



WHAT'S YOUR 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.

Leading Change: Phase #3

In the last edition of the Compass, we presented the second phase in leading congregational change: Leadership needs to *SELL IT*. This included building a biblical basis for the vision, using smaller groups to recommend to larger groups, and eventually leading the congregation to the point of decision. Once the vision has been shared, and an affirmative vote has been taken, you are now ready to move into the third phase in the Leading Change process: *START IT*.

Start It

Congratulations! Everything you have done thus far to *SEE IT* and *SELL IT* has been leading up to this moment—it is finally time to *START IT*! You now have permission to launch the second campus, begin

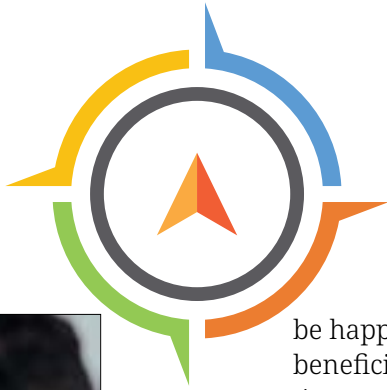
worship at the adjusted time, fund the community outreach, start the small groups, hire the support staff, break ground on the new facility, or reorganize the church board. It's finally time to *START IT*!

That being said, it is extremely important to understand that how an initiative is started has much

to do with how long it's allowed to continue, and how successful (or unsuccessful) it will ultimately be. In other words, the manner in which the new program, project or process begins can do more to validate (or invalidate) the new initiative in the minds of many than anything else that has been previously stated or voted. This means that if the start is poorly communicated, haphazardly planned, and weakly executed,

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Leading Change: Phase #3, *Continued from page 1*

people will begin to question the initiative and want to reconsider the decision. Therefore, it is imperative that leaders invest the necessary time and resources to ensure the new initiative starts well.

The Right People in the Right Places

One absolutely essential ingredient for starting well is having the right people in the right places. To illustrate, let's imagine that Moses, after spending forty days and forty nights upon the mountain receiving step-by-step instructions from God for the building of the wilderness sanctuary, comes down from the mountain and announces that I have been chosen to serve as the primary builder. The vision is phenomenal—straight from

the mind of God! And the plans are perfect—straight from the mouth of God! So, what's the problem? Well, I have the distinction of being one of the most mechanically disinclined people you will ever meet. I invariably get stuck when attempting to assemble simple household furniture even though I have directions in hand and continue repeating 'righty tighty, lefty loosey.' Regardless of how great the vision or organized the plan, if I'm asked to execute, the project will fail. The problem is simple: God has not gifted me to serve in this capacity.

God has designed everyone to serve somewhere, but He hasn't designed everyone to serve every-

where. As leaders, we must ensure that systems are put in place to place people into ministry, not according to seniority, family connections, or economic status, but according to their God-given gifts. Spiritual Gifts

Assessments are useful tools to assist with this process. Our Church Ministries & Mission Development Department recommends using the following: <https://gifts.church-growth.org/>.

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

Another important component of starting an initiative well is effective communication. People need to be told *what* will be taking place, *when* it will be occurring, and *where* it will

be happening. But it is extremely beneficial if leadership also takes the time to communicate *why*. See this as an opportunity to connect the new program, project or procedure back to the church's mission and vision. Help people understand that the initiative isn't just a creative or cool idea, but that it is a direct attempt to advance the church's mission and realize the church's vision, and then explain to them *how*.

A general communication rule of thumb is that when you think you have overcommunicated, people are probably just beginning to get your message. In other words, err on the side of too much. It would be much better for people to find out what's coming down the pike in an email, from your website, via Facebook, on your Instagram, through a mass text message, on the screen during pre-worship service announcements, and during the pastoral remarks,

then for them not to find out at all.

Take additional strides to make sure your leaders are kept in the loop. The last thing a new initiative needs is to suffer a hit because one of the church's leaders says they didn't know about it—and to be justified in saying so. If a new initiative fails, don't let it be because a lack of communication prevented it from succeeding. Communicate. Communicate. Communicate.

Evaluate and Adjust Accordingly

Finally, to ensure an initiative starts well, evaluate it continually, and adjust accordingly. For example, after the initial launch of a second worship service, debrief with your planning team to see what went well and what could have gone better. Then, based upon the assessment, make any necessary course corrections so that the next week's experience will be even that much better.

But don't just seek feedback from the initiative's supporters; also seek feedback from the initiative's detractors. This group may provide you with your greatest intel, especially if the initiative was voted as a "trial balloon." Getting their feedback early will give you ample opportunity to incorporate any valid insights prior to the date when the initiative is to be reconsidered.

When you get the right people in the right places, ensure you communicate effectively, debrief with those who were for and against, and debug missteps as you go along, you give a new initiative the best opportunity for success by starting it well.



Pastor **Furman Fordham, II**, Director SCC Church Ministries & Mission Development Department



PARTNERS IN SPREADING THE GOSPEL

The first time God's Word mentions the word "gospel" in the New Testament (Matthew 4:23) is actually describing Jesus' ministry which included healing the body, ..."Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and disease among the people." In fact, this point is also true in the second and third references to the word "gospel" (see Matthew 9:35, 11:5).

Ellen White simply puts it this way: "The union of Christlike work for the body and Christlike work for the soul is the true interpretation of the gospel," (Evangelism pg. 514). Therefore, consider Health Evangelism Ministries as partners in spreading the gospel throughout South Central Conference. Paula and I are looking forward with anticipation to strengthening this relationship, for, as Ellen White also says: "Without this union neither part of the work is complete," (Evangelism, pg. 519).



Curtis and Paula Eakins
SCC Health Evangelism Ministries



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What the Bible Says About Prison Ministry

I was in prison and you came to visit me ... I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.
(Matthew 25:36, 40)

Follow Jesus' Footsteps

When Jesus was berated for eating with tax collectors and sinners, he answered that "it is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark 2:17).

Back in the day, tax collectors had fallen into their own category of contempt — set apart, it seems from the rest of the sinners. They were considered corrupt, treacherous . . . criminal. Yet Jesus went to them, spent time with them, shared a friendly meal with them. He did not overlook what they had done or what they had become. But in the moral "sickness" of their sin, He offered them the healing of His forgiveness, His salvation, and even His friendship.

One of those hated tax collectors was Zacchaeus, a corrupt man who had grown rich by cheating others. When he climbed a tree to see what this Jesus was all about, the Lord invited Himself to dinner with Zacchaeus — again, to the irritation of the more "righteous" people in the crowd. But that loving invitation brought this corrupt tax collector to repentance and transformation — ready to make amends for his crimes. And then Jesus made an announcement to the crowd. "This man, too, is a son of Abraham" (Luke 19:9). This man that the others had considered an outcast was to be restored as a brother. If Jesus were on earth today, would we find Him in the prisons, talking and dining with criminals and outcasts? Of course we would. He would be there "to seek and to save the lost" and to restore them to sonship, just as He did with Zacchaeus.



And because the Church is now His representative on earth, prison is where we should be as well — calling the sick to the healing touch of our Lord and Savior; still recognizing in them the dignity of God's creation, no matter how far they have fallen; trusting that no one — NO ONE — is beyond Christ's love and power to redeem.

The Scripture passages that follow give us insight into God's heart for prison ministry. We hope these passages will encourage you to follow Jesus into the prisons and into the communities to minister to prisoners, ex-prisoners, and their families.

Follow Jesus' Example

God does not despise the broken; nor should we. Rather, we are to imitate the One who came to seek and to save the lost — as we once were —

no matter what type of bonds enslave and cripple them.

Jesus identifies strongly with the weak, the helpless, and the outcast. He considers the way we treat them to be the way we treat Him. He wants us to identify with them as well, putting ourselves in their shoes and caring for them.

"Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering." (Hebrews 13:1-3).



Pastor Jeffery L. Watson, MDiv.
Assoc. Director, Church Ministries and Mission Development



In the SDA Church, what Ellen White has written has a lot of influence on most of us as SDA's. We do not believe what she wrote to be equal to nor above the Bible but rather we believe her writings to be an aid to understanding the Bible and a prophetic voice in these contemporary times. In her writings, she has stressed the importance of reading various passages of scripture on a daily basis. Many of you know that she wrote that we should spend a thoughtful hour each day contemplating the final scenes of Jesus' life. Many of you know that she wrote that we should read 1 Cor. 13 every day. But what many of you may not know is what she said about Isaiah 58. She wrote, "The whole of the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah is to be regarded as a message for this time, to be given over and over again." What is it about this chapter that would cause Ellen White to suggest that the message found in Isaiah 58 is a message that must be given over and over again? What is so critically

important that she would suggest that we repeatedly tell people what this passage means to us today?

In the 58th chapter of Isaiah and verse 1, the Lord, speaking in prophetic voice to the prophet, Isaiah, says to him, "scream, don't hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet and declare to my people their rebellion and show them their sin (miss the mark). Their problem was hypocrisy in worship. Their religious expression did not match how they treated people. Every believer must understand that our religious expressions, our worship must positively impact our relationships with God and others. In other words, us living out our religion in this world should make this world better. If it does not then our religion is worthless. It is unacceptable to God. Ellen White said this is the message for today and it must be given over and over again.

God does not care that we keep the seventh day holy, or that we have a correct understanding of Bible prophecy, or that we know

what happens when a person dies. He does not care that we maintain a biblical diet, or that we dress modestly, or how we worship, what songs we sing, what instruments we play; God does not care about that stuff if our religious expressions are only self-serving and do not make a difference in the lives of those who are suffering around us. And the people we try to go witness to don't care either.

To the nation of Israel in Isaiah's day prophetically, and to us today, in principle, God says, Isaiah 58:6-12 ⁶ This is the kind of fasting I have chosen: Loosen the chains of wickedness, untie the straps of the yoke, let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke. ⁷ Share your food with the hungry, take the poor and homeless into your house, and cover them with clothes when you see them naked. Don't refuse to help your relatives. In other words, help those in need. Share your abundance with those who lack. Don't just pray for God to address the needs of

The Common Good

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those less fortunate; be the answer to your own prayer. Don't just hope that something good happens for them. Be the something good that happens. We cannot continue to be held back by selfishness. Notice this quote, The reason why God's people are not more spiritually minded, and [do not have] more faith, I have been shown, is because they are narrowed up with selfishness. The prophet is addressing Sabbathkeepers, not sinners, not unbelievers, but those who make great pretensions to godliness. It is not the abundance of your meetings that God accepts. It is not the numerous prayers, but the rightdoing, doing the right thing and at the right time. It is to be less self-caring and more benevolent. Our souls must expand. Then God will make them like a watered garden, whose waters fail not.—Testimonies, vol. 2, pp. 35, 36.

I have been instructed to refer our people to the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. Read this chapter carefully and understand the kind of ministry

that will bring life into the churches. The work of the gospel is to be carried by means of our liberality as well as by our labors. When you meet suffering souls who need help, give it to them. When you find those who are hungry, feed them. In doing this you will be working in lines of Christ's ministry. The Master's holy work was a benevolent work. Let our people everywhere be encouraged to have a part in it.—Manuscript 7, 1908. {WM 29.3}

It is my strong conviction that the SDA Church has to be a church that engages in ministries that address the whole person: physical, emotional, and spiritual. We have the spiritual but are severely deficient in the other areas. You should know that what I am suggesting as an emphasis for ministry in our churches is in harmony with an end-time prophetic movement that is supposed to declare the messages of the three angels found in Revelation 14. Making a tangible and relevant difference in people's lives is part and parcel of the last warning message. The third angel's message is not to be given second place in this work, but is to

be one with it....This work is to be to the message what the hand is to the body.—Letter 24, 1898. {WM 33.1}

We are looking for solid commitments from those of you who are determined to choose the path that God prescribes; people who are willing to go into the community and make a difference through a social gospel. We have a lot of work to do. We have a gospel to share, hurting people to help, and a devil to defeat. And through the power and grace of God we will be successful in this mission. May the words of Helen Keller be our own: I long to accomplish great and noble tasks, but it is my chief duty to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble. The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker.



Pastor
Troy Brand, Co-Leader,
Community Engagement
Ministry

Cory Jackson
Pastor
SCC Co-Leader for Community
Engagement

PRAYER MINISTRY



Is Prayer Important?

How important is prayer in the life of Christians? Do they really grasp the power and magnitude of prayer in their lives? Do they really believe that prayer can move the arm of God and that the impossible can be done? Or have the prayers of the saints become selfish and self-centered, thinking of God only as a genie, supplying their every want and desire? Has prayer only become necessary when a crisis arises in the life?

As Christians, prayer should be the most important thing that we do. It's where we talk to God telling Him about the concerns, cares, and stresses in our lives! Prayer is where we receive power and instructions to do the will of God. Praying daily is essential to our spiritual growth. As long as we stay connected to the source of our power, we'll have a saving, transforming influence upon those around us!

If ever there was a time to pray, it is now. Prayer is vital to our spiritual lives! This is something that must

be done every day! The servant of the Lord writes that to "neglect the exercise of prayer, to engage in prayer spasmodically, now and then, as it is deemed convenient, and you lose your connection with God. The Christian life becomes dry, and the spiritual faculties have no vitality. The religious experience lacks health and vigor" Prayer, p. 31.

This is why we need to have a daily devotion by reading the Word of God and prayer. Every day we need to consecrate ourselves to God and receive the blessings of the day. Even when we do not feel like praying, that's the time we need to ask God to fill us with His Spirit! The apostle Paul admonishes us to "pray without ceasing." This will keep our minds uplifted to God. God is the source of all power and efficiency.

The pen of inspiration gives words of encouragement when it says that "prayer is heaven's ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character. The divine influences that come

in answer to the prayer of faith will accomplish in the soul of the suppliant all for which he pleads. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; and the promise is, "Ye shall receive." We have the promises of God that when we pray, believing, we can have it. The Bible says in John 14:13,

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

John 15:7 says,

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

1 John 3:22 declares,

"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."

So, let's not get weary, worn, or tired when it comes to prayer! If we continue in prayer, God will do what He said He will do.

"A. S. A. P."

Always say a prayer

There's work to do,

deadlines to meet,

you've got NO TIME TO SPARE,

But as you hurry and scurry,

Always Say a Prayer.

It may seem like your worries are

more than you can bear,

slow down and take a breather –

Always Say a Prayer.

God knows how stressful life is,

He wants to ease our cares, and

He'll respond A.S.A.P."

Always Say a Prayer."



Pastor
Curtis Hall
SCC Prayer Ministry
Leader

Noise Cancellation
8:00 PM Eastern / 7PM Central
THURSDAY
AUGUST 22, 2024
Meeting ID: 840 0887 1810
Passcode: 8TB0ft
Education and Empowerment for Connecting to your City
A Community Engagement Conversation Hosted By Your South Central Conference Community Engagement Team