

VISION

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.

A Breath of Fresh Air

SCC SPIRIT-LED, MISSION-DRIVEN CHURCHES

Our Church Ministries and Mission Development Department goal is to establish and equip thirty Spirit-led, Mission-driven churches during the 2022–2027 quinquennium. As of this writing we are thrilled to report that we currently have 34 churches engaged at various points along our Spirit-led, Mission-driven continuum—to God be the glory!

The following article is a testimony regarding the blessings and benefits of the Spirit-led, Mission-driven process

from the pastor of one of our stellar Spirit-led, Mission-driven churches—Pastor Nathaniel Drew, pastor of the Breath of Life Seventh-day Adventist Church in Memphis TN.

A Breath of Fresh Air

I have been pastoring now for 13 years! For almost 5 of those years now I've been blessed to pastor the Breath of Life church. At no point in these last 13 years have I ever doubted the fact that I was called to pastor. Nor have I ever

regretted answering that call. Pastoring has afforded me the opportunity to do what I love most—connect with people! My path has crossed with thousands of people, thanks to pastoral ministry. I am now pastoring my 5th church, and immediately after being installed here, my ministry hit a crossroads. My ministry tenure here started smack dab in the middle of the covid pandemic. Our church doors were closed to the public, and

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THE SCC CHURCH MINISTRIES & MISSION DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Breath of Fresh Air, Continued from page 1



ministry as we knew it had forever changed. Even when our church doors reopened, there was only a fraction of our membership that returned. Everyone else either found comfort in virtual worship, or found a new normal being disconnected from our church.

I ran into the temptation of simply following the usual format when you first arrive at a church. Get to know your people. Get to know your city. Preach like your life depends on it. And wait for some meaningful inspiration concerning what to do next. That routine works like a charm, while you're still in the "honeymoon phase"; but then the questions begin to come: "Pastor, what's your vision for our church?" "Where do we go from here?" "Where is God directing you to lead us?" The truth is, I had

no idea how to answer those questions. I did say I was at a crossroad in ministry, didn't I? I had to face the reality that, as far as pastoring goes, I was great at the people part, but needed much help with the methodology part.

Then I received word that Pastor Puck Fordham, through the Church Ministries & Mission Development department, was looking for some churches to take part in an initiative designed to help those churches become Spirit-led and Mission-driven. This was an immediate answer to my prayers! What ensued was a year and a half process of Pastor Fordham working, hands on, with a Mission Development group from our church. We prayed, planned, and partnered together to create a model for ministry that would help

our church hit the reset button. And that's exactly what we did. We rebuilt from the ground up! It was a long, but strong process that has only helped propel us to a new level of life changing ministry! You can now go to just about any of our members and they would be able to tell you who we are and what we're about. The Spirit led us to cut away the weeds that were hanging around, in order to give us a new season from which to blossom.

We developed a new mission strategy that would completely govern the way we do ministry. Now, our four ministry teams are stronger and more robust than ever. This Spirit-led, Mission-driven process has moved us away from planning standalone initiatives and programs, that look good, but bear no long-last-

ing fruit; to creating a mission-based system, from which sustainable ministry flows. As a result of the system already having built into it goals, plans and processes; the pressure to come up with the "next best thing" no longer exists. Our four ministry teams (Love, Invest, Fortify, Equip) have allowed us to consistently and intentionally serve our community; and serve them well. Then the question became, how do we go about serving our members just as well? The Spirit then directed me to the book of Acts. "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:46-47). That which God used to transform His church was corporate worship and communal fellowship. At BOL, we had corporate worship down pat. However, we decided that we don't want to simply worship with each other, but we want to actually like the people we're worshipping with. That can only happen through relationship. And relationship can only happen through fellowship.

To that end, we built a small groups component to our church that we call LIFE Groups. Similar to Acts 2, our LIFE Groups ensure that our corporate worship is partnered with communal fellowship. Our groups stand on the following pillars: Faith, Fellowship, & Fun. Our LIFE Groups give us the opportunity to be served. We've implemented groups that focus on women, men, finances, entrepreneurship, cooking, kitchen apothecary, line dancing, teens, grief support, and a host of others. Our groups allow us the opportunity to



Our groups allow us the opportunity to spend time with people we would not ordinarily spend time with

spend time with people we would not ordinarily spend time with. At present, we have over half of our membership registered to participate in our groups. Our vision is to have every person within our faith community actively involved in a group. Our numbers are growing, excitement is reverberating, and positive energy is snowballing.

The Spirit-led, Mission-driven process did not just give us another initiative; it breathed life back into our church. And this is only the beginning! We are currently working on plans to build a business on our property that will allow us to provide a service to our community every day of the week, while also generating revenue for our church. We're discussing the possibility of building a farmer's market that we will out-source to local farmers; which will

give us the opportunity to provide fresh produce, at discounted prices, to our community, which resides in a health-food desert. To say we are excited is an understatement! Real ministry is taking place. Lives are being changed. People are excited about church again. And none of this would've happened without the Spirit working through the Church Ministries & Mission Development department. Working with Pastor Fordham and his team started us on an upward trajectory. And in our eyes, sky is the limit! ■



Nathaniel H. Drew
Pastor
Breath of Life
Seventh-day Adventist Church
Memphis, Tennessee



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

HEALTH EVANGELISM MINISTRIES

Hypertension

Discover how you can normalize your high blood pressure by two simple lifestyle strategies and learn about the side effects of blood pressure medications!



Curtis and Paula Ekins
SCC Health Evangelism Ministries

WATCH NOW



Pastor Cory Jackson (second from left) and New Covenant Church Community Service Director, Toya Sallis, accept the \$2,500 Crime Prevention Grant from Memphis Mayor Paul Young (left) and MPD Police Chief Cerelyn Davis (right).

Faith at Work in the Heart of the Westwood Community

New Covenant SDA Church Receives MPD Crime Prevention Grant

MEMPHIS, TN – The New Covenant Seventh-day Adventist Church has been blessed and awarded with a \$2,500 Crime Prevention Grant from the Memphis Police Department (MPD), a meaningful step in support of the church’s ongoing commitment to community-minded ministry.

For New Covenant, service is more than an occasional outreach; it’s the heartbeat of who we are. We have long believed that serving the community is part of the gospel, not separate from it. The church regularly hosts food drives, expungement fairs, job fairs, and other resource-based outreach events aimed at offering real solutions to our community. These efforts don’t just meet needs;

we hope they restore dignity, rebuild trust, and open doors for healing.

This work is not about recognition or reward. It’s a calling rooted in a biblical vision of what the church is meant to be. As Ellen G. White wrote in *Acts of the Apostles*:

“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 the Apostles*, p. 9

That’s exactly what this congregation is doing— carrying the gospel not just in sermons, but in service. Faith isn’t passive here. It’s practical, active, and deeply intertwined with the needs of the city around us.

The MPD’s grant will support our

local efforts of restoration to our community, and we are forever grateful for the opportunity to be that beacon of light. We serve a mighty God, so we expect Him to show up. And we do our part, pointing people back to a God who sees them, loves them, and will never stop showing up for them.

For New Covenant, this grant is confirmation not of status, but of direction. God honors faithfulness. And the mission continues. ■



Pastor
Cory Jackson, Sr.
New Covenant
Seventh-day Adventist Church
Memphis, TN



Ellen G. White defines prayer as “the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us but brings us up to Him” *Steps to Christ*, p. 93. We started opening our hearts to God as a friend to a friend. The workshop began with prayer and testimonies. The audience enjoyed starting it off this way so that we could get to know one another and build camaraderie that would make the presentation much easier!

The seminar commenced with the question “What is prayer?” We defined it by sharing the previously mentioned quote and establishing the fact that without prayer the heart can grow cold and careless. Again,

Ellen White writes, “Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven’s storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence? Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path” *ibid*, p. 95. Our eternal salvation depends upon knowing God and His will for our lives. Prayer is one of the essentials to our Christian growth.

There was a great deal of discussion concerning prayer and how it affects our lives and our relationship with the Lord and one another. However, we realized that we cannot take prayer for granted. Because when this happens, our spiritual life becomes weak and vacillating and can

die! “Neglect the exercise of prayer, or engage in prayer spasmodically, now and then, as seems convenient, and you lose your hold on God. The spiritual faculties lose their vitality, the religious experience lacks health and vigor” *Gospel Workers.*, p. 254, 255. Dennis Smith writes, “If one refuses to pray for himself, he will be very weak spiritually and ultimately cease to be a Christian. If believers neglect to pray for the lost, their efforts to win them to Jesus Christ will be of no avail. It requires prayer to breathe spiritual life into our souls and to those who are spiritually (dead). Prayer is required to sustain spirit life and advance God’s kingdom” *Spirit Baptism and Prayer*, p. 9.

That’s why we want all our churches to become houses of prayer, because where there’s much prayer, there is much power! We understand that prayer has power and can move the arm of God! The enemy knows the power of prayer, and he would rather you work for Christ than pray to God! I like what author Wesley Duewel writes in his book, *Mighty Prevailing Prayer*, p. 58: “Satan would rather have you do anything but pray. He would rather have you busy working for God than praying to God.”

The seminar was truly a success and a blessing to those who attended and to me personally. God was there in our midst as we discovered the science of prayer. If we had enough time to experience all that I had to share, it would have taken at least four days! However, it cannot be stated enough: God truly blessed the prayer seminar! ■



Pastor
Curtis Hall
SCC Prayer Ministry
Leader



Sherri Uhrig, D Min
Children's Ministries Director
North American Division

DO IT TOGETHER

SABBATH SCHOOL CONFERENCE



Pastor Gerry Lopez
Children's Ministries Assoc. Director
North American Division

HI FRIENDS!

Our online Sabbath School Training is almost here! We are excited to offer **Alive in Jesus** training for the **Do It Together Conference**. Help promote the **Do It Together Sabbath School Conference—a free virtual event taking place on September 12 and 13, 2025.**

This conference is an incredible opportunity to inspire and equip Sabbath School leaders and members across the North American Division. To attend the event, participants must register at oneteamplaybook.org.

To help you spread the word, we have provided a variety of marketing resources, including:

- Social media ads
- Posters
- Bulletin announcements
- Email templates and much more

You can **access all of these resources** here: [Marketing Resources Folder](#).

Here’s how you can help:

1. Share the Resources:

Distribute the materials through your networks, including your church’s website, bulletin, and social media platforms.

2. Encourage Registration:

Remind your audience to **register for this free event** at oneteamplaybook.org.

3. Stay Connected:

Let us know if you’re planning any special promotions, organizing watch parties, or translating the materials. We’d love to hear about your efforts and support you as needed.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Gerry or me. Thank you for your partnership in making this event a success and strengthening the mission of Sabbath School ministry for all ages across our division.

Pastor Gerry: gerrylopez@nadadventist.org
Sherri Uhrig: sherriuhrig@nadadventist.org



Why Spiritual Gifts Are Necessary

Greetings, South Central Family. Today, we explore the beautiful tapestry of spiritual gifts, as God has lovingly bestowed these upon us for our edification, growth, and His glory. Our focus will be on how these gifts not only foster personal faith and spiritual growth but also deepen our relationship with God. Let's examine the following three elements of spiritual gifts.

PURPOSE

They connect us to God's divine purpose and mission.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7: "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

This passage reminds us that our diversity in gifts is the hallmark of a unified body in Christ. Each gift is unique, yet each serves a divine purpose, demanding both personal reflection and communal engagement. Let it sink into your soul that your gifts are essential, not only for your journey but for the church and the world.

PARTICIPATION

Spiritual gifts enable every believer to actively serve within the body of Christ. I can recall from one of my churches that I was blessed to pastor a member who had a profound gift



of encouragement. Despite facing her own battles, she would uplift others with words so genuine and timely that they could only be inspired by the Holy Spirit. Her gift didn't boast loudly but sang softly into the hearts of those who needed it most. Her life was a testimony to how one person's spiritual gift could create ripples of hope and strength throughout an entire community.

Perhaps you've seen this in your life: moments when someone's unmistakable gift has fanned the flame of your own faith or times when God used your gifts to touch another's life unexpectedly.

PROGRESS

Spiritual gifts promote spiritual growth, both personally and communally.

To cultivate our spiritual gifts, we must:

- Seek intimacy with God through prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal and refine these gifts in us.
- Engage in regular Bible study, which not only nourishes your spirit but illuminates the path God has laid out for your gifts to shine.
- Surround yourself with a commu-

nity of believers who can encourage and affirm your growth.

- Practice using your gifts in small steps, trusting God to expand your capacity and impact. Remember, every act done in love, no matter how small, is significant to God. Be open to feedback and continue to grow, for our spiritual journey is one of continual learning and transformation.

CONCLUSION

In our quest for deeper devotion, let us commit to understanding and nurturing the spiritual gifts God has placed within us. These gifts call us to active participation in the kingdom, drawing us closer to God and creating a catalyst for personal and communal growth. ■



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



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