

METHODS AND APPLICATIONS

THE SCIENCE OF SOUL WINNING

Methodologies, Resources, and Basic Skills

AN ESSENTIAL SKILLS
PERSONAL MINISTRIES
TRAINING COURSE
ES-1

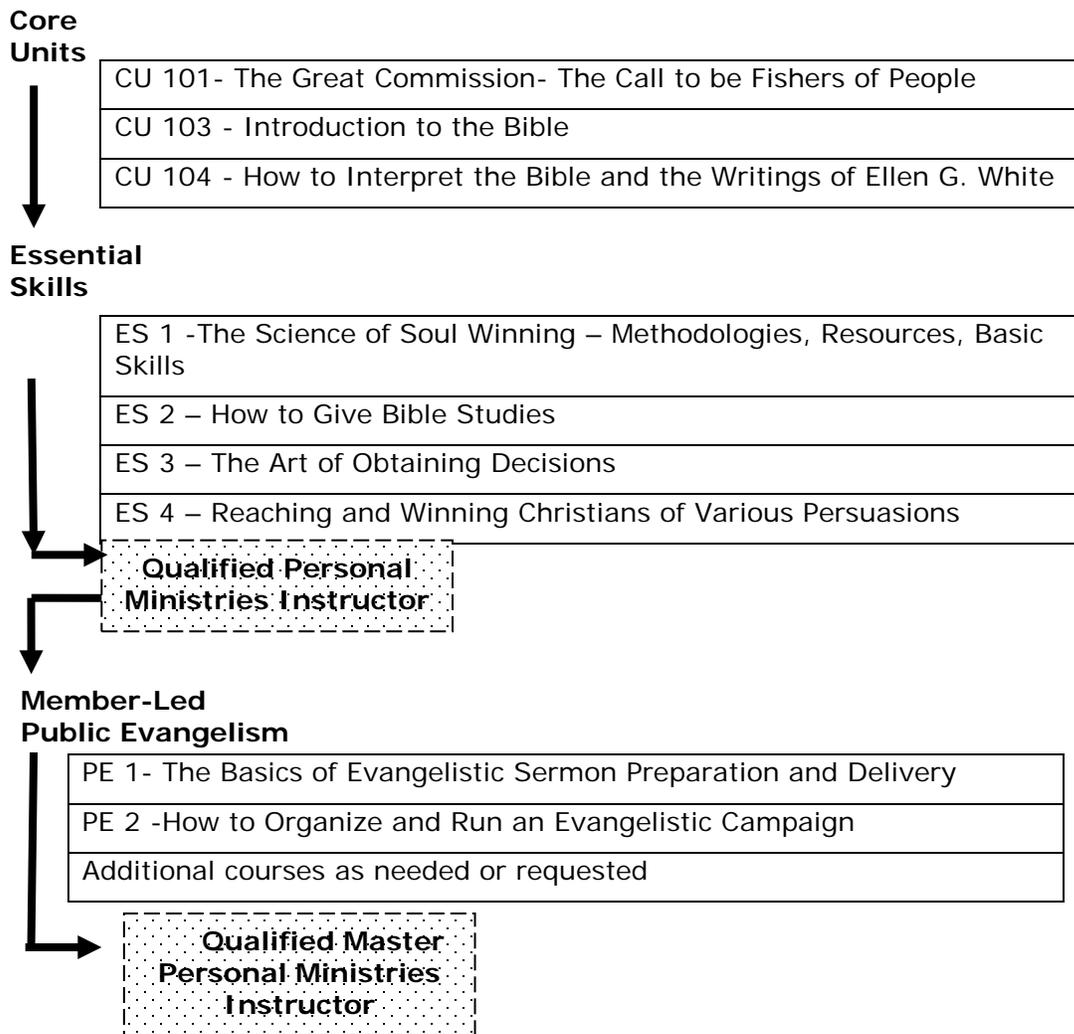
This Personal Ministries Instructional and Enrichment Course is sponsored by the Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

**A North American Division Adult Ministries Sponsored
Essential Skills Level Personal Ministries Instructional
and Enrichment Training Course**

The Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division sponsors a curriculum for the instruction and enrichment of those involved in personal ministries outreach and leadership. This curriculum has three levels of training and enrichment. All the courses are available online at www.nadadultministries.org.

These courses are all self-contained units. If you wish to obtain either the "Qualified Personal Ministries Instructor" or "Qualified Master Personal Ministries Instructor" *Certificates of Accomplishment* you must complete all of the previous courses in the curriculum outline.

**North American Division Personal Ministries Participants
Qualification Process and Curriculum**



The Science of Soul Winning: Methodologies and Systems

**A North American Division Adult Ministries Sponsored
Essential Skills Level Personal Ministries Instructional and
Enrichment Training Course**

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Course Description

Personal Ministries is both the name of a department sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist church and a designation for any ministry carried out by individual members, or small groups of people, focused on direct evangelistic contact such as Bible studies, baptismal classes, church member-led evangelistic campaigns, or other methodologies involving direct soul winning outreach.

Ellen G White gave us the phrase “the *science* of soul saving” (See *Ministry of Healing*, p. 398). To learn that science, the same statement admonishes, “a broad foundation must be laid.” The course you about the study proposes to lay that foundation. It will focus on the essential skills necessary to accomplish the mission implied in learning a “science.” Other courses will go deeper into actual hands-on applications of the “foundation skills” studied in the present course.

How to Study this Course

This is one of the online courses sponsored by the Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division. When you finish, you will receive a Certificate of Completion indicating that you have satisfactorily finished this course via www.nadadventist.org.

This course is both theoretical and practical. It is composed of a course outline, assignment sheets, and attached readings from different sources that cover valuable insights about personal ministries outreach enrichment.

You can download the material if you prefer to study from a printed copy. You can also study it directly on the screen if that is your preference.

Often Bible texts are indicated as references. It is always a good idea to look up these texts to see how they fit the pattern in which they are quoted or referred to in this course.

Vocabulary

Christian personality. The term "Christian personality" refers to the manifestation of the Christian virtues and attitudes in the life of an individual Christian or corporate body of Christians.

Church growth eyes. The term "church growth eyes" is an analogy referring to the ability to recognize how elements of church life relate to the Great Commission. A person with church growth eyes "sees" evangelistic opportunities that others are blind to.

Church/district. Many churches in the North American Division belong to an extended family known as a district. This is usually due to the fact that the local conference can only finance one pastor for various churches. Because this type of arrangement is common, and often the churches in a district cooperate in sponsoring training programs, etc. the term "church/district" is used in this course.

Discipleship. Discipleship refers to intentional dedication and service within the context of the corporate congregation.

Discipleship Quotient. A measure of the degree to which a member or a corporate congregation is practicing discipleship.

Evangelism. In this course evangelism refers to the entire process of winning converts and incorporating them into the life of the congregation. It is not limited to public meetings.

Friendship evangelism. A system of evangelization based on the *koinonia* and *oikos* principles that involves human relationships and listening skills as well as the passing on of information about the gospel and the church.

Incarnational evangelism. Incarnational evangelism refers to outreach attitudes and systems that build relationships with people rather than simply passing on information. It is based on the methods used by Jesus, and Paul's statement that Christians are "living letters."

Koinonia. The use of this Greek word means the system of fellowship and caring exhibited by personal ministries participants and/or a church congregation, both through its organizational patterns and individual attitudes.

Love/care quotient. A measure of the attitude a person exhibits toward other people. Measured by the attitudes outlined in 1 Cor. 13.

Missionary. This title is most often applied to someone who crosses salt water and works in a place other than his or her country of origin. The Bible, while it does not use this particular word, applies this role to anyone who is actively involved in "spreading the Gospel."

Missiology/Missiologist. Missiology is an academic discipline that studies ways and means of reaching people groups around the world with the Christian message. A missiologist is someone who is trained in this academic discipline.

Oikos. This Greek word is used to refer to the outreach system based on social networks and spheres of influence, including extended families, friends, work associates and other contacts.

Personal ministries participant. Anyone involved in soul winning/outreach/evangelistic activities in an intentional way.

Small groups. Small groups refer to any gathering of three to twelve people who do something in common by intention.

Spiritual gifts. A spiritual gift is a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the Body of Christ, according to God's grace, for use within the context of the Body.

Teaching ministry. Teaching ministry refers to any activity in the church whose objective is that the student or audience learn either information or application.

Unchurched. Any person or persons who does not regularly attend church services, or is not involved in the life of the church.

Witness/witnessing. This term refers to the responsibility of every Christian to relate to others what the Lord has done in his or her life and appeal to people to accept the plan of salvation.

Textbook

There is no specific textbook for this course. It is recommended that those who study any of these personal ministries online courses have at hand Ellen G White, *Evangelism, Christian Service, and Gospel Workers*. These volumes contain many ideas and methodologies presented within an Adventist context. They will be referred to often in these courses. The footnotes in the Readings contain valuable references for those who wish to go deeper into a topic.

Student Fulfillment Card

At the end of this Study Guide you will find a Student Fulfillment Card. This is the record you will forward to the Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division (jalfred.johnson@nad.adventist.org) so you can receive your Certificate of Accomplishment.

Types of Study Locations

- If you are studying this class on your own, this online Study Guide will indicate the exercises that you should complete. These contain question-and-answer sheets you can print out. They identify the important points of the readings and units of study. It is very important to fill in these sheets. They are your way of knowing how you are doing in the class.

- If you are studying in a classroom-type setting, an instructor will lead you through various participatory activities.

- If you are studying in a small group, ideas are included for those studying in this environment.

- There are no examinations scheduled for this class, unless an individual instructor decides to use them.

Course Introduction

The Bible emphasizes the responsibility of the followers of the Lord to pass on the instructions and belief system recorded in Scripture. This implies acquiring and building skills in the science of soul winning. Medical personnel are highly trained to do their jobs. You and I would not dream of going to a doctor who had no specialized training or medical degree. We know what the results would be! When your car needs repair, you take it to a certified auto mechanic because that person has been trained to repair whatever the problem is. If you try to fix it yourself with no knowledge of how automobiles function, the problem will probably just get worse.

The science of soul winning is no different. Participants need to acquire certain essential skills to do an effective job. Some of these skills have to do with understanding and applying resources. Others have to do with personal attitudes and characteristics (Christian personality).

The Bible also outlines many methodologies for doing outreach. Sometimes it is done through social networks (The woman at the well); sometimes through governmental agencies (Daniel, Nehemiah); sometime through public proclamations to large groups (Ezra, Paul); sometimes through one-to-one Bible study, conversations and discussions (Nicodemus).

The world Adventist church sponsors many mass media evangelistic outlets and initiatives, and has many resource materials available to accomplish this task. All of these methodologies are based on the principle that every believer is called to share his or her conviction and belief system with someone who is not a believer, or who inadvertently or deliberately believes things that the Bible does not teach. This is the purpose and assignment of what the Seventh-day Adventist church has chosen to call "Personal Ministries."

The local church/district is the best place to accomplish soul winning and establish discipleship. To accomplish this mission, Ellen G White writes, "Every church should be a training school for Christian workers. Its members should be taught how to give Bible readings, how to conduct and teach Sabbath school classes, how best to help the poor and to care for the sick, how to work for the unconverted." -- *Ministry of Healing*, pp. 148, 149.

Course Objectives

The objective of this course is to gain an understanding of the personal skills of a personal ministries participant, and skills in the use of basic personal outreach tools and methodologies.

After completing this course, you should:

- Understand the meaning and application of the "science" of soul winning as outlined in the Bible and the writings of Ellen G White.
- Understand the role of and application of the overall methodologies used by personal ministries participants.
- Understand the roll and application of the general systems (ways and means) used in developing effective soul winning strategies.
- Become knowledgeable in the identification and use of some key soul winning resources.

Unit 1

Soul Winning as a Science

At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus called some people to be His inner circle of disciples. Two early disciples were Peter and his brother Andrew (Matthew 4). Both were accomplished fishermen and owners of a fishing business in Northern Palestine. Any trade, regardless of its nature, has to be run by people who know what they are doing. So these two brothers were skilled fishermen. They were not just weekend campers fishing for the fun of it. They made their living running a fishing business.

Jesus used their livelihood skill-set to introduce them (“follow me”) to another type of “fishing,” and He added that they would acquire a new set of fishing skills: “Jesus said to them, ‘Come with me! I will teach you how to bring in people instead of fish’” (CEV *Contemporary English Version*).

Jesus statement, “I will teach you how. . . .” introduces us to the “science” of soul winning. Ellen G White used the same type of language in discussing what personal ministries participants are involved in: “The highest of all sciences is the science of soul saving”— *Ministry of Healing*, page. 398. While her use of the word “science” is in the sense of the importance of the subject matter (“highest of all sciences”), the statement also implies the need for skilled application (“science of soul saving”). Not only is the issue important, a personal ministries participant needs to know how to do it well.

Why is Soul Winning a “Science”?

A “science” is a systematic, skill-driven, organized way of doing things. In other words, Peter and Andrew, accomplished fishermen, knew what time was best for the biggest catch (Luke 5:5, “all night”), they knew how to keep their fishing nets in good repair (“mending” Mark 1:19, and “washing” Luke 5:2). They had a well-organized business with owners (Matthew 4:21), partners (Luke 5:7, 10) and some employees (Mark 1:20).

Jesus, their new training instructor, systematically taught them this new science of fishing for *people*. For instance, at one point He informed them about some of the kinds of people they would be fishing for. You need a particular set of skills to work with each of these categories of contacts.

Symbol	Text	Soul-Winning Skills
Lost sheep	Luke 15:1-7	Lost sheep rarely find their way without help.
Lost coins	Luke 15:8-10	Lost coins don’t even know they are lost, but that does not diminish their value.
Lost sons	Luke 15:11-23	Some people hit bottom before they realize they are lost and need help.
Lost older brothers	Luke 15:25-31	Some people already in the church don’t realize their real condition and are not very cooperative.

On another occasion He told the disciples that they would be dealing with different levels of receptivity (Matthew 13). It takes different combinations of skills and processes to deal with each of these situations.

Text	Symbol	Level of Receptivity	Examples of Skills and Processes
Matthew 13:4, 19	Beside the path	When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and <i>does not understand it</i> , the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart.	Teaching methodologies and resources that assure understanding. Small group technology.
Matthew 13:5, 20	Rocky places	The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since <i>they have no root</i> , they last only a short time.	Deepening "roots." Small group relationships, Friendship evangelism. Efficient discipleship training.
Matthew 13:7, 22	Thorns	The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the <i>worries of this life</i> and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.	Resources for help in crisis situations. Friendship evangelism and assistance.
Matthew 13:8, 23	Good soil	But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who <i>hears the word and understands it</i> . This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."	Discipleship assignment. Motivation and involvement.

From the way Jesus trained these original disciples we derive a simple, highly effective procedure of learning and applying soul winning skills:

1. Participants study and learn essential skills (what you are doing in this course).
2. People team up in an expert/apprentice team. Here is how that team works:

Step 1: I (the expert) do it, and you (the apprentice) watches.

Step 2: We do it together.

Step 3: You (the apprentice) do it, and I (the expert) watches.

Step 4: You (who is now the expert) does it, and someone else (a new apprentice) watches (and the cycle repeats itself).

The point is that to be an effective soul winner and personal ministries participant you need to know what you are doing. There are skills involved in soul winning (you can also call them "techniques") that greatly enhance the efficiency of the endeavor.

The Role of the Holy Spirit

None of this minimizes the role of the Holy Spirit as the ultimate power behind the evangelization and decision-making process.

There are times when the Holy Spirit takes the lead and directly guides someone. The Apostle Paul experienced this when he and his team developed a plan for evangelizing some sections of Asia Minor called Phrygia and Galatia (Acts 16:6-10). It turned out, however, that they were "kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia," and "the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to." So they travelled to a seaport called Troas. When they got there it became apparent why the Holy Spirit did not approve their plans for the two previous locations: "During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us,'" which led them to conclude "that God had called us to preach the gospel to them."

Those direct instructions from the Holy Spirit initiated the chain of events that took the gospel message to Europe and introduced a whole new chapter in the history of Christianity.

Church Growth Eyes

Soul winning is a science in the sense that a personal ministries participant has to know what she or he is doing and will built up a bank of skills that make their soul winning activities efficient and productive.

Jesus' original disciples watched Him in action and learned as they observed and listened. Today, we call this "church growth eyes." This refers to a developed skill that allows a "fisher of people" to "see" what other church members don't even realize is at hand. It is a "science" that becomes ingrained in a person's perception. When this skill is learned, you can "sense" when a person is in need of whatever skill-set you have available.

This has nothing to do with manipulation or extra-sensory perception or any "sixth sense." It is a skill endowed by the Holy Spirit through training and experience.

Peter, an early disciple of Jesus, developed church growth eyes to the point that he could tell personal ministries participants to "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). He perceived what people needed to learn, as well as the objections and opposition he might face.

Using Scientific Outreach Skills

Satan has a well-organized system to counteract God's system.

1. He blinds people's minds (2 Corinthians 4:4).
2. He blinds their minds with 20 categories of sins (1 Timothy 3:1-8).
3. He causes people to lose religious sensitivity (Ephesians 4:17-19).
4. He causes people to believe false ideas (Revelation 14:8; 17:8).

The function of personal ministries participants is to undo each of these points and, as the apostle Paul pointed out, "renew minds" (Romans 12:2). Doing this requires (1) personality skills (knowing how to approach people) and (2) application skills (knowing what resources and techniques to use in dealing with these various situations).

For instance:

1. Dealing with 20 categories of sins may require lifestyle and health-related skills and resources as well as salvation/conversion understandings.
2. Loss of religious sensitivity is usually known today as "secularism" and "post-modernism." It is also called "indifference." It takes some carefully crafted soul winning skills to deal with people in this category and convince them about biblical truths they don't believe in, or even know about. They may have to be persuaded that even the idea about having a "religion" is something to take seriously.

3. Dealing with people who believe all kinds of false ideas requires personality skills and a databank of resource and application skills. Going in with a direct "the Bible says..." approach may only raise opposition when they have been taught all their lives that the Bible says something entirely different. For instance, a "You are part of Babylon" attack will probably not accomplish much! A skillful friendship evangelism approach will undoubtedly be much more effective.

Assignment 1

Developing "Church Growth Eyes"

Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have done this assignment.

Instructions: Personal Ministries is all about developing "church growth eyes." Under each of the categories from the chart about Jesus' soul winning examples, list the people you know or from your environment (Use descriptions, not personal names) that you would fit into each category.

1. **Sent two by two to "face the wolves."** What "wolves" openly opposed to the gospel or Advent Message have you come across?
2. **Lost sheep.** Lost sheep rarely find their way without help.
3. **Lost coins.** Lost coins don't even know they are lost.
4. **Lost sons.** Some people hit bottom before they realize they are lost and need help.
5. **Lost older brothers.** Some people in the church don't realize their real condition and are not very cooperative.

Assignment 2

The Science of Soul Winning

- *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have read this article.*

Write out briefly:

1. Your understanding of personal ministries participation as a "science."
2. The skills you perceive that you may need to develop to be an efficient personal ministries participant.
3. A personal statement of your motivation and determination to be an efficient personal ministries participant.

Personality as a Personal Ministries Participant Skill

A personality skill means knowing how to approach people. The skills needed include some involving the personality of the personal ministries participant, as well as the personality of the contact with whom he or she is dealing.

Depending on what source you access, personality is defined in many different ways. For our purposes it means the way you act and relate to the social situation surrounding you. Character is what you are inside; personality is what people see. As one author writes: "Personality is the quality of the individual's total behavior, it is how he acts, when his activity is taken as a whole."¹

Our personalities are learned behaviors produced by our background, upbringing, home environment, education, workplace experience, etc. They can be modified. As a Christian pastoral counselling specialist once remarked: "It takes about fifteen minutes to change your personality into whatever you want it to be!"² Your personality does not control you – you control it!

Instruction books and manuals for personal ministries participants often contain long lists of personality traits required for effective outreach. No one, even those legitimately empowered by the Holy Spirit, is endowed with all these personality characteristics. A lot of negative traits get mixed in because we are all part of our society and personal background. Nevertheless, that is no excuse for being discouraged, or giving up on active personal ministries participation. Like our expert said, you can modify your personality any time you want.

A Christian Personality

Personal ministries is a spiritual activity. That means that the personality of the personal ministries participant reflects biblical descriptions. These are general personality qualities seen from a spiritual perspective. It is that spiritual overtone that makes an impression on a contact.

Old Testament lists. In Old Testament there are entire sections in the books of Moses (Leviticus, Deuteronomy) sometimes called the "Holiness Code." They indicate the attitudes and actions the Lord outlines for His people.

Jesus' Personality. Ellen G White mentions nine characteristics of Jesus' personality that especially appealed to people: (1) Thoughtfulness, (2) loveliness of disposition, (3) willing hands, (4) patience, (5) truthfulness, (6) integrity, (7) principle, (8) unselfish courtesy, (9) wisdom – *Desire of Ages*, p. 68.

New Testament lists. Besides the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), there are three places in the New Testament where Christian personality items are specifically listed; one by Peter and two by Paul.

Peter. Peter outlines a Christian personality in 2 Peter 1:5-7, a passage often called "Peter's ladder." It is called a "ladder" because of the use of the phrase "add to." In reality, this is a list of all the characteristics that the Lord wants to see in a Christian personality at any time, not one after the other. The *Message Bible* (a paraphrase) outlines them in contemporary language (numbers added): "Complementing your basic faith with (1) good character, (2) spiritual understanding, (3) alert discipline, (4) passionate patience, (5) reverent wonder, (6) warm friendliness, and (7) generous love, each dimension fitting into and developing the others."

¹Louis P. Thorpe, *Psychological Foundations of Personality: A Guide for Students and Teachers* (McGraw-Hill, Company, Inc, 1938).

²Dr. Eldon Chalmers, class notes, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

In more traditional language: "Make every effort to add to your faith (1) goodness; (2) knowledge; (3) self-control; (4) perseverance; (5) godliness; (6) mutual affection; (7) love" (NIV).

Paul. Paul outlines a Christian personality in Galatians 5:22,23 and 1 Corinthians 13. Galatians 5 mentions "the fruit of the Spirit" (numbers added): "But the fruit of the Spirit is (1) love, (2) joy, (3) peace, (4) forbearance, (5) kindness, (6) goodness, (7) faithfulness, (8) gentleness and (9) self-control" (NIV).

In contemporary language: "Things like (1) affection for others, (2) exuberance about life, (3) serenity (4) we develop a willingness to stick with things, (5) a sense of compassion in the heart, and (6) a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people (7) we find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, (8) not needing to force our way in life, (9) able to marshal and direct our energies wisely" (*Message*).

Other personality traits. Various resources, including Ellen G White, mention things like efficiency (being organized), politeness, genuineness, tact, and a "pleasing" personality.

The Iceberg Principle

For personal ministry, the issue of a Christian personality is part of what is known as the "iceberg principle." One of the chief characteristics of an iceberg is that most of it is under the water. You can't see it! All you see is the tip.

For personal ministries the iceberg principle articulates that the methodologies and systems used are the tip of the iceberg. The underlying mass corresponds to the relationships upon which these ways and means of doing things are built. These relationships include personality, friendship evangelism skills, and relationship-focused systems of contact and study.

Ellen G White backs this up with two key statements:

1. "The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian" – *Ministry of Healing*, p. 470.
2. "Paul seeks to impress upon our minds the fact that the foundation of all acceptable service to God, as well as the very crown of the Christian graces, is love; and that only in the soul where love reigns will the peace of God abide" - *The Sanctified Life*, p. 87.

Summary. Personal ministries participants are successful in spreading the gospel when some key factors are recognized and acquired:

1. Personal Ministries is a "science" in the sense that it requires the mastery of some specific skills.
2. The personality of the personal ministries participant is a key factor in the success of soul winning endeavors.
3. A non-Christian personality will turn off the usefulness of whatever spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit has given to a person.
4. All followers of the Lord are called to witness, but you can do that a lot more efficiently by developing the necessary skills.

Assignment 3

Your Personal Love/Care Quotient

- *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have done this assignment.*

These categories are based on the descriptions of how love acts in 1 Corinthians 13. Mark one of the small vertical lines for each category where you feel you fit between the two poles. Then connect your marks with an up/down line to get a general picture of your love/care personality.

1. Most of the time I am . . .
Impatient Patient


2. Most of the time I am . . .
Unkind Kind


3. Most of the time I am . . .
Jealous Trusting


4. Most of the time I am . . .
Arrogant Humble


5. Most of the time I am . . .
Selfish Unselfish


6. Most of the time I am . . .
Irritable and touchy Slow to anger


7. Most of the time I am . . .
Resentful Forgiving


8. Most of the time I . . .
Love evil Hate evil


9. Most of the time I am . . .
Inconsistent Consistent


Reading 1

Personal Ministries Guidance from Ellen G White

- Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you completed this Reading.

Ellen G White makes some specific applications of the principles derived from the ministry of Jesus. This Reading is selected from Evangelism, pp. 429-455 and Christian Service, pp. 113-131. In these pages, Ellen G White comments on the principles we have studied in this section of the course. For the complete content of these pages, it would be a good idea to read them in your personal copy of these books and highlight the information especially relevant to you as a personal ministries participant. Make notes that you can use in your outreach endeavors.

The references to "ministers" apply equally to personal ministries participants. When you read "men" it means "people."

From Evangelism, pp. 429-455

Cultivate the Soil—When a discourse is given, precious seed is sown. But if personal effort is not made to cultivate the soil, the seed does not take root. Unless the heart is softened and subdued by the Spirit of God, much of the discourse is lost. Observe those in the congregation who seem to be interested, and speak to them after the service. A few words spoken in private will often do more good than the whole discourse has done. Inquire how the subjects presented appear to the hearers, whether the matter is clear to their minds. By kindness and courtesy show that you have a real interest in them and a care for their souls.—*Testimonies for the Church* 6:68 (1900).

Come Close to Individuals—In Christlike sympathy the minister should come close to men individually, and seek to awaken their interest in the great things of eternal life. Their hearts may be as hard as the beaten highway, and apparently it may be a useless effort to present the Saviour to them; but while logic may fail to move, and argument be powerless to convince, the love of Christ, revealed in personal ministry, may soften the stony heart, so that the seed of truth can take root.—*Gospel Workers*, 185 (1915).

Instant in and out of Season—The minister must be instant in season and out of season, ready to seize and improve every opportunity to further the work of God. To be "instant in season" is to be alert to the privileges of the house and hour of worship, and to the times when men are conversing on topics of religion. And to be instant "out of season" is to be ready, when at the fireside, in the field, by the wayside, in the market, to turn the minds of men, in a suitable manner, to the great themes of the Bible, with tender, fervent spirit urging upon them the claims of God. Many, many such opportunities are allowed to slip by unimproved, because men are persuaded that it is out of season. But who knows what might be the effect of a wise appeal to the conscience?—*Gospel Workers*, 186-187(1915).

House-to-House Visitation

House-to-House Work—This house-to-house labor, searching for souls, hunting for the lost sheep, is the most essential work that can be done.—Letter 137, 1898.

Some Not Reached by the Public Effort—In large cities there are certain classes that cannot be reached by public meetings. These must be searched out as the shepherd searches for his lost sheep. Diligent, personal effort must be put forth in their behalf.—*Gospel Workers*, 364 (1915).

Even to the Disinterested—Go to the homes of those even who manifest no interest. While mercy's sweet voice invites the sinner, work with every energy of heart and brain, as

did Paul, "who ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears." In the day of God, how many will confront us, and say, "I am lost! I am lost! And you never warned me; you never entreated me to come to Jesus. Had I believed as you did, I would have followed every Judgment-bound soul within my reach with prayers and tears and warnings."—*Review and Herald*, June 24, 1884.

God Will Guide to Homes—Light, light from the Word of God,—this is what the people need. If the teachers of the Word are willing, the Lord will lead them into close relation with the people. He will guide them to the homes of those who need and desire the truth; and as the servants of God engage in the work of seeking for the lost sheep, their spiritual faculties are awakened and energized. Knowing that they are in harmony with God, they feel joyous and happy. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they obtain an experience that is invaluable to them. Their intellectual and moral powers attain their highest development; for grace is given in answer to the demand.—*The Review and Herald*, December 29, 1904.

Winning Families

Some Families Reached Only Within Homes—There are families who will never be reached by the truth of God's Word unless His servants enter their homes, and by earnest ministry, sanctified by the indorsement of the Holy Spirit, break down the barriers. As the people see that these workers are messengers of mercy, the ministers of grace, they are ready to listen to the words spoken by them....

When such a worker offers prayer to God in the family where he is visiting, the hearts of the members are touched as they would not be by prayer offered in a public assembly. Angels of God enter the family circle with him; and the minds of the hearers are prepared to receive the Word of God: for if the messenger is humble and contrite, if he has a living connection with God, the Holy Spirit takes the Word, and shows it to those for whom he is laboring....

Let God's workers teach the truth in families, drawing close to those for whom they labor. If they thus co-operate with God, He will clothe them with spiritual power. Christ will guide them in their work, entering the houses of the people with them, and giving them words to speak that will sink deep into the hearts of the listeners. The Holy Spirit will open hearts and minds to receive the rays coming from the source of all light.—*The Review and Herald*, December 29, 1904.

Find the Way to the Heart—To all who are working with Christ I would say, Wherever you can gain access to the people by the fireside, improve your opportunity. Take your Bible, and open before them its great truths. Your success will not depend so much upon your knowledge and accomplishments, as upon your ability to find your way to the heart. By being social and coming close to the people, you may turn the current of their thoughts more readily than by the most able discourse. The presentation of Christ in the family, by the fireside, and in small gatherings in private houses, is often more successful in winning souls to Jesus than are sermons delivered in the open air, to the moving throng, or even in halls or churches.

Evangelistic Visiting

The Answering of Questions—No minister is sufficiently equipped for his work who does not know how to meet the people at their homes, and come into close relation to their needs. The people should be allowed to ask questions concerning subjects presented that seem to be obscure to them. The light of God is to be brought before their vision. How often when this has been done, and the minister has been able to answer their inquiries, has a flood of light broken into some darkened mind, and hearts have been comforted together in the faith of the gospel. This is the way we are to work in order to flash the light into the minds of those who are seeking a knowledge of the way of salvation.—*The Review and Herald*, April 19, 1892.

Effective Method for Men of Ordinary Talent—Personal influence is a power. The more direct our labor for our fellow men, the greater good will be accomplished.... You must come close to those for whom you labor, that they may not only hear your voice, but shake your

hand, learn your principles, and realize your sympathy.—*The Review and Herald*, December 8, 1885.

Learning the Art of Personal Work

Teaching Doctrine Not Initial Object of Personal Work—There are many souls yearning unutterably for light, for assurance and strength beyond what they have been able to grasp. They need to be sought out and labored for patiently, perseveringly. Beseech the Lord in fervent prayer for help. Present Jesus because you know Him as your personal Saviour. Let His melting love, His rich grace, flow forth from human lips. You need not present doctrinal points unless questioned. But take the Word, and with tender, yearning love for souls, show them the precious righteousness of Christ, to whom you and they must come to be saved.—Manuscript 27, 1895.

Learning to Gather the Crop—There is need of education—the training of everyone who shall enter the gospel field, not only to use the scythe and mow the crop, but to rake it, to gather it, to care for it properly. This mowing has been done everywhere, and amounted to very little because there has been so little earnest work done by personal effort to gather the wheat from the chaff and bind it in bundles for the garner.—Letter 16e, 1892.

Learn the Art of Handling the Gospel Net—The mind must be active to invent the best ways and means of reaching the people next us. We should not be far-reaching, incurring great expense. There are individuals and families near us for whom we should make personal efforts. We often let opportunities within our reach slip away, in order to do a work at a distance from us which is less hopeful, and thus our time and means may be lost in both places. The study of the workers now should be to learn the trade of gathering souls into the gospel net.—*The Review and Herald*, December 8, 1885.

Natural Simplicity in Soul Winning—The work of Christ was largely composed of personal interviews. He had a faithful regard for the one-soul audience; and that one soul has carried to thousands the intelligence received.

The Approach—Persuasive, Kindly—Approach the people in a persuasive, kindly manner, full of cheerfulness and love for Christ..... No human tongue can express the preciousness of the ministration of the Word and the Holy Spirit. No human expression can portray to the finite mind the value of understanding and by living faith receiving the blessing that is given as Jesus of Nazareth passes by.—Letter 60, 1903.

Importance of Handshake—Much depends upon the manner in which you meet those whom you visit. You can take hold of a person's hand in greeting in such a way as to gain his confidence at once, or in so cold a manner that he will think you have no interest in him.—*Gospel Workers*, 189 (1915).

Prejudice Broken Down

Opposition Avoided by Personal Work—In God's service obstacles must be met and difficulties encountered. Events belong to God; and His servants must meet with difficulties and opposition; for they are His chosen methods of discipline and His appointed conditions of sure progress, advancement, and success. But I entreat the servants of the Lord Jesus to remember that there is a work which may be done quietly, without arousing that strong opposition which closes hearts to the truth.—Letter 95, 1896.

Tact Required to Break Down Prejudice—Nathanael was praying to know whether this was indeed the Christ of whom Moses and the prophets had spoken. While he continued to pray, one of those who had been brought to Christ, Philip by name, called to him and said, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Notice how quickly prejudice arises. Nathanael says, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip knew the strong prejudice that existed in the minds of many against Nazareth, and he did not try to argue with him, for fear of raising his combativeness, but simply said, "Come and see."

Here is a lesson for all our ministers, colporteurs, and missionary workers. When you meet those, who, like Nathanael, are prejudiced against the truth, do not urge your peculiar views too strongly. Talk with them at first of subjects upon which you can agree. Bow with

them in prayer, and in humble faith present your petitions at the throne of grace. Both you and they will be brought into a closer connection with heaven, prejudice will be weakened, and it will be easier to reach the heart.—*Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 149 (1886).

From *Christian Service*, pp. 113-131

Deeds as well as words of sympathy are needed. Christ prefaced the giving of His message by deeds of love and benevolence. Let these workers go from house to house, helping where help is needed, and, as opportunity offers, telling the story of the cross. Christ is to be their text. They need not dwell upon doctrinal subjects; let them speak of the work and sacrifice of Christ. Let them hold up His righteousness, in their lives revealing His purity.—*Testimonies for the Church* 7:228.

My brethren and sisters, visit those who live near you, and by sympathy and kindness seek to reach their hearts. Be sure to work in a way that will remove prejudice instead of creating it. And remember that those who know the truth for this time, and yet confine their efforts to their own churches, refusing to work for their unconverted neighbors, will be called to account for unfulfilled duties.—*Testimonies for the Church* 9:34.

Visit your neighbors in a friendly way, and become acquainted with them.....—*The Review and Herald*, May 13, 1902.

Go to your neighbors one by one, and come close to them till their hearts are warmed by your unselfish interest and love. Sympathize with them, pray with them, watch for opportunities to do them good, and as you can, gather a few together and open the Word of God to their darkened minds. Keep watching, as he who must render an account for the souls of men, and make the most of the privileges that God gives you of laboring with Him in His moral vineyard. Do not neglect speaking to your neighbors, and doing them all the kindness in your power, that you "by all means may save some." We need to seek for the spirit that constrained the apostle Paul to go from house to house pleading with tears, and teaching "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."—*The Review and Herald*, March 13, 1888.

The One-Soul Audience

The work of Christ was largely made up of personal interviews. He had a faithful regard for the one-soul audience. From that one soul the intelligence received was carried to thousands.—*Testimonies for the Church* 6:115.

The Saviour did not wait for congregations to assemble. Often He began His lessons with only a few gathered about Him, but one by one the passers-by paused to listen, until a multitude heard with wonder and awe the words of God through the heaven-sent Teacher. The worker for Christ should not feel that he cannot speak with the same earnestness to a few hearers as to a large company. There may be only one to hear the message; but who can tell how far-reaching will be its influence? It seemed a small matter, even to His disciples, for the Saviour to spend His time upon a woman of Samaria. But He reasoned more earnestly and eloquently with her than with kings, councilors, or high priests. The lessons He gave to that woman have been repeated to the earth's remotest bounds.—*The Desire of Ages*, 194.

Close Personal Touch

By personal labor reach those around you. Become acquainted with them. Preaching will not do the work that needs to be done. Angels of God attend you to the dwellings of those you visit. This work cannot be done by proxy. Money lent or given will not accomplish it. Sermons will not do it. By visiting the people, talking, praying, sympathizing with them, you will win hearts. This is the highest missionary work that you can do. To do it, you will need

resolute, persevering faith, unwearying patience, and a deep love for souls.—*Testimonies for the Church* 9:41.

Jesus saw in every soul one to whom must be given the call to His kingdom. He reached the hearts of the people by going among them as one who desired their good. He sought them in the public streets, in private houses, on the boats, in the synagogue, by the shores of the lake, and at the marriage feast. He met them at their daily vocations, and manifested an interest in their secular affairs. He carried His instruction into the household, bringing families in their own homes under the influence of His divine presence. His strong personal sympathy helped to win hearts.—*The Desire of Ages*, 151.

So it should be with us. Wherever we are, we should watch for opportunities of speaking to others of the Saviour. If we follow Christ's example in doing good, hearts will open to us as they did to Him. Not abruptly, but with tact born of divine love, we can tell them of Him who is the "chiefest among ten thousand," and the One "altogether lovely." This is the very highest work in which we can employ the talent of speech. It was given to us that we might present Christ as the sin-pardoning Saviour.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, 339.

Be Social

To all who are working with Christ I would say, Wherever you can gain access to the people by the fireside, improve your opportunity. Take your Bible, and open before them its great truths. Your success will not depend so much upon your knowledge and accomplishments, as upon your ability to find your way to the heart. By being social and coming close to the people, you may turn the current of their thoughts more readily than by the most able discourse. The presentation of Christ in the family, by the fireside, and in small gatherings in private houses, is often more successful in winning souls to Jesus than are sermons delivered in the open air, to the moving throng, or even in halls or churches.—*Gospel Workers*, 193.

Manifest Sympathetic Interest

Those who are fighting the battle of life at great odds may be refreshed and strengthened by little attentions which cost nothing. Kindly words simply spoken, little attentions simply bestowed, will sweep away the clouds of temptation and doubt that gather over the soul. The true heart-expression of Christlike sympathy, given in simplicity, has power to open the door of hearts that need the simple, delicate touch of the Spirit of Christ.—*Testimonies for the Church* 9:30.

Thousands of hearts can be reached in the most simple, humble way. The most intellectual, those who are looked upon and praised as the world's most gifted men and women, are often refreshed by the simple words that flow from the heart of one who loves God, and who can speak of that love as naturally as the worldling speaks of the things which his mind contemplates and feeds upon. Often the words well prepared and studied have little influence. But the true, honest words of a son or daughter of God, spoken in natural simplicity, will open the door to hearts that have long been locked.—*Testimonies for the Church* 6:115.

Cite Personal Experience

Those who have put on Christ will relate their experience, tracing step by step the leadings of the Holy Spirit,—their hungering and thirsting for the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, the result of their searching of the Scriptures, their prayers, their soul-agony, and the words of Christ to them, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." It is unnatural for any to keep these things secret, and those who are filled with the love of Christ will not do so. In proportion as the Lord has made them the depositaries of sacred truth will be their desire that others shall receive the same blessing. And as they make known the rich treasures of God's grace, more and still more of the grace of Christ will be imparted to them.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, 125.

Arouse every spiritual energy to action. Tell those whom you visit that the end of all things is at hand. The Lord Jesus Christ will open the door of their hearts, and will make upon their minds lasting impressions. Strive to arouse men and women from their spiritual insensibility. Tell them how you found Jesus, and how blessed you have been since you gained an experience in His service. Tell them what blessing comes to you as you sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn precious lessons from His Word. Tell them of the gladness and joy there is in the Christian life. Your warm, fervent words will convince them that you have found the pearl of great price. Let your cheerful, encouraging words show that you have certainly found the higher way. This is genuine missionary work, and as it is done, many will awake as from a dream.—*Testimonies for the Church* 9:38.

Reading 2

Ellen G. White's Experience and Methods as a Personal Worker

- *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you completed this Reading.*

This Reading illustrates how Ellen G White applied what she learned from the Scriptures in her own experience. It comes from Evangelism, pp. 447 – 455.

An Early Experience—The reality of true conversion seemed so plain to me that I felt like helping my young friends into the light, and at every opportunity exerted my influence toward this end.

I arranged meetings with my young friends, some of whom were considerably older than myself, and a few were married persons. A number of them were vain and thoughtless; my experience sounded to them like an idle tale, and they did not heed my entreaties. But I determined that my efforts should never cease till these dear souls, for whom I had so great an interest, yielded to God. Several entire nights were spent by me in earnest prayer for those whom I had sought out and brought together for the purpose of laboring and praying with them.

Some of these had met with us from curiosity to hear what I had to say; others thought me beside myself to be so persistent in my efforts, especially when they manifested no concern on their own part. But at every one of our little meetings I continued to exhort and pray for each one separately, until every one had yielded to Jesus, acknowledging the merits of His pardoning love. Every one was converted to God.

Night after night in my dreams I seemed to be laboring for the salvation of souls. At such times special cases were presented to my mind; these I afterward sought out and prayed with. In every instance but one these persons yielded themselves to the Lord.—*Life Sketches*, 41, 42 (1915).

Twenty-two Years After the Seed Sowing—After the meeting closed [a service at the Michigan camp meeting], a sister took me heartily by the hand, expressing great joy at meeting Sister White again. She inquired if I remembered calling at a log house in the woods twenty-two years before. She gave us refreshments and I left with them a little book, *Experience and Views*.

She stated that she had lent that little book to her neighbors, as new families had settled around her, until there was very little left of it; and she expressed a great desire to obtain another copy of the work. Her neighbors were deeply interested in it, and were desirous of seeing the writer. She said that when I called upon her I talked to her of Jesus and the beauties of heaven, and that the words were spoken with such fervor that she was charmed, and had never forgotten them. Since that time the Lord had sent ministers to preach the truth to them, and now there was quite a company observing the Sabbath. The influence of that little book, now worn out with perusing, had extended from one another, performing its silent work, until the soil was ready for the seeds of truth.

I well remember the long journey we took twenty-two years ago, in Michigan. We were on our way to hold a meeting in Vergennes. We were fifteen miles from our destination. Our driver had passed over the road repeatedly and was well acquainted with it, but was compelled to acknowledge that he had lost the way. We traveled forty miles that day, through the woods, over logs and fallen trees, where there was scarcely a trace of road....

We could not understand why we should be left to this singular wandering in the wilderness. We were never more pleased than when we came in sight of a little clearing on which was a log cabin, where we found the sister I have mentioned. She kindly welcomed us to her home, and provided us with refreshments, which were gratefully received. As we rested, I talked with the family and left them the little book. She gladly accepted it, and has preserved it until the present time.

For twenty-two years our wanderings on this journey have seemed indeed mysterious to us, but here we met quite a company who are now believers in the truth, and who date their first experience from the influence of that little book. The sister who so kindly administered to our wants is now, with many of her neighbors, rejoicing in the light of present truth.—*The Signs of the Times*, October 19, 1876.

An Experience in Nimes, France—When laboring in Nimes, France, we made it our work to save souls. There was a young man who had become discouraged through the temptations of Satan and through some mistakes of our brethren who did not understand how to deal with the minds of the youth. He gave up the Sabbath and engaged to work in a manufacturing establishment to perfect his trade in watchmaking. He is a very promising young man. My watch needed repairing, which brought us together.

I was introduced to him, and as soon as I looked upon his countenance I knew that he was the one whom the Lord had presented before me in vision. The whole circumstance came distinctly before me....

He attended the meeting when he thought I would speak, and would sit with his eyes riveted on me through the entire discourse, which was translated into French by Brother Bourdeau. I felt a duty to labor for this young man. I talked two hours with him and urged upon him the peril of his situation. I told him because his brethren had made a mistake that was no reason that he should grieve the heart of Christ, who had loved him so much that He had died to redeem him....

I told him I knew the history of his life and his errors (which were the simple errors of youthful indiscretion), which were not of a character that should have been treated with so great severity. I then entreated him with tears to turn square about, to leave the service of Satan and of sin, for he had become a thorough backslider, and return like the prodigal to his Father's house, his Father's service. He was in good business learning his trade. If he kept the Sabbath he would lose his position.... A few months more would finish his apprenticeship, and then he would have a good trade. But I urged an immediate decision.

We prayed with him most earnestly, and I told him that I dared not have him cross the threshold of the door until he would before God and angels and those present say, "I will from this day be a Christian." How my heart rejoiced when he said this. He slept none that night. He said as soon as he made the promise he seemed to be in a new channel. His thoughts seemed purified, his purposes changed, and the responsibility that he had taken seemed so solemn that he could not sleep. The next day he notified his employer that he could work for him no longer. He slept but little for three nights. He was happy, so thankful that the Lord had evidenced to him His pardon and His love.—Letter 59, 1886.

An Effective Use of Literature—There was one man whom, with his whole family, we highly prized. He is a reading man, and has a large farm, on which grow the choicest of oranges and lemons, with other fruit. But he did not in the beginning fully take his position for the truth, and went back. They told me about this. In the night season the angel of the Lord seemed to stand by me, saying, "Go to Brother _____, place your books before him, and this will save his soul." I visited with him, taking with me a few of my large books. I talked with him just as though he were with us. I talked of his responsibilities. I said, "You have great responsibilities, my brother. Here are your neighbors all around you. You are accountable for every one of them. You have a knowledge of the truth, and if you love the truth, and stand in your integrity, you will win souls for Christ."

He looked at me in a queer way, as much as to say, "I do not think you know that I have given up the truth, that I have allowed my girls to go to dances, and to the Sunday school, that we do not keep the Sabbath." But I did know it. However, I talked to him just as though he were with us. "Now," I said, "we are going to help you to begin to work for your neighbors. I want to make you a present of some books." He said, "We have a library, from which we draw books." I said, "I do not see any books here. Perhaps you feel delicate about drawing from the library. I have come to give you these books, so that your children can read them, and this will be a strength to you." I knelt down and prayed with him, and when

we rose, the tears were rolling down his face, as he said, "I am glad that you came to see me. I thank you for the books."

The next time I visited him, he told me that he had read part of *Patriarchs and Prophets*. He said, "There is not one syllable I could change. Every paragraph speaks right to the soul."

I asked Brother _____ which of my large books he considered the most important. He said, "I lend them all to my neighbors, and the hotelkeeper thinks that *Great Controversy* is the best. But," he said, while his lips quivered, "I think that *Patriarchs and Prophets* is the best. It is that which pulled me out of the mire." But suffice it to say, he took his position firmly for the truth. His whole family united with him, and they have been the means of saving other families.—*The General Conference Bulletin*, April 5, 1901.

Chatting With a New Believer About the Work—A woman about forty years of age was introduced to me, who has just decided to obey the truth, in Canterbury. Her husband is in full sympathy with his wife and does everything he can to get her to the meetings. They have a nice little cottage, which they own and which is paid for. She came out to the carriage and talked with us. She said the people in Canterbury are not a churchgoing people, but the tent at _____ has been an advertisement, and they are curious to know what it all means. In this way they are brought out to attend the meetings, and many are interested. You cannot get them into a church or a hall, but the tent they will patronize....

The sister mentioned, who talked with me at the carriage, said, "These precious things of the Bible are wonderful to me. Strange we could not see them before. The Bible is full of riches, and I want to have all the opportunity to hear and improve, so that I can help others. People here in Canterbury are in need of this kind of labor. If you will pitch the tent, they will come."—Letter 89a, 1895.

Leaves From the Diary of 1892—*October 26*. We had promised to visit Brother and Sister H, and after dinner today Elder Daniells, May Walling, and I went to fill the appointment. Through the temptations of the enemy, Sister H has given up the truth.... After a short conversation we all bowed in prayer, and the Lord breathed upon us His Holy Spirit. We felt the presence of God, and we greatly hope that this effort shall not be in vain.

November 5. It has been a pleasant day, but I have been almost strengthless. We attended meeting, and invited our next-door neighbor to go with us. She readily consented to go and seemed much affected. She talked freely as we drove to the meeting place, but on our return she looked very solemn and said nothing. I spoke on the parable of the man without a wedding garment, and we had a solemn meeting. The lady afterward told my niece, May Walling, that she was sorry that she had not attended all the meetings that have been held since we came. She declared that she would not miss one while we remained.

November 6. We had planned to drive into the mountains, ... but I had a burden of soul for Brother and Sister H, and felt that I could not go into the mountains and delay the Lord's business. With very imperfect directions May Walling and I started out to find Brother H's place.... At last we were successful. I told Brother and Sister H that I had come to talk with them. We began talking at half past two, and continued until five.... I tried to do all in my power to help Sister H. She wept nearly all the time that we were talking. I think the Spirit of the Lord touched her heart. I prayed with them and then left them in the hands of God.

November 7. I rested well through the night. At half past four I arose and began writing. At ten o'clock, May Walling and I rode out to visit Sister E.

November 8. I slept well through the night. During the day I drove to the house where Sister F is boarding with her children. We took her out to ride with us, and had a long talk with her. She is a woman who has seen great trouble.

November 9. In response to an earnest invitation, we drove out to a pleasant grove, where the parents and children of the Sabbath school were having a picnic.... I spoke for about half an hour. A number of unbelievers were present.

November 10. I wrote till noon, and after dinner we drove to Bourdon, to fill an appointment to meet with some sisters there. We had a very precious season of prayer, believing Christ's promise that where two or three meet together in His name, He meets

with them to bless them. I read some important matter to those present, and talked with them. I labored harder than when I speak on the Sabbath; for I was with them for nearly two hours. It was almost dark when we reached home; but I was blessed of the Lord, and we were happy in His love.

November 11. I fear that I have been doing too much. Since Sabbath I have written eighty-six pages, letter paper, besides making several visits to people in their homes. This afternoon I called at Brother and Sister H's and left some books.

November 21. At two o'clock today I visited Brother and Sister H and read some things that I had been writing to meet the difficulties existing in Sister H's mind.

November 27. Today I visited Sister K and her daughter. The daughter recently met with an accident.... We talked and prayed with her, and the Lord drew very near as we entreated Him to bless both mother and daughter.

We next visited Sister G, who is a widow.... We had a season of prayer with this sister, and the tender Spirit of the Lord rested upon us. We talked with Sister G's daughter, a girl of about sixteen, telling her of the love of Jesus and entreating her to give her heart to the Saviour. I told her that if she would accept Christ as her Saviour, He would be her support in every trial and would give her peace and rest in His love. She seemed to be influenced by our words. We then went to see Brother and Sister H.—Manuscript 21, 1892.

Fields Endeared to the Worker—Dora Ceek and Martinsville and the other settlements in the woods in which we labored are dear to me. I hope that the most tender solicitude will be shown for the souls in these places and that earnest efforts will be made to draw them to Christ. Much has been done in these places, and much more will need to be done.—Letter 113, 1902.

Assignment 4

What Have You Learned?

- *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have completed this assignment.*

Based on Readings 1 and 2, make a list of the methodologies and attitudes mentioned by Ellen G White as they compare to the methods Jesus used. Then explain how this principle applies to your own personal ministries participation.

An example: "Jesus talked about 'lost sheep.' Ellen G White mentions: 'This house-to-house labor, searching for souls, hunting for the lost sheep, is the most essential work that can be done.'" My personal application: This has to do with "Church Growth Eyes." I have to either learn some technique or find a way to discover lost sheep.

Unit 2

Methodologies: Personal Ministries Participant Tools

Personal ministries is a “science” because it is a specific type of evangelism that primarily focuses on one-on-one and small group witnessing. Some personal ministries participants also conduct public evangelistic campaigns because the Holy Spirit has given them spiritual gifts such as evangelism and teaching.

This Unit will describe and review some of the key types of outreach strategies that are employed by personal ministries participants. Other courses in this Personal Ministries Instructional and Enrichment curriculum will go much more into how-to detail (See the outline at the beginning of this course for the listing).

This Unit outlines the methodologies employed in four types of personal ministry:

1. *Direct personal witnessing*. This entails identifying contacts, making an initial approach, knowing and using a personal testimony, and how to approach various types of personalities and belief systems.
2. *Friendship Evangelism*. Friendship Evangelism is the core methodology around which everything else is built. This section will outline what it is and how it works.
3. *Visitation*. Visitation involves personal contact. This section will outline why it is important, its connection with Friendship Evangelism, and will outline ways and means on making effective visits.
4. *Sabbath School/Personal Ministries connection*. These two church entities are most effective when they work together. This section will outline some of the ways this can be done.

1. Direct Personal Witnessing Skills

Direct personal witnessing means personal contacts and conversations with friends, work associates, neighbors, casual acquaintances or anyone disposed to enter into an informal conversation/contact about religious issues. It also entails finding ways and means of identifying persons with whom a personal ministries participant wants to share the gospel.

The skills needed are: (1) knowing how to open a conversation/contact, (2) what approach to take, and (3) how to discern, through help from the Holy Spirit, the moment to ask for a decision.

Starting a train of thought. One day when He was 12 years old Jesus attended a lecture given by some learned Rabbis (See Luke 2: 41-52 and *Desire of Ages*, p. 80). His parents located Him, and in the ensuing conversation He laid out for them the pattern of His mission. Ellen G White makes an interesting observation about that conversation with His parents that has to do with personal ministries participant methodology: “His words started a train of thought that would never be forgotten.” What Jesus was doing, even with His parents, was giving a personal testimony. That testimony planted a seed that “started a train of thought.” In some cases, a personal testimony is the best way to get a point across. Sometimes that testimony hits home like nothing else.

Sometimes it is necessary to find a way to break through the barrier of indifference to religious thinking. John the Baptist used this method:

“The message that God had given him to bear was designed to startle them from their lethargy, and cause them to tremble because of their great wickedness. Before the seed of the gospel could find lodgment, the soil of the heart must be broken up. Before they would seek healing from Jesus, they must be awakened to their danger from the wounds of sin” – *Desire of Ages*, p. 103.

This statement includes some key words: (1) "startle," (2) "tremble," (3) "broken up," (4) "awakened"). Those are examples of "starting a train of thought."

The reason a personal testimony is effective is that it is personal. When someone can say, "Look, I know where you are because I have been there. But the Lord came along and made it different. So He can do the same for you," will always make an impression and "start a train of thought."

Personal witnessing is informal. Personal witnessing is not the same as giving a systematic Bible study. It just involves planting a thought, offering to pray with someone who has a problem. For instance, when some horrible news event has everyone disturbed, casually saying to someone "That is certainly like the signs of the times the Bible talks about." If the person responds, "What does that have to do with anything," you just opened the door for "starting a train of thought." If the person answers, "That's for sure," you can say "I read what one of Jesus' disciples named Matthew said that . . . (Mathew 24)" and you have opened the door for further conversation.

Identifying people to witness to. Everyone, whether they realize it or not, has a social network. The birth of social media on the Internet has extended that network enormously. A person's local social network is made up of friends, relatives, work associates and casual acquaintances such as store clerks, auto mechanics, etc. Notice this personal ministries participation guidance from Ellen G White:

In order to reach all classes, we must meet them where they are. They will seldom seek us of their own accord. Not alone from the pulpit are the hearts of men touched by divine truth. There is another field of labor, humbler, it may be, but fully as promising. It is found in the home of the lowly, and in the mansion of the great; at the hospitable board, and in gatherings for innocent social enjoyment. . . . Through the social relations, Christianity comes in contact with the world. — Ellen G White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 152.

There is a way of identifying and working out a specific personal witnessing plan to reach this social network with the gospel.

➤ **Study Reading 3 and then do Assignment 5**

Reading 3

The *Oikos* Principle of Personal Ministries Participation

By James W Zackrison

➤ *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you completed this Reading.*

The Greek word *oikos* (pronounced “oy-kos”) means house and “family.” In the Bible it is often used in the broader sense of “household” or extended family. It is a principle endorsed by Jesus and used throughout the New Testament. This networking principle is the most effective soul winning methodology. Ellen White reaffirms its importance:

This was the way the Christian Church was established. Christ first selected a few persons and bade them follow Him. They then went in search of their relatives and acquaintances, and brought them to Christ. *This is the way we are to labor.* A few souls brought out and fully established on the truth will, like the first disciples, be laborers for others.—*Welfare Ministry*, p. 60.

The Urban Impact

In today’s world more than half of the world’s population lives in cities. These so-called “urban masses” get lost in the milieu.

³ Nevertheless, everyone has an “oikos.” Who makes up an *oikos* in today’s urban world, or anywhere else? — neighbors down the street, your doctor, barber or beautician, optician, mechanic, insurance agent, common kinships, common friendships, common associates, work associates, etc.

These are the people who constitute a personal *oikos*. Learning to “fish” (as in “fishers of people”) in this pool is a fundamental methodology of personal outreach. Nearly all other evangelistic methodologies are built on the *oikos* foundation or core.

Fishing for People

You see a lot of pictures and photos of people fishing with a hook on the end of a pole. When people fish with a hook, how many fish do they catch at a time? When you fish with a net, how many fish do you catch at a time?

Oikos relationships allow “people fishing” with a net. They allow you to use your time efficiently, making it easier for people to accept the gospel, and to build natural bridges of assimilation into the church family

Oikos relationships are effective because:

1. *Oikos* relationships provide natural social networks for sharing the gospel. You don’t have to go “cold turkey” to some unknown person.
2. *Oikos* members are usually somewhat favorable or highly favorable on a receptivity scale.
3. *Oikos* relationships allow unhurried and natural sharing of God’s love and the gospel message.
4. *Oikos* relationships tend to win whole families. They fish with a net, not just a hook.

³For a country-by country breakdown see <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS>

5. *Oikos* relationships provide natural support when a person comes to church. People go to church with someone, not alone into some mysterious environment.
6. *Oikos* relationships provide a constantly enlarging source of new contacts. New people have their own *oikos*. All you have to do is show them how to identify and work with it.

Find and Reaching Your *Oikos*

There are three keys to finding and reaching your own *oikos*:

1. *Develop a personality profile.* Identify and make a list of five people that you want to put into your personal *oikos*. Experience has shown that for some reason five seems to be the ideal number. If someone drops out, or if they join the church, put another name in that person's place. Always keep five names on your *oikos* list.

Develop a personal profile for each member of your *oikos*. This is a short biographical sketch, a kind of description of what the person is like. Ask yourself some questions like the following. These are not all the questions you might ask, just some examples.

- Does he or she have any special interests?
- What hobbies does he or she enjoy?
- Does she or he have any personal concerns?
- What does he or she do in his or her spare time?
- How much does she or he know about the Bible and the church?
- Is this person open to spiritual matters?
- What attitude does this person have toward spiritual things?

Example of a personal profile. "Pete is married but has no children. His wife is six months pregnant. Pete's favorite recreational pastime is fishing. He repeatedly invites (you), but so far (you) have never gone with him. Pete's church background is zero."

2. *Intercessory prayer.* Pray regularly for each member of your *oikos*, and submit their names to your church's intercessory prayer ministry.

3. *Decide how much time you will regularly spend* on your discipleship plan for your *oikos* members. Remember Paul's advice: "I have become all things to all men, so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings." (1 Cor. 9:22, 23).

Divide the time period (even if it is only 15 minutes a day) into three activities:

1. Prayer for your *oikos*
2. Study on how to reach your *oikos* members
3. Contact with your *oikos* members.

Basic Skills for Reaching Your *Oikos*

1. *Learn to Use Understandable Language.* We Adventists tend to speak in a religious language that people in general do not recognize. Just talk in plain English, or whatever language you speak. This is not the time to interject phrases like "investigative judgment," or "last days." Instead, you can say, "There comes a time, according to the Bible, when God just winds things down. It all stops. Just look in your newspaper. What does it tell you?"

Paul was right when he said, "Pray that I will be bold enough to tell it (the gospel) freely and fully, and make it plain, as, of course, I should. Make the most of your chances to tell others the Good News. Be wise in your contacts with them. Let your conversation be gracious as well as sensible, for then you will have the right answer for everyone." (Col. 4:5,6 GNB).

The message gets across in various ways. Learning these communication skills will help win your *oikos* members. Here is how people perceive the message you have to share:

(1) Words = 7%, (2) Tone of voice = 38%, (3) Body language = 55%

2. Additional skills that help win your *oikos*.

- Learn how and when to give a gospel presentation.
- Friendship Evangelism. Friendship evangelism is effective witnessing in a natural, normal way with the members of your *oikos*.
- Plan as many exposures to church-sponsored events as you can. The faster a person is exposed to the church in nonthreatening ways, the easier it is for them to make a decision to join in the future.
- Always let people know that when they are on the Lord's side, in the long run they always win! Teach a positive message that gives people hope.
- Be patient. Don't give up—keep praying—trust the Holy Spirit. Your *oikos* will respond.

A Sample Gospel Presentation

There will come a time when you will sense that it is the moment to present the Gospel to an *oikos* member. The Holy Spirit will let you know when the moment is right. This is a moment of decision.

Here is a sample gospel presentation; or you can make up your own:

- All of us have sinned and deserve death. (Rom. 3:23, Rom. 6:23)
- God loves us and sent His son to die for us. (John 3:16, 2 Cor. 5:21, 1 Peter 2:24).
- If we accept Jesus, we become children of God and find salvation. (John 1:12, 1 John 1:9).
- We can know we have salvation now. (1 John 5:11-13, 2 Cor. 5:17, 1 John 2:1).

Personal experience speaks loudly. Good news is really difficult to keep to yourself! Your son bursts into the room with the good news that his team won the game! A nervous couple gets the word that their home loan has been approved—that's good news! Each of these "good news" messages brings excitement as the joys of the experience are shared.

Talking about Jesus should be just as exciting. When we recognize His leading in our lives we just have to share it. That is what is called a "personal testimony."

How can you give an effective witness to someone about Jesus? What do you do first? We sometimes have a tendency to begin with explaining a prophecy and burying people under a stack of chronological and historical facts? Prophecies are always important, but not usually the best place to begin.

Once the early disciples committed themselves to the Lord, the Holy Spirit got them excited and enthusiastic. They called it "good news." Paul said, "I am not ashamed of it. It is good news!" (Romans 1:16). These early disciples told people about what had happened to them personally. Ellen G White counsels us to follow their example. "We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience."—*Desire of Ages*, p. 347.

How Do You Build Your Own Testimony?

You can work out a personal testimony, memorize it, or at least have it clearly in mind, and you will be prepared to use it when the opportunity presents itself. This personal testimony is not a detailed confession of all the mistakes and nonreligious things you may have done. It is an expression of how at some point the Lord made a difference. Maybe you have been more or less decent most of your life, and you don't have some horrible ungodly things to relate. At some point in your life, nevertheless, the Lord made a distinct difference. That's what you will put in your personal testimony.

Sit down with a pencil and paper and outline your experience. Then memorize the outline. That will help you put it into perspective. Then you will be ready to tell anyone anytime about your own experience.

Tell where you came from. Let them know it was a jungle out there. Let them know you discovered that ultimately there was no gratification being outside of Christ. Not in the long run!

Tell how you became a disciple. Let them know how Jesus found you. Maybe it was an out-and-out miracle. Tell them that. Maybe it was a slow, tough road. Tell them that. Let your own personality paint the picture of the change that happened to you personally.

Let them know that the gospel is always gain. Tell them what your life has been like since you became a disciple. Tell them about the joy and peace you now feel. Tell them about some correction the Lord applied so you could grow in grace. Tell them that there is nothing better than being a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Most of all—make it exciting. No one is going to listen to a dead testimony. They are having more fun than that already! Smile, talk with enthusiasm, and then watch the results.

Someone once sat down with a pencil and paper and made a list of the events and incidents that had happened over the past three months. Then the person asked herself, "How has the Lord led in this instance?" You will be amazed at the results. We take too much for granted, and do not take enough time to praise the Lord.

Is this kind of activity just wishful thinking? Is it just sentimentality? No, it is not. When you take the time to develop a personal testimony, and see the hand of God in your life; take the time to reflect, and identify specific ways in which the Lord has led in the recent past, your personal testimony takes on a life of its own, and as the Bible says, "They came out of the town and made their way toward him."

Testifying with a Testimony

Now that you have a testimony, all you have to do is talk to someone. There doesn't have to be anything formal about this kind of conversation. It can be in a group. It can be between a couples of friends. It's a kind of "Hey, guess what?" conversation. It can even be a "You know what?" exchange with complete strangers you happen to strike up a conversation with.

Memorize a couple of Bible texts that talk about some positive benefits of believing and following the gospel. "Guess what, I read that 'all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose' (Romans 8:28). That sounds like good news to me! Here's what happened to me Same thing can happen to you. Here's how it works" A personal testimony is always a good way to share your faith.

Does the *Oikos* Principal Work?

In one place a speaker was presenting this *oikos* perspective to a group of pastors and church officials as part of a training seminar. An office employee (he drove the office bus) happened to be sitting outside the classroom door. He heard the presentation though the open door, and said to himself, "I can do that!" Not long after, he approached someone in the office with a request for some pastoral help. He had, he informed them, thirty people ready for baptism from his *oikos*!

In another place, a district pastor learned about the *oikos* idea in a training seminar. He set up his personal *oikos* and then began teaching the system in his churches. One Sabbath he had the distinct impression to let someone else do the preaching of the day and to go and get his *oikos* together. He did, presented a gospel appeal, and that Sabbath personally baptized twelve of his family members as a result of his personal *oikos*!

Some Leading Questions for Developing an *Oikos* Outreach Plan

Think about these kinds of questions to ask yourself when you are developing an outreach plan to reach the people on your *Oikos* list.

1. Is there something both you and your friend would like to learn, perhaps a new skill?
2. Is your friend more serious about life than you are, or less so?

3. If you had an incurable and terminal illness, how do you think this friend would respond?
4. What is your friend's major disappointment in life?
5. Can you think of a time when this friend was especially supportive and caring?
6. What kind of childhood does your friend describe?
7. Is there anything your friend would be willing to die for?
8. How does your friend feel about his or her family?
9. Can this friend accept a "no" from you?
10. Does this friend have a stronger need for people or for privacy?
11. What is your friend's favorite recreational pastime?
12. How does your friend feel about his or her job?
13. Does your friend believe in God?
14. Are there things you could never say or reveal to this friend?
15. Does your friend read more or less than you do?
16. Does your friend most often try to please others, or does self-pleasing come first?

Assignment 5

Using the *Oikos* Principle

- *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have completed this assignment.*

1. Look up the indicated texts and identify the *oikos* in each event.

Text	Biblical Incident	Who Makes Up the <i>Oikos</i> ?
Old Testament		
Gen 18:19	Who did Abraham win to the Lord?	
Gen. 47:11,12	Who arrived in Egypt?	
Num. 27:11	How was the inheritance passed on?	
Joshua 2:18	Who did Rahab bring into her house to escape destruction?	
1 Sam. 25:17	Who was to be punished along with Nabal?	
2 Sam. 15:16	Who went with David when he fled?	

New Testament		
Mark 2:14,15	Who came to this meeting? Why did these particular people attend?	
Mark 5:18-20	Who did this man contact?	
Acts 10:24,44	Who were the people Cornelius called together?	
Acts 16:30-34	Who were saved in this incident and how many were baptized?	
Rom. 16:7	Who were these people who may have had an influence on Paul?	

2. Choose one person from your *oikos* list and write a short personality profile. You can identify the person by a description rather than a personal name (for example: "My work associate").

3. Develop a personal testimony that you can use when the time is right.

The Principle of Receptivity⁴

There are moments in a person's life when the Holy Spirit manages to make a breakthrough, and the person becomes especially receptive to the gospel message.

We have seen that two of Satan's key strategies are (1) to blind people's minds (2 Corinthians 4:4) with various categories of "sins" (1 Timothy 3:1-8, and (2) cause people to lose religious sensitivity (Ephesians 4:17-19). We have also seen that one of the key skills personal ministries participants need to develop is knowing what resources and techniques to use in dealing with these various situations.

The principle of receptivity means that people become receptive to the gospel at various times. They are willing, and sometimes even eager, to hear the gospel story, make a decision, and become followers of the Lord.

Awareness

The core element of the principle of receptivity is that at some point a person becomes aware of something involving religion and in some way responds to the call of the Holy Spirit. Research has shown that most people, years before they think seriously about joining a church, say to a friend or to themselves, "If I ever join any church, I will be in that church." That is because something positive happened to them when they had some contact with people from "that church."

Interested in spiritual things

This is the way the Lord breaks through Satan's tactic of causing people to lose religious sensitivity. In her exposition about the undercover visit Nicodemus made to Jesus, Ellen G. White makes this observation:

By an agency as unseen as the wind, Christ is constantly working upon the heart. Little by little, perhaps unconsciously to the receiver, impressions are made that tend to draw the soul to Christ. These may be received through meditating upon Him, through reading the Scriptures, or through hearing the word from the living preacher. Suddenly, as the Spirit comes with more direct appeal, the soul gladly surrenders itself to Jesus.—*Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

There are "touch points" in a person's life—points at which he will allow the Spirit to touch him; points at which she will allow the witness of the church to touch her life; points at which they will allow the good news of Jesus Christ to touch their hearts.

People become receptive to the gospel most rapidly when two types of things happen in their lives: *trauma* and *transition*.

How Receptivity Develops in People's Experience

People who are going through transitions in their lives are much more likely to be open to the gospel. For example, research has shown that the majority of the adult converts that we are currently baptizing into the Adventist Church have moved to a new home in the year prior to their first contact with the church. If you want to know who in your town is most likely to attend an outreach program or evangelistic meetings or a small group fellowship, find out who moved in the last year. Those people are far more likely to attend than anyone else. In fact, the further they have moved, the more likely they are to come. If they have moved from another country, they are much more likely to join the church than people who have lived all their lives in the same town.

People who are getting married or getting divorced, starting a family, or experiencing the loss of a loved one, major illness, or unemployment—those are all key touch points in their lives.

⁴A more complete training manual titled *How to Find and Reach Receptive People* is available from AdventSource

A couple may have known about the church for years, and the time comes when their first baby is six months or a year old and suddenly it strikes them, "You know, we don't go to a church anywhere. Who is going to teach this child the facts of life and death; right and wrong? We've got to find a church!"

While it is true that society in the North American Division seems to be less and less religious, and increasingly secular and "postmodern," the principles of receptivity still hold true.

Intercessory Prayer Ministry

How do you find these receptive people? There are social indicators like the ones mentioned above that you can use. The key source, however, is the intercessory prayer ministry in your church.⁵ Ellen G White advises:

A created instrumentality (an angel) is used in heaven's organized plan for the renewing of our nature, working in the children of disobedience obedience unto God. The guardianship of the heavenly host is granted to all who will work in God's ways and follow His plans. *We may in earnest, contrite prayer call the heavenly helpers to our side.* Invisible armies of light and power will work with the humble, meek, and lowly one.—*Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, p. 97 (Letter 116, 1899).

One practitioner of intercessory prayer wrote: "If you pray to be led to receptive people, you will coincidentally discover them—time and time again. Stop praying to be so led, and coincidences will stop occurring."⁶

Unchurched People

There a lot people who are classified as "unchurched," meaning that they don't go to church, though they may often report that they are "religious."

Someone has calculated that there may be somewhere around one million or more non-attending Seventh-day Adventists residing in the territory of the North American Division (we used to call them "backsliders"). That is often a receptive group to reach out to.

Reading 4 outlines some general characteristics of "unchurched" people. This list is from the 1980s, but people don't change much. They may use a different vocabulary, but the characteristics are about the same.⁷ This study includes people from all kinds of churches, not just Seventh-day Adventists.

Please note: This study describes these "unchurched" attitudes. It does not pretend to give an opinion of whether they are right or wrong. Our job as personal ministries participants is to find ways and means of leading them to a decision for Jesus, and through the church door.

⁵An excellent source of information on how to set up this ministry in your church is Kurt Johnson, *Prayer Works* (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center, 1993). Also available through the Voice of Prophecy website www.voiceofprophecy.com

⁶George Hunter III, *The Contagious Congregation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1979).

⁷The original research is from J. Russell Hale, *The Unchurched: Who They Are and Why They Stay Away* (Harper and Row, 1980).

Reading 4

The Unchurched

- Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you completed this Reading

Type	Varieties	Description	What They Think About the Church
Anti-Institutional		They think of themselves as "religious," but "uncontaminated" by the institutional church.	The "church" spends too much time on itself and nonessentials. Too much gossip and backbiting.
Boxed In	Feel constrained by doctrines and/or ethics. * <i>Thwarted</i> . Feel treated like children. * <i>Independents</i> . Church feels like a prison.	Have been in the church but left. Felt they had no room to "move," or "breathe."	They see past experience in the church as too confining, either doctrinally or personally. "Don't fence me in!"
Burned Out	* Feel used and exploited. * <i>Light travelers</i> = No time or inclination to serve.	May have been very active, but feel no one cared or appreciated their service, so they quit.	The church is OK. They just don't want to put in the time and effort any more.
Floaters	* <i>Apathetic</i> . No deep feelings for the church. * <i>Marginal</i> . Never had any real attachment.	Bobbed and drifted on the surface. Never really committed to the church.	The church is one more activity in life. Take it or leave it according to personal priorities.
Hedonists (pleasure seekers)		The "pleasures" of this life are most important. "Whatever turns you on!"	The church doesn't want me to have a good time. Can't compete with what turns me on.
Locked Out	* <i>Rejected</i> . Often due to disobedience. * <i>Neglected</i> . Overlooked and slighted. * <i>Discriminated</i> . Victims of overt acts of prejudice.	* Believe that the church does not want them "inside." * Some recognize that they have locked themselves out.	You can't get "in" unless you have the right "key." That can be money, social status, ethnicity – all kinds of things.
Nomads		Always on the move. Don't stay put long enough to establish a church home.	The church is OK, but it is only one function in their lifestyle.
Pilgrims	Key words: "I think. . ." "I believe. . ." "My opinion is . . ."	On an ideological pilgrimage. Always searching and never finding.	Everything should be tentative. There "might be" more truth down the road. Therefore, you can't be "dogmatic" about anything.
Publicans	The largest unchurched group.	Better to live on the "outside" than to be part of what they feel is a half-hearted "scandal" on the "inside."	The church is mostly populated by "Pharisees" and hypocrites; phonies with double standards. No "ideal" exists.
True Non-Church Believers	Agnostics, Atheists, Rationalists, Humanists, Secularists. Not nearly as numerous as it sounds in the media.	They truly believe that "religion" is wrong. "Self-realization" is the goal, not some supernatural power.	The church is superfluous. There is no supernatural to worship.

Assignment 6

The Unchurched

➤ *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you completed this assignment.*

1. Go through the types and descriptions of the unchurched in Reading 4 and make a list of people you know that may fit the various categories or types (You can use descriptions rather than personal names if you wish).

2. You may want to add some names from this list to your *Oikos* and intercessory prayer lists.

3. Write out a plan about how you as a personal ministries participant might go about reaching the people you have on your list in each category.

2. Friendship Evangelism

Ecclesiastes 4:10 says "If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!" (NIV). This text contains the essence of friendship evangelism.

By definition Friendship Evangelism is living your life in such a loving and caring way to let people know God loves them and provides hope. Your relationship, at times, provides openings for you to share with your friends about a God who loves and cares for them. As someone has said: "No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care." It is estimated that two-thirds of adult converts come into the Adventist Church primarily because of the influence of a friend or relative.

Jesus was a social person. He attended a wedding and, when the hosts were embarrassed because the supply of wine ran out, He made more from water (John 2). Jesus drove the greedy merchants out of the temple court, partly because He was concerned for the poor sinners who were being financially exploited (John 2).

"The world will be convinced," writes Ellen G White, "not by what the pulpit teaches, but by what the church lives. The minister in the desk announces the theory of the gospel; the practical piety of the church demonstrates its power."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 16.

The Elements of Friendship Evangelism

Personal ministries participants are what the Apostle Paul calls "living letters:"

"You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts" (2 Corinthians 3: 2,3).

That in itself is friendship evangelism. But it is more than that. The human "envelopes" that contain these "letters" are attractive in themselves. Something about the "envelope" makes people want to see what the "letter" inside says. Friendship evangelism is a way of acting, an acquired attitude, developed by intention, that attracts people to the messenger and opens their hearts to the message.

In John 6: 1-14 is the story of Jesus' providing food for 5000 people. It is entirely possible that His disciples said something like "Well these people, it's their own fault that they're out here without any food. We never said we would feed them. We never made any promises to them. It's not our responsibility!" Jesus don't buy that attitude. Jesus always focused His ministry on the immediate needs of the people.

We all know that our actions and our behavior do not earn salvation or built up any list of merits in the Lord's Book of Life. However, our actions can and are used by God to help save somebody else! Amazingly, God uses you and me, guided by the Holy Spirit, to make a difference for eternal destinies of people. God could go it alone, but He chose to allow you and me to have part in the absolute happiness and joy that comes from helping someone discover Jesus.

Friendship Evangelism Element 1 – Learning to Care

A lot of people feel ill-equipped to witness. They probably immediately think of being unprepared to give what they consider a complicated doctrinal Bible study; or the fear of knocking on an unknown person's door comes to mind. They feel shy about discussing religion with anyone.

On the other hand, if you are tapped into friendship evangelism, it is easy to share your faith with people around you. In fact, some of the things you are already doing are effective tools in sharing the Gospel, even though you may not have understood how to use them. You learn to care by using some of the simplest things of everyday life: a conversation, a small gift, a word of encouragement; anything that demonstrates a "living letter." One expert writes,

“There are those today who sometimes feel that it is a waste of time for the church to conduct fellowship activities. Jesus evidently does not agree with them. He was willing to perform a miracle just to make sure there was enough fruit juice at a party. The first miracle that Jesus performed was to meet the social needs of a family gathering. . . real ministry when we serve in Christ’s name, always happens at the point where mankind’s need and God’s power intersect. . . I am suggesting that you find some way to give your life to those for whom Jesus died. Maybe it begins with the people in your own home or in the factory or office where you work.”⁸

Friendship Evangelism Element 2 – Learning to Listen

James 1:19 gives a clue to a valuable skill of Friendship Evangelism: “Let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.” This is a key to discovering the receptivity of a person. We often think of witnessing as telling people about our beliefs and convictions. But the beliefs we are sharing at a particular moment may not meet the immediate needs of the person to whom we are speaking. The person or persons are concerned about their own needs. Jesus was a good listener and a keen observer of people’s struggles. Listening skills mean that we can develop the eyes to see and the ears to hear times of readiness in their lives, when they are experiencing a need.

James tells us to be *quick* to listen, *slow* to speak, and *even slower* to let our negative feelings take over. That is exactly opposite to human nature. Sinful, untrained human nature leads us instinctively to speak before we listen; jump to conclusions based on our frustrations. After we’ve made our speech, we *might* get around to doing some listening. The Scripture is telling us that if we want to become “living letters” in our homes, where we work, and in our neighborhoods, we have to learn to be “quick to listen.”

Friendship Evangelism listening skills means re-training ourselves so that our first instinctive response to every individual is to hear them, to listen to them carefully, to understand them, to empathize with them. Then you can say something useful and encouraging.

It takes a lot of patience, faith, time spent on our knees, time spent in practice and self-discipline to become an instinctive, caring listener. But that’s what the Scripture is asking us to do. The language of ministry is the ability to listen in a deep, significant way to other people.⁹

So, an essential skill in friendship evangelism is to learn to be a better listener—to hear the deep inner needs of another person. And to be able to go beyond that to hear the spiritual dimension of those needs. When a person shares an economic need or an emotional need or a practical need of some kind, down deep inside it is connected to their fundamental spiritual needs. God is just as concerned about our behavior at the grocery store on Tuesday night as He is about our behavior in worship on Sabbath morning.

When we listen to a neighbor or friend, and they begin to talk about problems of family finances, frustrations in the business, problems with their children or with their spouse, we must remember that every one of those stories is connected to a spiritual need deep, down inside of them. I often say a little prayer that the Lord will help me to hear how they are connected, so that the connection becomes an open door, an avenue through which I can reach out and help that person to see, perhaps for the first time, the spiritual need that is down inside of them.¹⁰

⁸Monte Sahlin, *Friendship Evangelism* (Siloam Springs, MO.: Concerned Communications, 1988).

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid

How to Use Listening Skills

You can absorb what is being said almost twice as fast as you can say it. What that means is that people often "hear" you say things you never said (or at least never intended to say), because their brain is working faster than their ears! What they "heard" was not just the words. They "read" and "heard" your body language, the tone of your voice, an "attitude" you probably didn't even know you were projecting. You did the same while listening to them. That's why James said, "be *slow* to speak, *slow* to anger. Someone may "hear" you are angry before you say even a word. This happens all the time when media newscasters ask each other what they "heard," not necessarily what someone actually said. You might "hear" that the person you are talking to is really upset about something even though they don't say so "in so many words."

The apostle James was surprisingly scientific in what he said, although he wasn't conducting a soul winning seminar when he wrote chapter 1, verse 19! There is a "gap" between what you say, and what people hear. That gap has a specific name. It is called a "lag time." The core listening skill is to learn to ask a specific question that fits into that "lag time" so both you and the person you are talking/listening to "hear" the same thing. It also gives you the opportunity to "hear" what is really behind their personal concerns.

There are six listening skills that apply to Friendship Evangelism:

1. *Active questioning.* This is asking questions based on the information that the other person volunteers.
2. *A "feeling check."* A feeling check means guessing about the emotion of the other person by responding to the non-verbal messages he or she is sending you through things like body language and the tone of the voice.
3. *Story listening.* This means hearing metaphors (figures of speech) that come out in a conversation. These give some clues to the deep inner spiritual concerns of the person.
4. *Values listening.* This is "hearing" the basic values that direct a person's life.
5. *Option introduction.* This is how you introduce a Christian option into the hearing/listening situation that deals with the person's immediate needs.
6. *Ways to deal with resistance.*

Developing these listening skills takes some practice, and often a few awkward encounters. Once you learn the skill, however, it become more or less spontaneous, and you begin to see results. Please note: These are not manipulative skill such as a talented salesperson might use. These are honest soul winning skills based on the apostle James' advice "Let everyone be quick to hear."

Assignment 7

Learning to Listen

- *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you completed this Reading*

Listening instead of talking is a key Friendship Evangelism skill. What you are listening for are clues to the emotional, physical and spiritual needs of the person. This also part of "church growth eyes" and identifying receptivity. Once you listen so that you "hear," with the help of the Holy Spirit, what the real needs are, you will know how to share the gospel.

Case Study

1. Assume you are conversing with someone (You can describe who it is). You have "listened" and think you have a clue to their inner spiritual needs. Check the questions in the following list that might be the best ones to lead to a constructive dialogue with your friend.
2. For each question you would NOT USE write out why that is the case.

- ___ What did you do today?
- ___ Would you explain that to me?
- ___ How was the game?
- ___ What do you feel about that?
- ___ Is something the matter?
- ___ What would you have done?
- ___ Do you love me?
- ___ Why did you say that?
- ___ Oh, really?
- ___ For instance?

Case Study

Here is a statement you might hear from an unchurched friend who is thinking about spiritual things. Imagine that it comes out in the middle of a conversation. It volunteers information that you did not ask for.

"Yes, I know that we are supposed to accept whatever God puts in our lives, but He seems so unfair sometimes. I am usually very strong and able to accept whatever happens to me. I know we have only this one life and we must enjoy it to the full while we can."

1. Write two questions that you might ask that would facilitate communication.
2. Write a question that would probably be blocking and negative.

Feeling Check

Another listening skill is to learn how to do a feeling check. A feeling check means guessing about the emotions of the other person by responding to the non-verbal messages that he or she is sending you, such as the tone of the voice and/or their body language. It is an observation with a follow-up question. It works best if it is said in a tentative way. It must include the name of an emotion.

Here is how this works:

1. You have sensed some clue to the inner state of the person.
2. The name of the emotion involved comes to mind (The Holy Spirit helps you at this point).
3. You make a tentative statement such as: "I am guessing that . . ." or "Somehow I get the impression that . . ." or "It appears if . . ."
4. Ask an immediate follow-up question, such as: "Did I get that right?" or "Am I guessing correctly?" or "Is that true?"

Here's some examples:

1. A co-worker comes out of the boss's office and is obviously upset. You say: "I would guess that you might be feeling offended by what went on in the boss's office this morning. Is that correct?" Contrast that with: "Well, you probably got what you deserved from the boss this morning!"
2. You notice that someone likes what they are doing. You say, "This project seems to be very exciting for you. Is it?" Contrast that with: "Do you really like doing that. I hate that stuff!"
3. Somebody you are listening to is complaining about the activities of the weekend. You say: "The way you talk about your weekend leads me to a hunch that you found it disappointing. Am I guessing right?" Contrast that with: "You should have had more sense than to go on a weekend like that!"
4. Somebody just looks kind of down. You say: "Somehow I get the impression that you are discouraged today. Did I get that right?" Contrast that with: "Hey, cheer up. It can't be that bad!"

It takes some practice and intentional trial to develop this skill, but eventually it becomes the natural thing to do. You will be surprised at how many emotional "doors" open as a result, and you have the opportunity to present a gospel-oriented solution.

Assignment 8

Feeling Check

- *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you completed this Reading*

Here are a number of the kinds of statements that people make. Describe how you would do a feeling check for each one. There is no single best way for a feeling check. You have to figure out what you think is best. Use the four steps outlined above.

1. "I had too much religion when I was young."
2. "I don't have to go to church to be a good person."
3. "All those churches want is my money."
4. My spouse doesn't want anything to do with religion."
5. "I don't want to force religion on my children. I want them to grow up and make their own choices."
6. A friend says: "After all that has happened to me, I can no longer believe in God."
7. A new parent says: "Since the baby came, we've been thinking about going to church somewhere; some place that has a quality program for little ones."
8. "There are too many hypocrites in the church."
9. A friend says: "I sometimes wonder if it is worth all the rushing around, and money, and . . . My kids don't seem to appreciate what we do for them anyway."
10. "I don't want to be hassled. Church is a hassle."

Friendship Evangelism Element 3 – Sharing Skills

People go through a five-step process when they become interested in religious perspectives. These steps are more or less like a step ladder. The steps are:

1. Awareness (See the section above about receptivity).
2. Interest
3. Evaluation
4. Trial
5. Adoption.

It is difficult for a person to climb this ladder by themselves. For instance, they may not even realize that an “interest” is developing. It is the process of Friendship Evangelism that helps them climb this ladder.

What Is a Sharing Skill?

Sharing skills are those that come into play when you and the contact are ready to look at religious solutions to the human needs you discovered in the previous steps of identifying (receptivity and listening skills), pinpointing (feeling check) and establishing confidence. Sharing skills mean that the contact comes to what is called “the moment of discovery.”

A “moment of discovery” is the moment when the Holy Spirit let’s both you and the contact know that it is time to suggest a Christian option that meets the felt need of the person. This might be a moment of decision to accept Jesus as a personal savior. It might be a moment to decide to become an active, serious Christian. It might be a moment of a decision to allow Jesus to truly empower the person’s life.

How Do You Use This Skill?

About 40% of people say that they are shy. Our social environment usually tells us that beyond our close circle of family and friends, we are not supposed to get involved in “other people’s business.” On the other hand, some 80% or more of these people say that they don’t like being shy!

Much of these feelings of shyness come from the perception that personal ministries participation implies meeting strangers “cold turkey” (with no previous contact), giving a complicated Bible study one feels inadequate to give, and other such assumptions.

Reading 5

Witnessing Styles¹

- *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you completed this Reading*

Acts 2:8 tells us every person who calls themselves a Christian is to tell what they know about Jesus to others: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and shall be witnesses to me...”. That is what a witness does—tells others what they know from their personal experience. There are basically two ways a Christian witnesses—verbally and by actions.

The “action” part of witnessing is easier for most people; however, we all must be ready to “tell” when asked or when a window of opportunity arises because of our “actions.” It is not an either/or choice. Both go together. The two cannot be separated. As one studies Scripture there are numerous styles or approaches to sharing Jesus. One approach is not better than another. In fact, most people are a blend of or use a blend of styles depending upon the situation.

Direct Approach

Sometimes you have to take a direct approach. Ellen G White reminds us:

If you have a word of warning, of invitation, of entreaty, do not fear to speak it. Lose no opportunity of witnessing for Christ. He is the source of all grace, and he will send to his people the precious golden oil, enabling them to witness boldly for him. As we consecrate ourselves to God, the Holy Spirit will impart to us the holy oil, that our lamps may be kept bright and shining. — *Review and Herald*, May 16, 1899.

Kurt Johnson, the director of the Discover Bible School based at the Voice of Prophecy media program, writes:

This approach could also be called “confrontational.” Not negatively confrontational. It doesn’t mean whacking people about the Mark of the Beast the first time you talk to them! It simply means getting right to the point of the matter. This approach is seen in Acts 2:36-38. Peter is preaching and states bluntly to the listeners, “You crucified Jesus.” Their response was “What shall we do?” Peter responds, “Repent and be baptized.” As one considers this approach the danger is that it could be viewed by some as a lack of sensitivity or tact. However, most people considering accepting Jesus as Savior, or other teachings of Scripture, need someone to ask them directly for a decision. The key is to pray for guidance and as sensitively as possible call people to decision.

He relates how one pastor handled this situation:

My first year in the ministry I was told the story of a pastor who was preaching a series of revival meetings. A family had been attending each meeting, but had not made a decision to accept Jesus. The pastor had talked to them several times, but the husband and wife were still thinking about it. After much prayer the pastor was impressed to ask the couple for a decision following the next night’s meeting.

¹Most of this Reading comes from Kurt Johnson, “Personal Witnessing Styles,” *Sabbath School Toolbox*, Second and Third Quarters, 2016. See the footnotes for further resources.

However, the couple did not attend. It was late when the pastor got home. He could not go to sleep. He was troubled—he was convicted that he was supposed to ask the couple for a decision that night. So he got dressed and drove to their home. Rang their doorbell and got them out of bed! There in the living room with everyone in bathrobes, he led the husband and wife to a decision for Jesus.

Now this is somewhat out of the ordinary, but the point is there is a time to be direct. Some people by personality are more direct, others become direct as the circumstances dictate. The Holy Spirit will guide you and even help you choose the right words to speak.

One expert² says:

Don't allow fear to hinder you. It is the greatest deception the devil uses against the Christian church. Fear often keeps us from loving people and helping them to get born again and filled with the Holy Spirit. Don't even entertain the thought of fear. Know inside yourself that you are an able minister, and that God has called you to minister to people. If He has called you, then He has enabled you.

The same author writes:

Don't listen to your physical symptoms, or your physical responses to fear. You might be shaking in your boots, you might stumble over your words, your mouth might be dry as cotton, you might sweat, or you might cry. There are all kinds of things you might do, but if you say, "I don't care what I physically go through, I am not going to allow that to stop me. I am going to help people," that fear will leave. If you step out in faith, and in obedience to what God has told you to do, you will be victorious the way He says you will. When you act in love, fear cannot remain (1 John 4:18). Don't go by your feelings. Feelings will deceive you. Come against that fear, and don't allow anything to stop you. Do what the Word of God has commissioned you to do.

Relational Style

The relational style is probably one of the easiest to use. The reason is that when you have a relationship with someone they are already your friend. You know them. You understand somewhat, their personality and reactions. I think of Jesus and the demon-possessed man (Luke 8). When Jesus freed him, the man wanted to travel with Jesus. But Jesus told him to go home to his friends and tell them what Jesus had done for him.

Jesus sent the man home to his friends. The key to telling your friends about Jesus is to make sure we have friends who do not know Him. This means we must purposely make friends with our neighbors, work associates, relatives and others who need to make decisions to accept Jesus. In the time we spend together with them we too may have an opportunity to tell what great things God has done for us.

Invitational Style

Do you ever freeze up when you think about having to give a Bible study, or explain even a verse of Scripture? But you still want to tell others about Jesus and the Bible. This one is for you. You simply invite people to attend a music program at the church, or the grade school Christmas program, or the prayer revival meetings at your church. Invite them to the satellite NET Meeting at church or in your home. In other words, you invite someone to go with you and let the speaker(s) assist you in telling your friends and neighbors about Jesus and the Bible. Your invitees may ask you a few questions, but it will because they are really interested.

²Wendy Treat, *Bold & Effective, Fearless Witnessing* (Seattle, WA. Christian Faith Center, 1986). P. 9.

Service Style

Right away we think of the lady named Dorcas in the Bible. She was known for helping those who needed food, clothes, blankets and a helping hand. Actions speak louder than words. When someone sees your kindness they see Jesus. When someone sees your kindness they sometimes become interested in the One who impels you to be kind.

Using this style is an opportunity for Sabbath School to cooperate with the Community Services program of your church/district. A Sabbath School class could take on a project related to Community Service.³ You can obtain an excellent resource from AdventSource (adventsource.org) titled *Reinvent Your Sabbath School*, by Chris and Yolanda Blake (Book, kit and DVD) that has some great ideas for service style witnessing.

Intellectual or Discussion Approach

Our text for this style of witnessing is Acts 17:22-33. Paul is speaking on Mars Hill to the Greeks in Athens. The listeners are philosophers and love to dialogue over different topics. So Paul gets their attention and enters into a discussion with them. Many sets of Bible studies are built on this model. The Bible is studied systematically, usually by topic.

Testimonial Approach

There are numerous texts that come to mind regarding this approach. The woman at the well in Samaria went home and told the people all that Jesus had said and done for her. In other words, she told her personal experience. Every Christian has a story. When you share your story no one can argue with you regarding whether it is right or wrong. It is your story. Everyone ought to have in mind a simple personal testimony they can use when the moment is propitious.

Any one or combination of these styles may be used, according to the circumstances and the impression given you by the Holy Spirit.⁴

³You can obtain an excellent resource from AdventSource (adventsource.org) titled *Reinvent Your Sabbath School*, by Chris and Yolanda Blake (Book, kit and DVD) that has some great ideas for service style witnessing.

⁴An outstanding resource for further study is Joseph C. Aldrich, *Gentle Persuasion: Creative Ways to Introduce Your Friends to Christ* (Multnomah Press, 1988).

3. Visitation

Visitation is another key Personal Ministries skill. Not everyone is automatically good at this, but it doesn't take long to learn. All of the skills studied under Friendship Evangelism apply equally to visitation skills.

Visitation is important because showing up at someone's home demonstrates that you care enough to take the time to come and see them. This makes an impression. You may appear spontaneously, or you may make an appointment.

There are some issues to consider about visitation in contemporary society.

Privacy and Security Concerns

Privacy is both a social and political issue, and people today are very security conscious. When you go to a person's home to visit, you are in a sense invading their personal space. Some people live in anxiety, and they will not open the door for anyone. Senior citizens hear all kinds of reports about swindlers who are after their possessions on one way or another. Visitation has to be carefully planned.

If the visit is to a home, it is always best if those making the visit are the same gender as those they are visiting—or for a husband and wife team to make the visit. Two men appearing at the door of a woman's home may be frightening to her. Two ladies appearing are much less intimidating. The social ethics of a country or locale will dictate what is best.

Spontaneous Visitation

Personal visitation has always been a key outreach strategy. It is connected to the idea of friendship evangelism. Talking face-to-face with another individual always has a social impact. Many people who live in large urban areas tend to be loners, not because of personality, but through the nature of cities themselves. Many times their primary social contacts are through online social media, or with the people they know in the workplace, who often don't live in the same neighborhood. This leaves many individuals open to a friendly personal contact.

Kurt Johnson from the North American Division Discover Bible School writes:

The contract has to be done right. Another characteristic of urban life is that people are very security conscious, sometimes even suspicious when someone knocks on the door. Often people live in large apartment complexes with multiple locks on their doors, and are not even acquainted with the people who live in adjacent apartments.¹⁵

How to Prepare for a Visit.

The Psalmist writes: "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Psalms 118:6).

Here is how it works: You are somewhat afraid, but you have decided to make a visit to Sarah and John. They have not been in church the past several weeks and you want to make a friendly visit and let them know you care about them. How should you prepare for the visit? The same ideas apply to visiting someone you may only know from a contact form, a Bible school lesson follow-up, or from randomly knocking on doors in the neighborhood.

Dr. Johnson presents these suggestions: Every visit that I make, I have (1) general goals and (2) specific goals in mind. I think these through as I plan the visit.

General Goals

1. *Develop a friendship with the person I am visiting.* The number one thought in my mind no matter what type of visit I make is to establish a friendship/relationship with the person. My first priority is to be a friend, to let the person know that I care about them.

¹⁵"How to Make a Visit," *Sabbath School Toolbox*, Fourth Quarter, 2016.

2. *Meet the needs of the person I am visiting.* You may visit someone to let them know that you missed them at Sabbath School and discover other issues. Maybe they are out of work and need food. Maybe they are grieving the loss of a friend or family member or are lonely and need someone to spend time with them. When you find a need and you can meet the need yourself, then fulfill it. If you cannot meet the need yourself, then contact your pastor or church elder to assist.

3. *Be ready to give spiritual encouragement.* As you visit the person, look for windows of opportunity to point them to the Bible and prayer as a source of strength. You do not have to give a sermonette or planned speech, but simply share that in your personal experience, prayer and reading your Bible has made a difference for you.

4. *Be ready to point a person to Jesus* as the answer to life's issues and eternal life. You do not have to give a Bible study or lead someone in a prayer of acceptance of Jesus, unless you are comfortable doing so. But always be aware of a person reaching out to make Jesus the Lord and Savior of their life. If you notice a readiness in someone's life, contact your pastor, church elder, Bible worker, etc. to assist the individual making a commitment to Jesus.

Specific Goals

I always ask myself three questions before I make a visit. These questions are: (1) Why am I going? (The purpose for my visit). (2) What do I want to accomplish? (3) What am I going to say when the person opens the door?

For example, As I visit Sarah and John I would answer the questions in the following way:

1. Why am I going? (To become acquainted with them and tell them I am glad they are part of the church family.)

2. What do I want to accomplish? (To let them know that I care about them and want to be their friend. Also, I am going to invite them to sit with me in church and if they do not have a Sabbath School Class to sit with me in my class.)

3. What am I going to say when they open their door or if I make a phone call before I visit? (Hi, Sarah, I am _____, I am a member at church and I stopped by (or want to stop by) for a few minutes to just say "hi" and to get better acquainted with you. Do you have a few minutes (or if telephoning, what would be a good time for you? You can say the same in an email contact).

Pray

Before you make the visit pray and ask God to go with you. Ask for the Holy Spirit to prepare the person you will visit and yourself. Ask for wisdom, sensitivity, the removal of the fear to visit, and God's presence to be with you. Trust the Lord to help you make the visit. Have a smile on your face and be a friend, that is what matters the most!

Usually, a personal ministries participation is visiting someone they already are acquainted with, so many of these factors are already taken care of.

Guidelines for Visitation

Your area of the country, the location of the home (city or country), etc. will dictate to some degree how to go about visitation. Here are some suggestions. Adapt them for your situation and circumstances:

1. In a subdivision, stay on sidewalks; do not walk across lawns. (In some situations it may be appropriate to walk across yards; use your judgment.)
2. Respect "No Soliciting" signs. Check with local ordinances whether such signs apply to religious visits; this varies by community.
3. Be respectful. If the person is eating a meal when you knock on the door, ask when would be a better time for you to come back.
4. Do not put literature in a mailbox. This is against postal regulations in the United States.

5. Keep in mind that someone knocking on their door may frighten some people, especially single women, the elderly, and others—especially if it is dark outside. You may hear someone inside the house, but if no one comes to the door, do not keep knocking. Come back when it is daylight.

Your goal is to establish a friendship, gain mutual respect, and have an opportunity to introduce a person to Jesus Christ and the truths of the Bible. Hopefully, this person will eventually become a baptized church member. If the person becomes upset with you because of your visitation technique, a barrier has been established that may be impossible to overcome. Always err on the side of carefulness, rather than carelessness.

Helpful Observations

Much of the success of personal visitation has to do with attitudes and interpersonal relationships. Friendship evangelism is the foundation of every visit.

1. *Attitude toward people.* You are not a salesperson selling a product. You are the herald of the everlasting gospel with eternal consequences. Ellen White writes: "In every human being [Jesus] discerned infinite possibilities. He saw men as they might be, transfigured by His grace" (*Education*, p. 80).
2. *Respect social conventions.* It is taken for granted that people who visit others will be acquainted with the normal social conventions of the people they are visiting and will practice politeness and courtesy.
3. *Dress appropriately.* This means attire appropriate to a personal ministries participant, yet not so different from those you are visiting that you seem a stranger to them. Modesty is always in style.
4. *The power of a smile and polite conversation.* When you approach people smile; be polite and respectful. Avoid any remarks that could be interpreted as negative about the person's home or his or her social status or activities. People who are victims of vices and habits already know their situation; you don't have to point it out to them. There may come a time to discuss these situations when the time is right to do so.
5. *Be brief.* Your objective is to be brief, if possible gain the right to return, and make friends. Don't argue about anything; build bridges—not walls.

4. Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Connections

This is another key personal ministries participation resource and methodology. A Sabbath School class is probably the single most consistent and stable small group that exists in your church environment. Even if the attendance is low, and possibly the level of class enthusiasm is not very high, it is still a key outreach ministry site.

One of the four primary purposes of Sabbath School is community outreach. That is the same purpose as personal ministries participation. Anyone involved in personal ministries is probably also a member of the Sabbath School class. So the ideal is that the two entities work together.

At one time (and still in some places) Sabbath School became known as "The Church At Study." This was also a common trend in what is often called in other churches "religious education" (Sunday school).

Sunday school churches discovered that when they emphasized "the church at study," attendance began to drop. The same thing happened in Seventh-day Adventist churches. One study by Sunday school entities included Seventh-day Adventist churches in North America.¹⁶ While our decline was not as drastic as some other churches, it was (all too often still is) significant. What this research revealed was that when you add outreach into the

¹⁶Charles Arn, Donald McGavran, Win Arn, *Growth: A New Vision for the Sunday School* (Church Growth Press, 1980).

total, the Sabbath School begins to grow. This Sabbath School outreach includes anything from developing a Sabbath School class *Oikos* list, to intentionally following up on non-attenders or absentees, to active participation in visitation, and any other outreach strategy.

Adding Outreach to Sabbath School

About a half-century ago, some creative people in one part of the world came up with an innovative idea. They organized some Sabbath School classes into what they called “Evangelistic Units.” The idea was an outgrowth of Ellen G White’s statement that, “The Sabbath school should be one of the greatest instrumentalities, and the most effectual, in bringing souls to Christ.”— *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 10. This system recommended that a typical Sabbath School class be an hour and a half long, and that the class use the added time to emphasize and plan some outreach initiative. The plan called for a Sabbath School class to choose an outreach project and follow through with intentional action. The results were amazing.

In the North American Division this idea became what for many years was known as Sabbath School Action Units. In some places it caught on and in others it did not. Many church bulletins in the North American Division still title their Sabbath Schools “The Church At Study.”

The point here is that when you deliberately find creative ways to combine personal ministries participation with Sabbath School class organization, the Sabbath School grows, and Personal Ministries becomes more productive.

Branch Sabbath Schools

Branch Sabbath Schools have been around forever. A Branch Sabbath School is an outreach activity sponsored by a Sabbath School class at a different venue and a different time. The history of Branch Sabbath Schools relates how one of the same World Divisions using the Evangelistic Unit idea came up with the idea that a good outreach project for these evangelistic Sabbath School classes would be to organize and run Branch Sabbath Schools for adults. They set a Division-wide goal of 10,000 new Branch Sabbath Schools; ended up with 20,000, and nearly doubled the overall membership in the Division.

The point here is that the well-developed Branch Sabbath School system is an ideal strategy that can be used by the combined Sabbath School/personal ministries planning process.¹⁷

¹⁷You can download a how-to pamphlet about Branch Sabbath Schools at <http://www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org/>

Unit 3

Personal Ministries Outreach Systems

The principles of friendship evangelism comprise a framework within which these systems or methodologies function.

Within this framework, certain systems, sometimes called “programs” or “techniques,” are more or less traditionally used for doing personal ministries. These are the ways and means that often come to mind when one hears about personal ministries. They are effective systems that have worked well throughout the history of the church.

Shifts in the social environment within which a local church/district finds itself often determine a need to modify components, content and application methodology, but in general the systems themselves remain as the integral components of personal ministries. They are often connected to, or work in conjunction with, targeted ministries such as Community Service and Prison Ministries.

There are basically six such systems. A personal ministries participant needs to be familiar with each of them. Some of these will be studied in much more detail in other Personal Ministries Instructional and Enrichment Courses in this curriculum.

1. Personal Bible studies and media program sponsored Bible study courses.
2. “Full Message” Bible study systems.
3. Small group study systems and curricula.
4. Baptismal classes.
5. Systematic outreach plans and assignments.
6. Ways and means of obtaining decisions.

What Do These Systems Undertake to Do?

These systems are methodologies; ways and means of accomplishing something. The ultimate goal of all these systems is to (1) lead people to accept Jesus as a personal savior, (2) teach them the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist church, and (3) encourage them to join the Seventh-day Adventist church.

These systems have appeared, under an assortment of titles and formats, throughout the history of the church. They have all stuck very closely to what might be called the “officially accepted” theological stance of the world Seventh-day Adventist church, today outlined in the list of Fundamental Beliefs.

These various systems do not debate the doctrinal beliefs of the church. They are designed to teach what those beliefs are. Studies, debates, intricate scholarship and/or defense of Adventist doctrinal or prophetic beliefs are the preview of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference and university and seminary theologians.

In addition, there are always groups who have personal opinions about some belief or other. These assorted (often called “non-cooperative”) groups occasionally publish sets of Bible studies. Personal Ministries, however, is a title used by the “official” church, and the Bible study series produced by church entities contain, as noted, the standard doctrinal beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

1. System 1 -Bible Studies

Bible study systems have been the heart and soul of personal ministries from the beginning. As it is used by personal ministries, a Bible study refers to studying a biblical theme systematically with the purpose of finding out what the Bible teaches about that particular topic. This is usually done in a person-to-person or small group setting.

The other popular variant is the system of Bible study lessons provided by media programs, traditional called “Bible Correspondence Courses.” The objective of these courses is to personally make contact with the enrolled students as quickly as possible, and convert

the distance learning into person-to-person or small group studies within the framework of Friendship Evangelism.

Venues and Timeframe

Venues for Bible studies vary. They may be person-to-person or family group studies in a private home. They may happen around a meal or break time in a workplace. A Bible study group may meet at the church, or at some selected convenient site.

The average traditional length of a Bible study is one hour. This can vary according to the circumstances involved.

Many Bible study series are available on the Internet in various formats via social media. Just about all the Bible study series available can be studied online.

Resources for Bible Studies

There are many Bible study guides available. People who give Bible studies regularly often develop their own set of lessons based on their own personality and the environment in which they work.

1. By far the most popular and most used personal ministries Bible study guide book produced by the General Conference is *Bible Readings: Four Thousand Answers About Bible Topics*. It was originally titled *Bible Readings for the Home Circle*. It is arranged by topic and each topic is answered by Bible texts. The book is available on the Internet or at any Adventist Book Center. It can be used in giving Bible studies, or as a study reference for personal ministries participants.

2. The North American Division provides a website that lists some of the most used Bible study guides (<http://www.nadadventist.org/article/6/bible-study>).

3. A popular resource is Mark Finley, *Studying Together* (Fallbrook, CA Hart Research Center, Revised Edition, 1995). This is a valuable handbook of answers to all kinds of questions that come up in giving Bible studies. It also outlines the belief systems of many churches in the North American Division.

4. Another popular resource over the years is *Training Light Bearers: Brief Bible Reading for Busy People*. The latest revised edition was produced in 1977. The book is no longer in print. You can find copies in PDF format on the Internet and obtain printed copies from various Internet websites.

This book covers the science of giving Bible studies and contains 29 Bible studies. Each study consists of about 10 questions with accompanying Bible texts and a page of explanatory notes for the person giving the Bible study. The studies are heavily weighted toward prophecy and distinctive Seventh-day Adventist beliefs.

5. The current most used Bible study series are produced by Seventh-day Adventist media programs. The It Is Written television program provides a series titled *Search for Certainty Bible Study Guides*. It Is Written also provides a visual media based Bible study series called *New Beginnings*. The Voice of Prophecy produces the *Discover Bible Study Guides* sets. Amazing Facts, a cooperative independent ministry, produces a series of Bible study guides available through AdventSource (adventsource.org).

6. The Voice of Prophecy also sponsors *Bibleinfo.com*. This is a website that has Bible questions and answers. It is an excellent study resource for personal ministries participants to use in preparing Bible studies and finding answers to questions raised. It is also an excellent reference for Bible study students to use to find answers to questions raised in whatever Bible study guides they are using.

Types of Bible Study Series

There are many types of Bible study lessons. Some are general series. Some specialize in a particular area of Bible study. Some are geared to target groups. Other series are designed to be used in small group settings.

1. *Full-Message Bible study guides*. A full-message series contains all of the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist church. They usually consist of around 25-30 individual lessons. An example is the *Discover Bible Study Guides* series from the Voice of Prophecy.

This is a series of twenty-six Bible study guides that cover all the Seventh-day Adventist doctrines and lifestyle. The series has three specific decision points built in: (1) A decision to accept Jesus as a personal Savior, (2) a decision to accept the seventh-day Sabbath, and (3) a decision to be baptized and become a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

The *Search for Certainty* series from It Is Written follows the same general outline and covers the same general topics. The *New Beginnings* series available from It Is Written is also full-message, but is designed primarily for visual presentations (DVD, etc.) rather than written.

2. *Targeted series.* Targeted series are focused on a particular audience or theme. The 27 Bible study guides produced by the Amazing Facts ministry focus more on prophecy. They are still full-message, but the arrangement of topics is different. The Discover Bible School has a series of lessons that are chapter by chapter studies of Daniel and Revelation. The Discover Bible School also has available, for example, series of Bible studies such as "Shema Israel," targeted specifically to a Jewish audience, and "Native New Day," targeted specifically for Native-Americans.

AdventSource has available a series titled "41 Bible Studies" designed specifically for teenagers. The same resource center has a series titled "Lifting Up Jesus" that focuses on the plan of salvation. A set of 12 study guides titled "Footprints for Parents & Mentors" is geared to small group study for this targeted group.

A series provided by the Women's Ministry department of the General Conference titled "Surprised by Love," is targeted specifically to women's study groups. The Pacific Press publishes a series titled *Bible Studies for Busy Women* that targets the group mentioned in the title. These are just a few examples of targeted Bible study series.

Assignment 9

Types of Bible Studies

➤ ***Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you completed this assignment***

1. Evaluate a series of Bible study guides you are familiar with. Note what you feel are the strengths and weakness of the series.

2. Look up some of the resources mentioned and note your impression. How could you best use a particular resource?

3. What Bible study system most appeals to you? Why is this the case? How would you use this system as a personal ministries participant?

2. System 2 - Small Groups¹⁸

Small groups are the most efficient and effective strategic evangelism tool we have for the 21st century. The reason is that small groups develop an environment of fellowship and socialization that is the essence of friendship evangelism. The strength of small groups is that they provide built-in opportunities for participation and fellowship. They allow for deeper understanding of whatever is being taught because they provide venues for participation.

In a small group, shy people feel comfortable in expressing themselves, while outgoing people have opportunity to facilitate information and experiences. Insecure people gain feelings of security from the fellowship that builds up in a small group. Small groups also offer opportunities for systematic intercessory prayer.

One expert writes: "Small groups force people to think about and articulate what they believe in a way not usually possible with sermons and traditional lectures. They prompt dialogue and can bring a person to greater ownership of belief."¹⁹

There are two major categories of small groups: fellowship groups and outreach groups, with many variations within each category. Personal ministries focuses primarily on outreach groups.

How Small Groups Function

A small group is made up of any number less than about twelve persons. Usually around six persons is ideal. The reason for these numbers is that within the timeframe of a typical Bible study, a small group of about six people will all have opportunity to participate.

For example, assume you begin Bible studies with an individual. If the study is in the person's home, there are likely some family members there also. Invite them to participate in the study and you automatically have a small group.

All small groups have some things in common:

1. They provide opportunity for personal participation.
2. They engender a social network and a "family" atmosphere.
3. They have a certain social and structural dynamic that needs to be understood and utilized.
4. They require a certain type of organizational pattern.

Kurt Johnson records this example:

In one small group, members were studying Bible prophecy and had Christians and seekers (people who haven't accepted Jesus) attending. During the meeting it was obvious that Martha, one of the non-Christians, did not understand the Bible study. At the end of the meeting Martha said that she was going to become a Christian and join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was clear that she did not understand the prophecy in Daniel 9 that the group had just studied. When Martha was asked about her understanding of the teachings of the Adventist Church, she responded, "There are some things I don't understand. But those that I do understand I know are true. Once I continue to study and understand that which is not clear to me, I know I will find it

¹⁸This section is only a brief explanation of how small groups function. See Kurt W. Johnson, *Successful Small Groups*, (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2011) for detailed instructions on how to set up and manage all kinds of small group ministries.

¹⁹Ron Havermast, *Christianity Today*, Feb.7, 1994, p. 29.

biblical, because everything I have understood so far is rooted in Scripture. Besides, these people love me; they are my family."²⁰

Ellen G White advocates that we should in our church work "Preach less, and educate more, [1] by holding Bible-readings, and [2] by praying with families and little companies."²¹ Without using the actual words, that is a description of a small group ministry. Her most well-known statement is: "The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort is a plan that has been presented before me by One who cannot err. If there is a large number in the church, let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members but for unbelievers also."— *Evangelism*, p. 115.

How to Manage a Small Group

As mentioned, small groups have a certain social and structural dynamic that needs to be understood and utilized, and they require a certain type of organizational pattern.

In a small group study, the object is not for the teacher or person in charge to lecture. It is for all those in the group to participate. Each member of the small group Bible study will have a Bible in hand and will look up and read Bible passages. For the benefit of people who have little or no knowledge of the Bible, there are Bibles available with page numbers that match the study guides being used.

A very important management point the study group leader needs to keep in mind is that the group is studying *systematically*. All kinds of questions come up in Bible study groups. It is vitally important to stick to the topic by saying something such as: "That is a good question, and we will find the answer in study ____ in a couple of week."

It is also very important that the group members learn to respect what each member says, no matter how off-the-wall a comment may seem. Small groups are made up of people who come in all types, sizes, and personalities. There are common personality types such as shy, biblically illiterate, "take charge" types, "know it all's," etc. that appear in every small group. "People problems" are inevitable in small groups.

One note of caution: In a Bible study group such as most personal ministries participants will be involved with, friendship, fellowship, and mutual support are important. They do not, however, take the place of advancing spiritual knowledge or answers to the question "What does the Lord want me to do?" Answering that question is the primary point of any Bible study.

Small Group Organization

The organizational pattern of a small group (often unseen or invisible) is relatively simple:

1. Make sure each member of the group has equal opportunity to participate or ask questions in an emotionally "safe" atmosphere. It is up to the person managing the group to make sure this kind of atmosphere exists.
2. The group leader must be consistent in his or her attendance. If the group leader is sporadic in attendance, or consistently late, the group will fall apart very quickly.
3. Start on time and quit on time.

Here is a typical small group meeting organizational plan.²² This plan is based on the main elements outlined in Acts 2: 41-47:

1. *Sharing time.* Give time for members to discuss what has occurred in their personal lives since the previous meeting. Also, use questions that allow the members to get better

²⁰Kurt Johnson, *Small Groups for the End Time*, (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1997), p. 58.

²¹*Gospel Workers*, p. 193

²²Kurt Johnson, *Successful Small Groups*, p. 191.

acquainted with each other—"What is your favorite hobby?" "Where were you born and raised?"

2. *Bible study time.* The leader will facilitate the group discussion using the printed Bible study guide.

3. *Prayer time.* Ask the group members for prayer requests and pray for them and their needs. Pray for the "open chair," which represents the fact there is room for additional members in the group. Encourage the current members to invite their friends.

Summary: Small groups are an outstandingly efficient soul winning methodology.

3. System 3 – Baptismal Classes

Baptismal classes are made up mostly of people who have decided to join the Seventh-day Adventist church. It is estimated that nearly 40% of all newly baptized members have attended baptismal classes. Many attended as a result of friendship evangelism and actually made decisions in the baptismal class itself.

One Adventist university, for instance, reported some years ago that it had seven baptismal classes functioning on a regular basis and had baptized some 100 students as a result.

Why Are Baptismal Classes Effective?

Baptismal classes are nothing new. What is needed is to give new life to an historically successful soul winning outreach system. Ellen G White advised: "Put new life into the old methods of labor and . . . invent new plans and new methods of awakening the interest of church members and reaching the men and women of the world."²³

There are a number of reasons why baptismal classes are successful:

1. Baptismal classes are a type of small group.
2. They are easy to organize and manage.
3. They are a type of small group and a natural venue for friendship evangelism and learning.
4. Systematic Bible study always produces results.
5. Baptismal classes are low-key, informal setting for making decisions.
6. They are financially viable. About the only costs are for materials.

Some local churches/districts have organized permanent baptismal classes. When one cycle ends, another starts up immediately.

What Is a Baptismal Class?

The purpose of these classes is to make sure people understand the belief system and lifestyle perspectives of the Seventh-day Adventist church before they officially join through a baptismal service. These classes can be made up of any age group, but personal ministries participants will usually work with adults or young adults.

The curriculum for baptismal classes is usually based on a review of the distinctive Seventh-day Adventist doctrines and basic biblical prophecies.

The materials used are a Bible and some series of study guides or baptismal manuals. The series titled *In Step With Jesus* is designed as a post-baptism, four-quarter training system, but it can also be used in baptismal classes.

It is best to clearly identify the class as a baptismal class so that people who attend will understand what it is. If you use some other designation, someone is going to feel that they joined under false pretenses.

²³*Evangelism*, p. 105.

Who Can Teach a Baptismal Class?

Any personal ministries participant versed in personal ministries methodology and attitudes can facilitate a baptismal class, just as they would a personal Bible study or small group. Nevertheless, a baptismal class is not the place to ventilate personal perspectives or attitudes. As in anything sponsored by Personal Ministries, the content of these classes must be what we could classify as "standard" Adventist information. This is not the place to advocate far-out dietary preferences, some personal interest in a fine point of prophetic interpretation, or to vocalize discomfort with something going on in the church.

Managing Baptismal Classes

If your local church/district sponsors permanent baptismal classes, here is how they can be organized:

1. They never quit. When one lesson cycle finishes, they start all over again. As a lesson cycle finishes, the local church/district should plan a baptismal service.
2. People can join the baptismal class at any time. They stay in the class until they have completed all the lessons in the series. Even if the series ends, they simply continue in the class until they come to the lesson where they first joined.
3. A baptismal class may be one of the regular Sabbath School classes. People stay in the baptismal class until they finish the series and are baptized; then they join a regular Sabbath School class.

Baptismal classes are a very effective personal ministries strategy.

4. System 4 – Systematic Outreach Plans and Assignments

Sometimes, the Personal Ministries Department of the local church/district either develops or is assigned the development of corporate programs (programs involving the total membership). These may be on-going, but are often periodic outreach initiatives targeted to a specific audience or event. Five types of such activities have traditionally fallen under the purview of Personal Ministries:

1. Initiating and managing a Discover Bible School
2. Territory-specific projects
3. Literature distribution
4. Prayer initiatives.
5. Member-led revivals.

Discover Bible School

A Discover Bible School is the name given to a branch of the North American Division sponsored Bible School located at Voice of Prophecy headquarters. A Discover Bible School is located and managed at the local church/district location. All the tools and resources necessary for setting up and running a Discover Bible School are available.

All a local church/district has to do to set this system up is to register a church board vote that it wishes to do so, and contact the Discover Bible School at the Voice of Prophecy. The Voice of Prophecy will send you a packet that contains everything necessary to get started.

A local school may use any one or combination of five components: (1) Correspondence school (by mail), (2) personal delivery of Bible lessons, (3) small group Bible studies, (4) online Discover Bible School, and (5) a Bible school in conjunction with a public evangelistic campaign.

A Discover Bible School may be sponsored by the Personal Ministries Department of the local church/district, or as a cooperative venture between the Sabbath School and Personal Ministries.

Territory-Specific Project

A local church/district may decide to map out its ministry territory and recruit personal ministries participation in contacting the homes/apartments in the territory. People who live in suburban housing venues may decide to adopt a block or two around their home as their territory, and systematically devise ways and means of utilizing friendship evangelism methodologies throughout the territory.

A church once related that it could not find a way to penetrate security-heavy apartment houses in its ministry territory, so the church rented an apartment in the complex and put up signs advertising Bible studies at certain times. That apartment always filled up with interested people. There is no end to what consecrated initiative and creativity can accomplish!

Literature Distribution

This system is self-explanatory. A personal ministries participant may have a particular affinity to this methodology and will take it on as their particular project. Sometimes a Personal Ministries Department in a local church/district may decide to blanket a territory with selected literature. The Discover Bible School has in place, for instance, mechanisms for mass mailings to chosen zip/postal codes.

Some personal ministries participants carry tracts, Discover Bible School enrollment cards, and other types of literature in their pockets, or in their vehicles, and pass them out at every opportunity. Innumerable stories are on record about people who have eventually become Seventh-day Adventists as a result of receiving a piece of literature.

Prayer Initiatives

Personal Ministries/Sabbath School may sponsor some broad-based prayer initiatives focused on outreach and soul winning. In addition to intercessory prayer groups, these may include neighborhood prayer walks, targeted prayer sessions focused on a particular territory, groups praying over packets of literature to be delivered in the neighborhood, or any kind of situation appropriate to a special prayer initiative.

Some local churches/districts sponsor yearly or semi-yearly all-night or extended-period prayer meetings, especially at the beginning of the year or prior to some special outreach initiative. This is an ideal activity for personal ministries participation.

Revivals

If a local church/district has the available resources and membership skills, member-led revivals are an excellent activity for personal ministries participation. A highly spiritually focused weekend, or even longer, revival recharges spiritual batteries and opens the door for enthusiastic personal ministries participation. A separate course in this Personal Ministries Instruction and Enrichment curriculum in the Member-Led Public Evangelism section has more details about member-led revivals.

Assignment 11

Systematic Outreach Plans and Assignment

- *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you completed this Reading*
1. Chose two of the plans mentioned and outline how you would initiate and organize each of the ones you chose.

5. System 5 – Obtaining Decisions

Obtaining decisions is a key component of personal ministries participation. Ellen G White notes: “Many are in the valley of decision, where special, close, and pointed appeals are necessary to move them to lay down the weapons of their warfare and take their position on the Lord’s side.” — *Testimonies of the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 646.

A key objective of personal ministries participation is to lead people to three basic decisions: (1) To accept Jesus as a personal savior, (2) accept and observe the seventh-day Sabbath, and (3) join the Seventh-day Adventist church through baptism. A separate course in this Personal Ministries Instruction and Enrichment curriculum deals with the in-depth details of the process of leading people to decision.

The decisions people make in the process of evangelism are spiritually-motivated decisions, empowered by the Holy Spirit. Making these decisions does not happen spontaneously. Nor do these decisions happen because a personal ministries participant happens to have some salesperson-like talents for getting people to do things. As the apostle Paul wrote: “The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because *they are discerned only through the Spirit*” (1 Corinthians 2: 14, emphasis added).

Ellen G White expresses it this way:

When truth is held as truth only by the conscience, when the heart is not stimulated and made receptive, only the mind is affected. But when the truth is received as truth by the heart, it has passed through the conscience, and has captivated the soul with its pure principles. It is placed in the heart by the Holy Spirit, who reveals its beauty to the mind, that its transforming power may be seen in the character.—*Evangelism*, p. 291.

Ellen G White also writes: “In order to lead souls to Jesus there must be a knowledge of human nature and a study of the human mind. Much careful thought and fervent prayer are required to know how to approach men and women upon the great subject of truth.” — *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 4, p. 67.

Key Components of Decisions

1. *Understanding Jesus’ system* of leading people to decision. The classic example is the story of the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well in John 4. The Personal Ministries Instruction and Enrichment curriculum course on The Art of Obtain Decisions will deal with this encounter in detail.

2. *The value of the Gospel*. A key component in any spiritual decision process is that the gospel is always gain. When you follow Jesus, you win; you do not lose. “His blessings He (Jesus) presents in the most alluring terms. He is not content merely to announce these blessings; He presents them in the most attractive way, to excite a desire to possess them. So His servants are to present the riches of the glory of the unspeakable Gift.” —*Desire of Ages*, p. 826.

3. *Action*. A key component of the decision-making process is to motivate immediate action. For instance, a person who says, “I am convinced that the seventh-day is the Sabbath, and I want to keep it,” has not made the same decision as the person who says, “I will be at church next Sabbath!”

4. *A series of small decisions*. All Bible study lesson series use the system of asking for a series of small decisions leading up to a major decision. When the moment comes for a larger decision, a personal ministries participant can refer to the many smaller decisions the person had made.

Course Summary

This course has outlined why soul winning is called a “science” in the sense that it is organized and you need to know what you are doing as a personal ministries participant. It has review the core methodologies used in personal ministries, listed some notable resources, and outlined the key outreach systems employed.

Student Fulfillment Card

The Science of Soul Winning

Name: _____
Church/District _____

This Student Fulfillment Card is the record that you have successfully completed the Essential Skills course *The Science of Soul Winning* of the North American Division Adult Ministries Department Personal Ministries Instruction and Enrichment training curriculum. When all the items are completed, have the Fulfillment Card signed by the appropriate person (your class instructor, your Internet instructor, a person in charge of Personal Ministries in your church/district, your pastor or someone from the conference in charge of personal ministries or evangelism training).

Check the items completed.

- I have read the three Units of the Study Guide.
- I have looked up and read the Bible passages included in this Study Guide.
- I have completed Assignment 1: Developing "Church Growth Eyes."
- I have completed Assignment 2: The Science of Soul Winning.
- I have completed Assignment 3: Your Personal Love/Care Quotient.
- I have completed Assignment 4: What Have You Learned?
- I have completed Assignment 5: Using the *Oikos* Principle.
- I have completed Assignment 6: The Unchurched.
- I have completed Assignment 7: Learning to Listen.
- I have completed Assignment 8: Feeling Check.
- I have completed Assignment 9: Types of Bible Studies.
- I have completed Assignment 10: Baptismal Class
- I have completed Assignment 11: Systematic Outreach Plans and Assignment
- I have completed Reading 1: Personal Ministry Guidance from Ellen G White.
- I have completed Reading 2: Ellen G White's Experience and Methods of Personal Ministry.
- I have completed Reading 3: The *Oikos* Principle of Personal Ministries Participation.
- I have completed Reading 4: The Unchurched.
- I have completed Reading 5: Witnessing Styles.

_____ has satisfactorily completed the course *Introduction to the Bible*.

(Signature) _____ Date _____
Position _____