do good deeds. In other words, we need to think how we can get every single member involved in loving others and in helping others. And when we consider that, we create vision.

Maybe your church has a vision statement, maybe not. If it doesn't it may be time to create one. Maybe that's where you should start. If your church does have a vision statement, it would be a good idea to find out who knows about it? Who wrote it? Who was involved in it? How old it is? Is it still relevant? Did you include everyone in writing it? Do young people help implement it? When did you last evaluate it, and did everyone take part?

Ultimately, vision is meant to be shared by all members. It needs to be owned by all members. And the only way to do that is to constantly talk about it, constantly preach it, and constantly involve as many people as possible in implementing and evaluating it.

DISCUSSION

- › When did you become a leader? How old were you?
- › How were you coached when you started to lead?
- › Young people were instrumental in founding the early church and the Adventist movement. Were young people instrumental in founding your church? What role do young people play in leadership in your church?
- › How many young leaders are there in your pathfinder group? Can we learn from the pathfinder model?

IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS

- › What do we already do to lead with vision and passion?
- › Are there elements of our church's culture that need changing to allow for more focused and effective leadership?
- › What can we do to lead more with vision and passion? And how can we make sure that we do not build a castle in the air?
- › What practical ideas can we implement before the next board meeting? (Choose one or two, either from the suggestions below or from your own discussion.)

IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS

- › Create a list of leadership positions in the church, discuss which leadership positions could be open to young people.
- › Have a 'Vision Sabbath' where you discuss the vision of the church in every age group.
- › Young people have difficulties committing to a long-term position. Consider asking young people for a project-based leadership position.
- › Organise a multi-age group to implement a plan to make the vision known to the church and become alive.
- › Send a multi-age group to a leadership training.
- › Create apprenticeship positions next to current leaders.
- › Create a system of support and supervision, where each existing leader is a mentor of a young person.
- › Plan regular vision services where the worship service is linked to the vision of the church.
- › Set a goal of how many leadership positions should be filled by young people. Aim high.
- › Organise a day where everyone can express the vision through their personal gifts.
- › Create a personal development plan—with an end vision—for everyone.

iCOR RESOURCES

+ iCOR STUDY GUIDE



+ iCOR INFORMATION BROCHURE



+ iCOR DVD + DISCUSSION GUIDE



MORE INFO: youth@eud.adventist.org

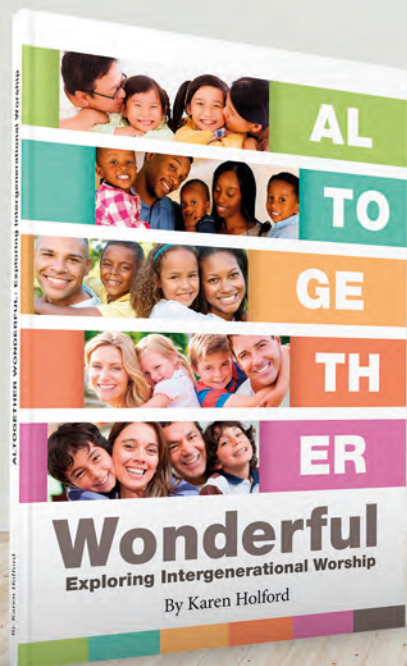
VISIT THE
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RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

+ **ALTOGETHER WONDERFUL**
Exploring Intergenerational Worship



+ **YOUTH ALIVE HANDBOOK**



MORE INFO: youth@ted.adventist.org



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