

A Quick Start GUIDE



PERSONAL MINSTRIES

This Quick Start Guide was prepared using materials created by the Personal Ministries Department of the North American Division.

Director: J. Alfred Johnson
Editor: Cassie Martsching
Design and layout: Alan Eno

Available from:
AdventSource
5040 Prescott Avenue
Lincoln, NE 68506
800.328.0525
www.adventsource.org

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Printed in the United States of America

ISBN #: 1-57756-466-9

Quick Start Guide for Personal Ministries Leader

Welcome to the most important task God ever assigned to church leaders – reaching out to others in the name of Christ, bringing them into fellowship with believers and leading them to eternal life. In coordinating the outreach ministries of your local church you are called to build on a noble heritage of personal evangelism that has been successfully modeled by hundreds of men and women throughout history.

Job Description

Whether your job title is outreach coordinator, evangelism director, chair of the church growth committee, personal ministries leader, member activities leader or something else, your ministry will include four basic areas:

Planning (page 2)

Education and communication (page 6)

Recruiting and training volunteers (page 9)

Ministry management (page 10)

Qualifications

The personal ministries leader needs to have a vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ and a desire to share Him with others. This person also needs to be able to plan, organize, manage and evaluate outreach projects. He or she must be able to motivate and supervise volunteers. The ability to communicate effectively with church members, other leaders and the community is also needed.

Top 10 Tasks for Personal Ministries Leaders

1. Maintain a strong relationship with Jesus
2. Make sure you understand the true meaning of salvation and grace
3. Develop and show genuine love for all people
4. Be prepared to engage in spiritual warfare as you teach others the truth about freedom in Jesus
5. Surround yourself with a team of prayer warriors
6. Communicate effectively with your church leadership
7. Become a leader who inspires and motivates
8. Think clearly and plan wisely
9. Be flexible and open to the Holy Spirit's leading
10. Remain focused and optimistic – Jesus has already won!

Level One: Planning

The Mission Driven Church

The word “mission” means purpose. If your local church already has a clear mission statement, you are a step ahead. If not, meet with your church leaders and prayerfully develop one that includes the threefold command of the Great Commission to evangelize the world:

1. Go (ministry of presence and compassion)
2. Baptize (ministry of soul winning)
3. Teach (ministry of nurture and spiritual growth)

To truly fulfill the Great Commission we must realize that the church exists to serve people who are not members; people “outside in the world.” It can be a wrenching experience for a congregation to put aside the self-centered view of church that is so common, and focus on a mission-centered view. However, the focus and goals of the church need to be determined by Christ's words, not by majority vote or ecclesiastical authority. A soul winning church cannot remain a church that resists any change. A mission-driven church cannot be a tradition-driven church.

A solid commitment to Christ's mission will cause your church board to take on new challenges, launch new projects and enter into new partnerships. Faithfulness to Christ's mission will motivate your church members to increase their giving and invest more of their time in volunteer roles. A true dedication to soul winning will lead your members to accept changes that are inconvenient and perhaps even uncomfortable because those changes help the church reach and

win people who otherwise could not be reached or won to Christ and His remnant church. And every person who joins the church must be encouraged to share in this mission by planning and working toward its achievement.

Our Mission in a Secular World

Over 80 percent of people surveyed in North America say they believe in God and 70 percent say they belong to a church or synagogue and attend “regularly.” Yet when other strands of data are correlated, a mixed picture emerges, indicating that only about one in four persons is an active church member.

We seem to live in a neopagan culture in which people pay lip service to religion but avoid any spirituality that impacts their values or behaviors. This issue is crucial to the future of Adventist evangelism in North America. It determines whether we continue to start with the assumption that our audience accepts the authority of the Bible, or is, in fact, scripturally illiterate.

Who Are the Unchurched?

In a study conducted by the Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University, the largest category of “unchurched” people in North America is made up of professionals with higher than average income and education. They tend to have few or no children and a very secular outlook on life. The unchurched population includes more men than women, more young persons, single adults, and residents of urban areas.

This group tends to be not so much hostile toward Christian ideas as distrustful of organized religion and church-related activities. Many fear emotional intimacy, yet are sexually promiscuous and use mind-altering substances frequently. They have little interest in helping others and are terrified of growing old and dying.

The unchurched person often has a sense of inner emptiness combined with a (usually unrecognized) spiritual hunger. However, research indicates that any unchurched person with a significant level of stress (divorce, death of loved one, loss of job, relocation, etc.) is likely to be responsive to a source of spiritual care. In today’s society, this group represents a vast mission field for evangelism.

What is Evangelism?

Many different words are currently used in referring to this topic. Outreach is a general term including anything the church does to reach beyond its own members. Personal ministries is also a general term, but focuses more on what members can do individually. Evangelism is a term used in Scripture that literally means to share the good news of salvation.

Many Adventists are in the habit of meaning only one thing by the word evangelism – a preaching meeting to which non-members are invited so they can hear the doctrines of the church.

There are in fact three distinct types of evangelism, and the format of public evangelism where a professional speaker addresses a large group is only one of them. Small group evangelism has emerged in recent years as an extremely effective method of communicating the gospel through various activities involving four to fifteen people. Personal friendship evangelism is carried out through one-to-one conversation, or occasionally to more than one person (especially in the context of families).

Unfortunately, unless long-term groundwork has been laid, the majority of people baptized in public evangelistic meetings do not remain in the church. Do they change their minds about the doctrines? Not usually. They stop coming because they aren't connected in friendship to the body of Christ. Research shows that unless a new convert makes six friends at church he or she is unlikely to stay. In small group evangelism those friendships are already established.

The first task of personal evangelism is not to teach doctrine, but to bring the unbeliever to a personal relationship with Christ.

God wants us to work wisely...to pray and think and research and plan before jumping into "programming." Since we are accountable for the use of our energy and resources, we must utilize the methods that will be most effective in reaching our particular communities.

The Example of Christ

"Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me'" (*The Ministry of Healing*, page 143).

Christ listened and observed. He became acquainted with the customs and culture of His day. To communicate the gospel we must know two things: we must know the gospel and we must know the needs of the people around us.

Friendships are recognized as the primary tool for bringing men and women to Christ and into the church.

Christ spent more time healing than preaching. Our gospel message has no credibility apart from a visible demonstration of compassionate, practical ministry. Relational needs are the bridge to the unchurched. We must stretch across the cultural and social barriers our society has raised and mold caring, patient relationships with those we wish to reach. When we have achieved this relational approach to soul winning we will succeed in the work Christ has given us and see true renewal and growth in the church.

Principles of Church Growth

What can we learn from the early Christian church about evangelism and church growth? Can we again find that rich fellowship, vibrant spirituality and dynamic missionary zeal?

The relational nature of church growth is implicit in every New Testament passage on the topic. The process is always one of relationships and careful attention to the social currents which most quickly carry the gospel message.

The Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University has helped conduct dozens of studies about Adventist church growth in North America. They have accumulated a mountain of evidence for us about what works and what doesn't. The results indicate that six factors are absolutely essential to sustained growth in Adventist congregations in North America.

Growth Factor One: Intentionality

Where there is church growth, the leadership focuses on outreach. The church board establishes a plan for growth. The members want to see growth. They view their congregation as a soul winning church.

Growth Factor Two: Small Groups

Small group ministries accomplish several necessary functions, including:

Bonding with friends. Only small groups provide opportunity for real bonding and the maintenance of a strong fabric of fellowship.

Involvement in service. Members more readily become involved in various ministries in the setting of small groups where skills can be developed and opportunities for service are presented on a doable scale.

Growth toward mature faith. Bible study in small groups provides the time and level of personal support necessary for spiritual growth.

Assimilation of new members. When congregations have a sufficient number of small groups, new members have the opportunity to get acquainted, form strong friendships and become involved in activities.

Delivery of pastoral care. Leaders of small groups serve as informal pastors to those in their group who are in need. This is vital to church growth; if we're losing members out the back door as fast as new converts are being baptized there is still no growth.

Multiple outreach activities. When several different ministries are being conducted the church has more power in achieving its mission.

(See the Resource section on page 13 for a list of tools available in developing and supporting small group ministries.)

Growth Factor Three: Involvement

Growing congregations have a large percentage (at least 65 percent) of members who hold church offices or are actively involved in ministries sponsored by the church. Achieving this level of involvement is perhaps the single most important challenge facing the Adventist church in North America today. (See the section on Motivating Members on page 10.)

Growth Factor Four: Fellowship

Growing churches have a strong sense of caring, acceptance and forgiveness in the congregation. People feel wanted and needed. They take time to show they care about each other. They seek out inactive members and encourage them.

Growth Factor Five: Inclusiveness

Growing congregations consciously work to help visitors and potential members feel included in the life of the church. Intentional efforts are made to assimilate new members.

Growth Factor Six: Demographics

Growing churches are more likely to have higher percentages of young adults than congregations with declining numbers. Youth evangelism is a priority for churches that want to grow.

Opportunities and Challenges

Today there are major opportunities in North America for unprecedented evangelistic initiatives. But these opportunities also present challenges because they require new approaches.

During recent years the average work week for Americans has increased to nearly 50 hours. Consequently, for most people member witnessing needs to shift from neighborhood models to the arena of the workplace. Friendship evangelism skills must be developed so Adventists can effectively reach the unchurched with which they work.

A vast opportunity also exists now for small group evangelism through home video seminars and internet sites. Today, more than ever before, witnessing involves taking the gospel out of church settings and into the workplace, the marketplace and the home. Because we are currently facing a more secular, urban and media-driven culture we must learn how and when to use the wide array of media available for teaching the full message that answers the questions in hearts and minds.

Churches experiencing growth have three things in common: committed leaders, a comprehensive plan and the Holy Spirit's blessing.

Level Two: Education and Communication

Sharing the Vision

One of the first goals for your congregation is embracing the concept of being a mission-driven church. Unless the majority of members believe in this concept, there isn't much hope for sustained church growth.

Members also need to realize that they are witnessing to their families, work associates and neighbors every day, whether they intend to or not. You cannot NOT witness! It may come as a surprise to some who think they don't know how to witness that they're doing it all the time.

**“A kind, courteous Christian is the most powerful argument that can be produced in favor of Christianity.”
Testimonies Vol. 6 page 84**

The most common misconception about witnessing is that it begins with saying something. In fact, any truly effective Christ-like witness begins not with talking but with listening.

For most people in our self-centered North American culture, listening is a sadly underdeveloped skill. But until we have demonstrated that we are caring listeners, people are unlikely to carefully listen to what we say.

Every believer is a missionary, and it is part of your job as the personal ministries leader to communicate regularly with members about their witnessing opportunities. This can be done during the personal ministries time on Sabbath mornings or through more involved seminars at other times. Consider using the excellent pamphlet *One-Minute Witness* by Monte Sahlin, available from AdventSource at www.adventsource.org or 800.328.0525, or look through the list of available resources at the end of this booklet for effective ways to educate your members.

Organizing for Outreach

Each congregation in the Seventh-day Adventist church has the responsibility to organize so it effectively carries out the mission assigned by Christ. It is the role of the personal ministries leader to bring recommendations from the planning council to the church board (based on your church's size, location and resources) and request specific decisions about how outreach will be organized in your local church. This approved plan becomes the framework around which your outreach activities will be developed.

The Planning Council

This group should include all the department heads or program leaders involved in outreach to your community: health ministries, communication, community services, etc. It may also include small group leaders, greeters and youth ministry leaders. The church board should appoint a chair for this council.

The purpose of the council is to develop specific plans for evangelism (personal, small group and public), community service and public awareness of the church. This is the group that does

creative thinking and finds a way for every member to be challenged to join the mission of Christ. This is also the group that takes initiative and makes things happen.

In the smallest churches – fewer than 50 members – the planning council may include everyone on the church board (or even the entire congregation) and may meet only once a year. In churches of up to 150 members the council should meet quarterly and include the pastor. When Sabbath attendance climbs to 300 the council should meet monthly. In the largest congregations the specific structure and role of the council needs to be determined by the board in consultation with the pastoral team and personal ministries leader.

The Planning Council Agenda

When your council meets there is a definite progression that is important for the development of good plans:

STEP ONE

Review the global mission of the church from scripture and inspired writings. Review your local church's mission statement. Spend time in prayer, confessing faults and acknowledging needs. Ask in faith for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

STEP TWO

Discuss the nature of your community and the needs among its residents. Look at a demographic profile and any other information that is available regarding members of your community and problems they are facing. As far as possible, get a clear picture of your mission field.

STEP THREE

Set goals for the year. How many members will you try to involve in volunteer ministry? How many specific events will you seek to implement? How will you endeavor to contact and nurture inactive or former members? What kinds of new ministries would you like to launch? Will you consider starting a Branch Sabbath School or planting a “daughter church” in the area?

STEP FOUR

Determine which activities will best achieve the goals you have set. Assign each event or project a leader and a time frame. Also, decide how many helpers and how much funding will be needed.

STEP FIVE

After projects have been launched listen to reports from their leaders. Find solutions to problems that have surfaced. Evaluate activities that have occurred, asking what can be learned for the future. Spend time praising God for His blessings and guidance!

Interest Coordinator

Each Adventist congregation is directed by the Church Manual to appoint an interest coordinator. The interest coordinator is responsible for maintaining a file of all the names that come to the church from various sources. Adventist media ministries, periodicals and seminar leaders collect the names of tens of thousands of interested people each year in North America.

It is the job of the interest coordinator to arrange for each interested local person to receive the service requested, whether that is literature, an invitation to a specific seminar or small group, a visit from a member who can pray with the person or give Bible studies or in some other way meet that individual's needs. In essence, the interest coordinator is the "customer service manager" for the outreach activities of the church.

The interest coordinator is the most important coworker of the personal ministries leader. It is vital to carefully select for this position a responsible person with human relation skills and spiritual and emotional maturity. It is best to have continuity over several years with a qualified individual.

Level Three: Working with Volunteers

Recruiting Volunteers

"I would really like to see my church do at least some of the things suggested in the resource materials, but when I ask for volunteers no one responds." This is a typical remark from personal ministries leaders across North America.

Why do many members hesitate to be involved? Some have a limited understanding of the role of laity. Many lack confidence; they do not know the potential they have. And most have little or no training.

What will motivate church members to get involved in outreach activities? Pleading and guilt trips may work for a few, but most are unmoved by these appeals. General requests for volunteers rarely achieve a response.

Yet many others do give their time to selected volunteer activities regularly. What makes the difference? The real success in motivating volunteers is finding the right fit for them. This is why discovering one's spiritual gifts plays such a major role in the life of the church. As the personal ministries leader you need to schedule spiritual gifts seminars and encourage every member to attend (see Resources on page 13).

There are plenty of nice, kind people attending church regularly who aren't involved in reaching out to the community. They display the fruit of the spirit in their lives – love, joy, peace, longsuffering, etc. They have the Holy Spirit WITHIN, leading them to be like Jesus. Yet they lack the second function of the Spirit – the power UPON them, giving them the ability to perform works in ministry for the building up of the church, the body of Christ. The outpouring of the Spirit upon them will be realized as they discover and develop their specific spiritual gifts.

One-on-one is the best path to successful volunteer recruitment. Approach prospective volunteers in a kind and positive manner. Ask, "How do you see yourself being involved in our congregation's outreach?"

Listen carefully to what individuals say. A person's past experiences, hopes and dreams, personality and spiritual gifts all combine to determine his or her current level of willingness to commit to the project at hand. It is worth the time invested because it is this sensitive, spiritual work that births motivation for ministry in each church member.

Remind members that honor in service pays greater rewards than cash wages, especially when one is ministering where he or she has been gifted by God. Talk about spiritual gifts and pray together that God will help each person find just the right place to work for Him.

Eight Essential Elements in Motivating Members

1. A sense of community – the opportunity for friendships.
2. A chance for personal growth and development.
3. Participation by the volunteers in problem solving and significant decision making about the project.
4. The opportunity to choose a project that relates to the individual's interests and needs.
5. A specific contract regarding time and level of commitment.
6. An opportunity to review the goals of the project and buy into those goals. Volunteers must believe what they do will have a significant impact on important objectives.
7. Meaningful orientation and training activities so members feel qualified.
8. Regular channels for supportive feedback.

The first principle of good leadership is to have your objectives clearly in sight. The second is to have the right person assigned to the right job.

Retaining Volunteers

Dealing with volunteers is not the same as working with employees. And keeping volunteers involved doesn't happen by accident. You must find ways to show workers that you (and the entire church) care about them and appreciate their efforts. Periodically ask them how things are going and what needs they have.

When planning training sessions use energy, humor and creative touches to inspire the volunteers. Keep their busy schedules in mind, and make sure that events are well planned, concise and practical.

Take pictures of volunteers at work and display them on your church bulletin board, in your newsletter or on the church website. Seeing what is being accomplished is encouraging to everyone. Also work with your church communication director in writing stories about members

who are actively helping others in your community.

Level Four: Ministry Management

Building Project Teams

The secret of making disciples for Christ in our contemporary culture is to build consistent, ongoing relationships with specific segments of the community. Growing churches sponsor specifically targeted long-term ministries that meet the true needs of their communities, instead of hosting short-term evangelism events. In today's secular, urbanized society it is the consistent ministry of a team of people who are present with the target audience year in and year out, who demonstrate their compassion and reliably meet needs, that wins a hearing for the gospel.

A “lone ranger” style of ministry where one person does it all seldom works. Working together in teams prevents burnout and loss of spiritual ground. Small congregations may have only one outreach team working with one project. Larger congregations will have more individuals who are gifted as leaders. An important aspect of team outreach is leadership development – providing opportunities for new members, younger people and those not previously recognized as leaders to try their wings.

A key responsibility of the personal ministries leader is to find the core members for each project team.

Before each team is launched it is important for the personal ministries leader to meet with the team leader to clarify the team's goals, timeline and available resources. Write specific, measurable goals and work out a specific timeline and a budget for each ministry. Note: This budget can include revenue generated from modest registration fees or charges for materials. Charging a fee will actually increase enrollment in many cases because the public tends to view a program as more professional or valuable if a fee is charged.

For details on marketing and advertising your ministry, see the book *Practical Guide to Personal Ministries* available from AdventSource at www.adventsource.org or 800.328.0525.

Involving Every Member

A set of tools has been developed for congregations to use in a systematic way to involve every member in some kind of ministry. This kit, entitled Connections, includes a leader's guide, two videos and other materials for leaders and participants. The theme of the eight-unit curriculum is “the right person in the right job for the right reasons.” When a church begins to conduct a Connections class each year, it starts to chip away at the percentage of its members who sit passively on the sidelines. Connections is available from AdventSource at www.adventsource.org or 800.328.0525.

Every outreach project needs a network of prayer warriors. This may include individuals who cannot otherwise participate in the activities. Nonetheless, their prayers make all the difference in terms of the success of the project. Frontline workers will know that someone is fervently praying for them. And projects bathed in prayer are less likely to get off track.

In the frantic economy today people are busier than ever and generally have less time for church activities. More women (the former core of the volunteer force in most congregations) work outside the home, and more men are working a second job to help their families make ends meet. Take this into account by asking members to perform very specific tasks with clearly specified time limits rather than calling for open-ended commitments.

If you think about the fact that you're creating ministry, not just "doing programming," you will realize that plans may continue to change throughout the year. Please meet with your advisory/planning council as needed to make certain you're aware of what's happening in the community and the church so you will be addressing current needs.

Evaluating Ministries

Periodically evaluating each ministry is important because it helps you:

- Find out what is and is not working
- Show your church board and community what each ministry does and how it benefits participants
- Improve by identifying strengths and weaknesses
- Add to conference church leaders' knowledge about what does and does not work at local church levels with different types of participants

Biblical Leadership Principles:

- God is the real leader
- Lead with a view of restoring God's leadership
- Distinguish between role and status
- Realize that leadership is a God-like function which demands high standards
- Lead humbly because you are human

Summary

It is necessary to plan, to educate and to communicate. It is necessary to manage ministries carefully and wisely. But these things will never be enough if the power of God's Spirit is lacking.

In New Testament times whenever the Spirit came upon someone, something special happened. Think of Peter at Pentecost and Phillip with the Ethiopian eunuch. "You shall receive power," Jesus promised, "after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8).

When the Spirit is poured out people will gladly receive the gospel and be baptized; fellowship will be rampant. Unity will be the norm and there will be selfless sharing. Signs and wonders will be done; there will be **POWER FOR SUCCESSFUL MINISTRY!**

Recommended Resources

Books

Available from AdventSource

For a complete listing of personal ministries resources visit AdventSource at www.adventsource.org. You can place your order or request a catalog by calling 800.328.0525.

Christ's Way of Reaching People by Philip G. Samaan. (Review & Herald)
Catalog #420490

One-Minute Witness by Monte Sahlin. (Center for Creative Ministry)
Catalog #420085

Power Witnessing: How to Witness to Different Personalities by David Farmer.
(Review & Herald) Catalog #420900

Practical Guide to Personal Ministries. (North American Division of Adult Ministries)
Catalog #420520

The Psychology of Witnessing by Jard DeVille. (Word Books)
Catalog #550995

Revolution in the Church: Unleashing the Awesome Power of Lay Ministry by
Russell Burrill. (Hart Research Center)
Catalog #416605

Available from the Adventist Book Center or Local Christian Bookstore

Visit www.adventistbookcenter.com or call 800.765.6955 to reach the Adventist Book Center closest to you.

Christian Service by Ellen G. White.

Listening and Caring Skills in Ministry by John Savage. (Abingdon Press)

Out of the Salt-Shaker and Into the World: Evangelism as a Way of Life by
Rebecca Manley Pippert. (InterVarsity Press)

Show and Then Tell: Presenting the Gospel Through Daily Encounters by Kent and Davidene Humphreys. (Moody Press)

Simple Keys to Effective Christian Service: Principles That Can Be Understood. Methods That Can Be Followed. by J. Alfred Johnson II. (Alpha Books)

Training Videos and DVDs

Available from AdventSource at www.adventsource.org or 800.328.0525

Connections: Implementing Spiritual Gifts in the Church. (Center for Creative Ministry) *Catalog #420055*

Friend 2 Friend: Reaching the Unchurched through Friendship Evangelism. (Center for Creative Ministry) *Catalog #420001*

Miscellaneous

Center for Global Urban Mission (CGUM) can assist you in getting an inexpensive demographics report for your neighborhood or city. They also provide training events and consultation services. Phone: 301.891.4036 or email: 74617.2465@compuserve.com

Real Cards

Want a simple way to share your faith with others? A few pictures and words that help people see the essence of what you believe? Real Cards may be your answer. Six cards in set. Available from AdventSource at www.adventsource.org or 800.328.0525. *Catalog #602070*

Websites

Center for Creative Ministry www.creativeministry.org

Center for Youth Evangelism www.andrews.edu/CYE

PlusLine www.plusline.org

North American Division Adult Ministries www.nadadultministries.org