

MISSION

We believe that the South Central Conference Office exists to strengthen and support the mission and ministry of the churches in the South Central Conference. Therefore, the South Central Conference Church Ministries & Mission Development Department exists to assist pastors and their church leaders in leading their churches to become more Spirit-led and Mission-driven. We do this by providing pastors and their church leaders with ministry coaching and support in five fundamental areas of Church Development: 1) Prayer, 2) Mission, 3) Spiritual Gifts, 4) Small Groups, and 5) Ministries. When engaged sequentially, these become one fivefold strategy for leading churches to become more Spirit-led and Mission-driven.

10 STEP

SPIRIT-LED, MISSION-DRIVEN PROCESS

STEP #6

Our SCC Vision for the next five years is focused on four major emphases: **#1 Transformational Evangelism**; **#2 Christian Education**; **#3 Community Engagement**; and **#4 Youth & Young Adult Empowerment**. The Church Ministries & Mission Development Department has been tasked with assisting pastors and their church leaders in moving their churches forward with #1 Transformational Evangelism and #3 Community Engagement. To do so, we recommend churches follow our *10-Step Spirit-Led, Mission-Driven Process*. In previous editions we have presented the following steps: 1) Discover the Mission, 2) Describe the Vision, 3) Depend on God's Promise, 4) Draw a Fresh Slate, and 5) Design Mission

Strategy. This month we move on to **Step #6: Develop Ministries**.

Let's imagine that a congregation, aware that their church building is no longer sufficient for their current or future needs, hires a top notch architectural firm to draw up plans for a remodeled, state-of-the-art facility. The process begins with the firm's project coordinator meeting with the church board, and various segments of the congregation, to assess the church's needs. Then, after multiple back-and-forth discussions, the lead architect creates the perfect design for the future church facility, and provides it to the church's leadership team, who in turn presents it before the church in business meeting where it is voted unanimously. Further imagine that after the



business meeting vote the members of the church board take their new architectural drawings—the literal blueprints—and lay them out on top of the existing church building's roof. Handshakes are exchanged, and pats on the back are given, and with that the project is considered complete. Now who among us would be surprised when 6 to 12 months later

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THE SCC CHURCH MINISTRIES &



10-STEP SPIRIT-LED, MISSION-DRIVEN PROCESS, Continued from page 1

board members begin wondering why the time and money they invested in the architectural process didn't bring the results they anticipated? The problem would be obvious. No matter how well-done the new architectural design was, it would have little to no effect on the church's facility if it was simply laid on top of the current church structure. In order for the architectural design to have the desired effect, the church's physical structure would need to be remodeled and reconfigured based upon the new architectural design.

In a similar vein, many churches go through a strategic planning process where significant amounts of time and other resources are spent developing a mission statement in hope that it will produce directional unity and evangelistic synergy. Then their well-crafted mission statements are pasted upon an unrelated church organizational structure, and they wonder why the result is minimal mission impact. It's because just like a church's physical structure should be remodeled and reconfigured based upon a new architectural design, so also should a church's organizational structure be remodeled and reconfigured based upon a church's designed mission strategy. Another way of saying it is *form should follow function*. To be truly mission-driven, a church's organizational structure, its ministries and departments—its forms, should grow out of that church's mission strategy—its functions.

Maybe a biblical example will help

to illustrate. In Acts 6 we find the church, for the very first time, developing a brand new ministry team. Although we rarely stop to consider it, it is important for us to remember that the church didn't always have departments and church officers. Jesus did choose twelve apostles and gave them their mission, but for quite some time they were pretty much it. However, here in Acts 6, seven more ministry leaders are selected by the church to serve in what would eventually become associated with the office of deacon.

But why did the church do it? Why did they develop this ministry? Did the twelve apostles simply wake up that morning with an innovative, creative idea—"Hey, let's start a ministry team and call them the deacons!" Or did a well-meaning church member, after consulting the church manual, call a meeting with the apostles and say, "Hey, there's no way we can possibly be a church without appointing some deacons!" No, it was neither of these. The context makes it clear that the church was so engaged in their mission of making disciples that "in those days, as the disciples were increasing in number," unfortunately, "there arose a complaint by the [Greek-speaking] Jews against the Hebraic Jews that their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution [of food]." And that is why "the Twelve summoned the whole company of the disciples and said, 'It would not be right for us to give up preaching the word of God to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, select

from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom we can appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word'" (Acts 6:1-4, CSB). *They developed this ministry because the needs of the mission demanded it!*

Notice that the church in the book of Acts was not driven by the need to fill a quota of predetermined departments. That's called being organization-driven. Additionally, it's safe to assume, since the need to feed overlooked widows prompted the creation of this ministry, that they would have suspended the ministry if suddenly there were no more widows who needed to be fed. Why? Because the church in the book of Acts was also not tradition-driven. They were Spirit-led and *mission-driven*. That's why *they developed ministries based upon the needs of the mission*—and so should we.

After a church has taken the courageous step of drawing a fresh slate (step #4), and the creative step of designing their mission strategy (step #5), our Church Ministries & Mission Development Team will provide coaching for pastors and their church leaders in developing ministries (step #6) to execute the church's mission strategy.



Pastor
Furman Fordham, II,
Director
SCC Church Ministries &
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Department



Compass is a monthly publication of the South Central Conference Church Ministries & Mission Development Department

MISSION DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones.

Ezekiel 37:1 NKJV

When we look at this text, Ezekiel declares that “the hand of the Lord was upon me”. Brothers and sisters, we need to realize that it is the hand of the Lord that leads us and guides us. It is the very hand of the Lord that strengthens us and sustains us. It is the hand of the Lord that protects us.

In fact, nobody, whether saved or not, can make it without the hand of the Lord. Before I had sense enough to know that there was a God on my side, I can look back now and realize that I was more than just lucky, I realize that it was the hand of the Lord that was protecting me.

Once Ezekiel was down in the valley, the hand of the Lord caused him to pass round about these bones. In other words, Ezekiel surveyed the bones. Ezekiel took inventory of the bones. Ezekiel got down with the bones to see what condition they were in.

Too many times we are afraid to get down with the bones. Too many of our churches are full of members that don't know how to get down with the bones.

Brothers and Sisters, in order to effectively witness we must get down with the bones. That process of

getting down with the bones is called ministry. That is what being Spirit-led and mission-driven is all about.

It is only when we find out the where and the how, that the Lord can use us to move them from where they are to where they need to be in Christ.

We are excited that churches in the South Central Conference are determined more now than ever to embrace their mission. The Bethany SDA Church in Montgomery is one of those churches. On their journey to get to a bullet mission strategy they ran across several landmarks.

They started out with statements from the Spirit of Prophecy such as:

The mission of the church of Christ is to save perishing sinners. It is to make known the love of God to men and to win them to Christ by the efficacy of that love. Testimonies Vol. 3 - p. 381

“The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world.” Acts of Apostles p. 9.

This led them to wrestle with the following statement:

At the Bethany Seventh-day Adventist Church we believe in living and making God's love known through Powerful, Relevant, Excellent Service

for our Savior (P.R.E.S.S.)

This finally allowed them to settle on the following mission strategy:

Reaching UP, Reaching OUT and Reaching IN.

- **We Reach UP** – a vertical reach to God through worship, prayer and the studying of the Word of God both individually and corporately.

- **We Reach OUT**- a horizontal reach to seek and save those around us through community service and evangelism.

- **We Reach IN** - an inward reach through the nurture and fellowship of our members and the strengthening of our families.

As churches with made up minds to become Spirit-led and mission-driven, the answer to the question is yes, these bones can live by:

- Allowing the hand of the Lord to lead us.
- Allowing God's Word to direct us.
- Allowing God's Spirit to fill us.



Pastor
Jeffery L. Watson
Associate Director,
SCC Church Ministries
& Mission Development
Department

United in Prayer

Prayer Thrives at Oakwood University Church

The house of God is to be a place of prayer,” said Pastor Debleaire Snell, senior pastor of the Oakwood University Church and director/speaker for Breath of Life ministry during the Oakwood University prayer emphasis weekend held July 15/16, 2023. “United in Prayer,” the church’s congregation (local and online) experienced a spirit-filled weekend. Prayer ministry director Sister Shirleyann Cherry reminded the church family and community that God admonishes each person to pray “without ceasing.” The weekend included prayerful activities.

Anchoring the weekend was a Holy Spirit anointed message “Something Within Me” preached by Pastor Snell. Di-Dri Hurt, a “digital disciple” of the Oakwood University prayer team, said the lesson she garnered from Pastor Snell’s message is “I do not need to confront my accusers or my conspirators. I need to be faithful to God, staying in prayer.”

Organized by Jacqueline Telesford,

before and after the church service, attendees were able to stop at prayer stations located around the church. Each person was given thematic Bible promise cards. Prayer intercessors were present to pray with people requesting prayer.

Pastors Furman Fordham and Paul Goodridge welcomed the attendees from all over the world to the intergenerational online panel discussion, “United In Prayer: Baptism of the

“The overarching idea is to move prayer from being an optional activity to an essential activity.”

—Pastor Snell.

Holy Spirit.” The seven panelists (Stephanie Johnson-Dingome, Taylar

Johnson, Akivah Northern, Pastor Gabe Taylor, Marsha Miller, Lenroy James) answered pivotal questions about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The panel discussion ended with prayer. Participants were able to place their prayer requests in the chat or share their prayer requests verbally. Following the format of the Oakwood University prayer line, each prayer request received special petition to the throne of God. Mrs. Akivah Northern, the panelist from California, said “In reading about when and how the Holy Spirit comes to us, I realized that the giving of the Holy Spirit reveals a deep intimacy . . . between God the Father, God the Son, Jesus, and God the Holy Spirit.”

On Sunday, July 16, 2023, a prayer breakfast was held. Mrs. Joyce Vernon and Mr. David Person were honored for their service to the church and community, respectively. In addition to a delicious breakfast and musical contributions by Dr. Janice Johnson Browne, Sister Gwen Shepherd, and Jedidiah Ayivor,

attendees were blessed to experience a soul-stirring-spirit filled testimonial presentation by Mrs. Judy Dent, Oakwood Academy principal who reminded the audience that “this is God’s world; [we] are just living in it.” “Understand,” said Dent, “God will always come through.”

Many were blessed by the prayer emphasis weekend. Marsha Miller, an online member of the prayer line who traveled to Huntsville, Alabama from Texas, said the weekend “. . . was a life changing experience. I felt like I was truly baptized by the Holy Spirit.” Miss Taylar Johnson, who coordinates the prayer table at the

mid-week prayer meeting, said “the prayer emphasis weekend was a moment to pause and mindfully think about the power of prayer and the Holy Spirit.” Continuing Sunday, the Prayer Breakfast was a moment to pause and mindfully come together as prayer warriors, through the Holy Spirit.

Prayer is thriving at Oakwood University Church. “Our hope is that the body of Christ would see a strong prayer life as something that is attainable for all. The overarching idea is to move prayer from being an optional activity to an essential activity,” said Pastor Snell.

Dr. Ramona L. Hyman is a writer, speaker, and professor. In 2022, Dr. Hyman was appointed to serve as a Governor’s appointee for the Alabama State Council on the Arts. Dr. Hyman serves as a professor of English at Oakwood University. Dr. Hyman is the co-editor of African American Seventh-day Adventist Healers in a Multi-cultural Nation and the collections of poetry *I Am Black America* and *In the Sanctuary of ‘de South*. She is the author of the children’s book *Grandma Annie’s Poetry* (2022).

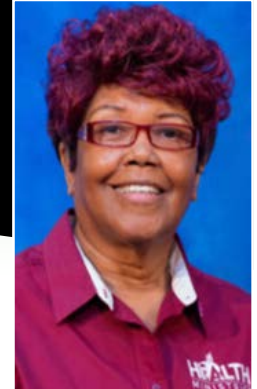
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H.E.A.L.E.R.S

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Discover the healing power of herbal medicine and learn the biblical and scientific findings that accompany this amazing healing component.



Curtis and Paula Ekins
SCC Health Evangelism
Ministries

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

I am joyfully reporting another successful, informative, empowering Women's Ministry celebration during SCC Camp Meeting, June 9-17, 2023. WM Leader Dr. Freddie Jenkins, set the tone of the celebration on Monday with a **Women's Small Group Ministries 101** workshop that explored and discussed the fundamentals of developing small-group ministries.

Estefania Howell, Coordinator and Leader of **Ablaze Prayer Group** shared how-to, hands-on information to create, grow, and maintain a small group ministry. Dr. Jenkins was gifted a beautiful lantern from the **Ablaze Prayer Group**, symbolizing her empowering leadership in Women's Small Group Ministry.

The highlight of this celebration was Women's Day, Thursday, June 15, 2023. The day began with Sabbath School taught by Wanda Misori, First SDA Church, Huntsville. Our souls were nourished with early morning manna from Pastor Thiea Wilson, Temple Gate SDA Church, Selma, AL.

The day proceeded with an intriguing discussion of the top three critical women's issues that affect women and the ministry to women. The afternoon sessions included



Breakouts and Workshops:

- **Mental Health and Wellness** – Joanne Palmer, Creator & Founder of "Your Heart's Journey"
- **Financial Wellness for Black Women** – Starlett Moore Mat-

thews, Biblical Wealth Coach

- **Gender Inequality and Inequity** – Pastor Shawn Jackson Moss, Shiloh SDA Church, Greenwood, MS
- Joanne Palmer**, Creator & Founder of "Your Heart's Journey," presented



Empowering Churches for Compassionate Support

Grief, a universal experience that transcends ethnic and socioeconomic boundaries, knows no culture untouched by the profound pain, isolation, and singular agony that accompany the loss of a loved one. The emergence of Covid-19 has forcefully underscored a stark reality – as a nation, as

families, and as churches, we were ill-equipped to provide effective support for those grappling with grief. Long before the pandemic imposed its tyrannical presence upon our lives, compelling us to confront chaos and endure anguish on an unprecedented scale, we were already confronted with a mission.

Deep within our hearts, an insistent call reverberated, urging us to champion the cause of churches lacking a functional grief ministry, and to be a catalyst for its creation. When the pandemic struck, it crystallized the fact that grief represents a profound challenge and an arena of service that harbors untapped potential for meeting the needs of our congregations. Furthermore, there remain unexplored avenues for extending solace to grieving communities beyond the confines of our church walls. Today, our community encompasses both the geographical vicinity of our physical churches and the digital spaces where our connections flourish.

It is with fervor that we reveal the encouraging truth – certain churches within the Southern Union are resolutely addressing the needs of our bereaved brethren within the church, while also extending their reach to their adjacent grieving communities. Such endeavors are wholeheartedly a blessing, a cause for celebration! Yet, the somber reality is that numer-

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Women's Ministries, Continued from page 6



Joanne Palmer

a dynamic discussion and workshop to raise awareness of Mental Health and Wellness issues utilizing the formula: **Information + Application = Transformation**. The workshop allowed participants hands-on experiences of engaging in relationships while solving puzzles. Since puzzles have many life applications, participants were able to share stories of abuse, disconnect, mental health struggles, generational trauma, and lessons learned in trying to locate appropriate services. Participants also understood that our brains were made to connect with other brains and that new thinking

and functioning happen when we intentionally engage in healing relationships with each other.

The grand finale of this phenomenal Women's Day celebration was highlighted with the empowering and inspiring words of wisdom from **Dr. Paula Olivier**, an accomplished minister, the first female lead pastor of Haitian descent in the SDA denomination, and Youth Ministries Director for Northeastern Conference. Her commitment to empowering women and promoting diversity has earned her widespread praise and recognition. Dr. Olivier's dynamic speaking style and steadfast faith left a lasting impression on all who heard her speak.

Women's Ministries exist to nur-

ture, empower and develop Women's Small Groups throughout South Central Conference. As Women of God, we are responsible for sharing the good news of Christ's return with those around us, our families, co-workers, and in our communities.

Together we can turn this world right side up – one life at a time. Women's Small Groups ~ Ministry in Real-Time! Let's **Come Together! It's Time To Go!**

Prayer, Praise, Perseverance



Dr. Freddie Williams Jenkins
SCC Women's Ministries Leader

GRIEF MINISTRY



Grief Ministry, Continued from page 7

ous churches have yet to establish an active grief ministry. The journey ahead is replete with unfulfilled potential. Grief, an often unwelcome guest, the last enemy to be destroyed, will persistently confront us until the return of Jesus. Thus, the direction is clear – every church should consider cultivating a dedicated, engaged grief ministry.

We are Chaplains Leon and Vanessa Verrett, and we are entrusted with this fervent mission, fueled by our unwavering dedication. Our passion is illuminated by the guiding principle found in 2 Corinthians 1:4 (NLT): "He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us." Partnered with the Southern Union Family Ministries Department under the esteemed leader-

ship of President Ron Smith, we are authorized to collaborate with pastors and family ministry leaders across the Southern Union churches, offering our services free of charge. As invited presenters, our objectives are straightforward: first: to support churches in establishing a Grief Ministry; second: to identify individuals ignited with the inspiration to engage with this ministry; and third: to provide some foundational tools necessary to launch the initiative. In essence, it's about the creation of a small group ministry.

With divine guidance, our hope is to forge connections with an expansive array of churches. Accordingly, we are excited to share that conversations are underway regarding the possibility of us conducting a workshop during the South Central Camp Meeting in 2024! Grief Ministry:

Every Church Needs It!

Our contact information is available through the Southern Union, accessible via Ann Freedman, Associate Family Ministry Director, at 704-408-1800, extension 144. Alternatively, you can contact us directly at 843-619-7438 or via email at verrettministry723@gmail.com



Chaplains Leon and Vanessa Verret