

INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION

RETENTION PROGRAM

2011 – 2015

Slogan: Retain to grow

Inter-American Division we have a team of Revival and Reformation, Nurture, Reclaiming and Retention of Members. Presented. Roberto Herrera who is specially in charge of Revival and Reformation

Justification of the Plan

One of the greatest challenges we have as a church is the retention of members, both new and regular members. They need to be constantly reaffirmed in Christ (see Acts 18:23, 27, 28). When the church fails to nurture the recently converted, they fail in complying with the mission. Ellen White declares: “Those who have newly come to the faith should be patiently and tenderly dealt with, and it is the duty of the older members of the church to devise ways to provide help and sympathy and instruction for those who have conscientiously withdrawn from other churches for the truth’s sake, and thus cut themselves off from the pastoral labor to which they have been accustomed.” (Evangelism, page 351). She also says that: “After individuals have been converted to the truth, they need to be looked after. These newly converted ones need nursing, watchful attention, help and encouragement. These should not be left alone, a prey to Satan’s most powerful temptations; they need to be educated in regard to their duties; to be kindly dealt with, to be led along, to be visited and prayed with. These souls need the meat apportioned to every man in due season.” (Evangelism, page 351).

General Objectives

1. Retain the new converts.
2. Consolidate the regular members and help them to constantly renew their experience in their relationship with Christ.
3. Implement a system where the recently baptized members could receive communication from the president of the Division.
4. Pay special attention to the new members by placing them in a small group.
5. Promote the organizing of the post-baptismal class in each church and congregation.
6. Help the new members to adapt to the Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle.
7. Promote the holding of annual congresses for new members in the local fields.

Guidelines: Annual Emphasis

- **2011 – Year of retention through prayer and spiritual nurture. We are blessed with trained professional pastors. They should use their knowledge to nurture and equip the believers for the enhancement of their ministry (see Ephesians 4:12). Pastors should seriously take “discipleship” as the objective of their ministry because they are trained leaders, facilitators, instructors and motivators (see 2 Timothy 2:2). Train the new converts, principally, and also the older believers: Through preaching, seminars and workshops; in**

congresses, in the church and/or in small groups. Help them to discover their spiritual gifts. Challenge them and organize them so they could participate in the fulfillment of our mission as the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This is with the objective that every believer become a disciple of Christ, prepared and ready to use their spiritual gifts in order to prepare others for the soon coming of Jesus Christ. “Christ intends that His ministers shall be educators of the church in the gospel work. They are to teach the people how to seek and save the lost” (The Desire of Ages, p.825).

- 2012 – Year of retention through Small Groups. Each new convert must be integrated into a small group where he can participate in Christian fellowship, develop new friends, increase his Bible knowledge, participate in prayer and praise, develop his individual gifts, learn to share his faith and participate in missionary work. “The talents that God has given to each one of his children are to be used to honor and glorify him”. (The Review and Herald, December 1, 1896). “The formation of small companies [small groups] as a basis of Christian effort has been presented to 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.” 7T 21-22
- 2013 – Year of retention through family integration. Since the family forms a sphere of action where the most basic dimensions for human security and the social integration of people are

defined, and since the church is being affected by problems that the modern family faces such as family violence, unemployment which is associated with poverty, family disintegration, the lost of values and divorce which is getting very common, we should carry out instructive programs for all the members, considering especially the new converts. We should promote family establishment and help the family to be a protective factor for the children, social, educational and spiritual. We should promote the expression of Christian love to strengthen the sense of identity as part of the worldwide Adventist family in such a way that the newly converted will feel loved, accepted and with a clear sense of belonging. “The family tie is the closest, the most tender and sacred, of any on earth. It was designed to be a blessing to mankind” (The Adventist Home, page 18). “The family relationship should be sanctifying in its influence. Christian homes, established and conducted in accordance with God’s plan, are a wonderful help in forming Christian character.... (The Adventist Home, page 19).

- 2014 – Year for retention through pastoral visitation. As visitation is an important work of the church, both the pastor and the elder should direct and support this work (see Acts 9:32). The new converts should be visited by the pastor every trimester and all members receive a pastoral visit each semester. In this visit they should emphasize: The benefits of belonging to the church, the necessity of family worship and personal devotion, the needs of the various family members, and the needs of the church. If the pastor and elder love and practice visitation, undoubtedly you will see the evidence in the program and spirit of the church. “No work done for the Master must be

considered inferior or of little account... If it is done cheerfully, humbly and in the meekness of Christ, it will result in the glory of God” (Letter 88, 1985) (Evangelism p. 471).

- 2015 – Year of retention through faithful stewardship. Since the permanent new church members are being integrated into the church, and because the purpose of stewardship is the reconciling of man with God, and man with man, and the restoring of man to the image of the creator, a program will be developed to help the new converts to understand and experience in a personal way the principles of integral stewardship, that have its origin and foundation in creation and redemption. It is Biblical and is backed up by the Spirit of Prophecy, it includes all the areas of life, it demands faithfulness in returning the tithe and thankfulness in giving offering, its greatest expression is found in the light of Calvary and is projected toward eternity (see Psalm 24:1,2). “God has lent men talents--an intellect to originate, a heart to be the place of His throne, affection to flow out in blessings to others, a conscience to convict of sin. Each one has received something from the Master, and each one is to do his part in supplying the needs of God’s work” (Counsels on Christian Stewardship, page 114). “Money, Influence, time and energy, are talents given to us so we could be more helpful to those who surround us, and for us to honor our Creator” (Review and Herald, February 1912).

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JUST SOME EXAMPLES ABOUT HOW THE UNIONS IN THE INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION ARE PRACTICING THE PROGRAM OF RETENTION IN INTEGRATED FORM.

ALL UNIONS CONTINUE PROMOTING REVIVAL AND REFORMATION: CONSTANT IN PRAYER, HEARING THE WORD, THAT THE WORLD MAY KNOW.

WE CONTINUE PROMOTING GROWTH: THROUGH THE FORMATION OF NEW SMALL GROUPS, TO FACILITATE THE SPIRITUAL GROWING OF THE NEW AND REGULARS MEMBERS AND CONTRIBUTE FOR THE STRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT.

THE UNIONS IN THE INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION ARE SERIOUSLY COMMITTED WITH CONSOLIDATION AND RETENTION: THROUGH A SOLID PROGRAM OF VISITATION TO MEMBERS AND PROMOTING A CONSCIOUS PERSONAL FIDELITY PLAN, AND A PLAN OF PERSONAL GIVING.

WE BELIEVE THAT FOR RETENTION WE FIRST NEED TO WIN NEW SOULS FOR CHRIST, AND FOR THIS REASON WE ARE PROMOTING BOTH THAT EACH NEW MEMBER AND EACH REGULAR MEMBER CAN BE INVOLVED IN TELL TO THE WORLD: FACE TO FACE, IN SMALL GROUPS OR IN BIG EVANGELISTIC PROGRAMS. WE ARE ALSO CELEBRATING ALL THAT THE LORD IS DOING IN OUR TERRITORY.

God spoke to Rosa Santiz through a dream at night and he told her: You need to find the Seventh day Adventist Church or a pastor of my church for him to explain to you more about Me and about My Word, the Bible. You need to keep my holy Sabbath and then I will bless you and I'll give you a long life. Rosa obeyed the voice of the Lord and went to the city of San Cristobal de las Casas where she could find the church and a pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Pastor Daniel Díaz taught Rosa about our gospel and she was finally baptized.

- After she had been teaches for the seventh day adventist church's pastor and after she received the message of the Word of God and embraced the gospel of salvation, she shared it with Daniel Morales Gomez and Juana Santiz.
- BEFORE BEING BAPTIZED, JUANA AND DANIEL SHARED THE MESSAGE TO JUANA'S GRANDPARENTS: AGUSTIN, WHO IS 115 YEARS OLD, AND HILARIA SANTIZ WHO IS 95. THE BROTHER AGUSTIN SAID THAT HE WAS A CATHOLIC. HE THEN BECAME A PRESBYTERIAN WHERE HE WAS A EXEMPLAR MEMBER, BUT HE HAS HAD THE DESIRE TO KNOW THE CHURCH THAT IS PREPARING TO SEE JESUS AND CONTINUE OBEYING ALL OF GOD'S COMMANDMENTS. THEREFORE HE AND HIS WIFE HAVE DECIDED GIVE ALL THEIR BEING TO CHRIST.
- THEY ASKED THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST PASTOR TO TEACH EVERYONE IN THEIR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. AFTER THIS, THEY GAVE HIM THE KEY TO THEIR TEMPLE.

- WELL, THE TEMPLE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HAS BECAME AN ADVENTIST TEMPLE AND THANKS TO THE MIRACULOUS OF GOD'S CALL TO ROSA, WHERE WE DID NOT HAVE A SINGLE ADVENTIST WE NOW HAVE A CHURCH THAT CONTINUES GROWING IN EVERY AREA, FOR THE HONOR AND GLORY OF GOD.
- ANOTHER STORY WAS IN EL SALVADOR: In our yearly Retention Festival on November 9, 2013, Pastor Daniel Burgos, Union Executive Secretary and responsible for Retention in El Salvador Union, asked how many of the newly baptized in 2013 that were in attendance in this meeting, have had the joy of winning one or more souls for Christ? Several people raised their hands, including Sister Carmen Guillen Nufio who is 62 years old. Sister Carmen's pastor told us that she had won 12 people to Lord.
- God is using new members to win souls for Christ. We need to retain to grow.