Summit on Nurture & Retention

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General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
“A genius is someone who asks dumb questions that nobody else would ask, an idiot asks the smart questions that have already been answered”

- Unknown
“Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget…”

Isaiah 49:15
1. Sacred Cows Syndrome
2. Pilate Syndrome
1. methodological Issue
2. integrity Issue
3. ethical issue
4. statistical issue
5. theological issue
Evangelism Hit and Run?
1. methodological Issue
2. integrity Issue
3. ethical issue
4. statistical issue
5. theological issue
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2. integrity Issue
3. ethical issue
4. statistical issue
5. theological issue
Real or perceived, the pressure is on—pressure to produce numbers.

Numbers mean performance.
Numbers mean image and status.

Those who could produce numbers are recognized and rewarded.

Nurture doesn’t bring recognition.
ADVENTIST SOTERIOLOGY

In the church, justification is by grace.  
In the classroom, justification is by works.  
In administration, justification is by numbers.
The monthly reporting system is one of justification by works!
GLOWING NUMBERS MEAN

- Greater recognition
- More tangible rewards
- Greater opportunities for promotion up the ecclesiastical ladder
If a pastor nurtures and equips the newly baptized, he has no way to report that.

Since nurture and disciple-training are not generally reportable, there is little incentive to train new believers.
The Seven Signs of Ethical Collapse

How to Spot Moral Meltdowns in Companies... Before It's Too Late

Marianne M. Jennings, J.D.
“All companies experience pressure to maintain solid performance. The tension between ethics and the bottom line will always be present. Indeed, such pressure motivates us and keeps us working and striving.” (p. 17)
“But in this first sign of a culture at risk for ethical collapse, there is not just a focus on numbers and results but an unreasonable and unrealistic obsession with meeting quantitative goals.” (p. 17)
SUBTLE MESSAGE TO EMPLOYEES
“Meet your numbers, or you are out of a job, or out of favor.”
“Not just pressure to meet numbers, but pressure so great that **they made up numbers.**”

Finance—creative accounting.

Education—manipulating numbers to achieve rankings or ratings.
One manager was told to meet the numbers but not to do anything “stupid.”

The manager concluded, “I would be stupid not to make the numbers.” (p. 21)
OBSSESSION WITH NUMBERS impairs judgment and robs dignity.
“The drive for numbers, numbers, numbers can take us right to the slippery slope and into ethical collapse.” (p. 18)
The numbers game is not about numbers. It’s about people—souls that are lost twice!
1. methodological Issue
2. integrity Issue
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Evangelism is not for evangelists only.
Unfortunately, the doctrine of priesthood of all believers is understood more soteriologically than ecclesiastically.
About 9 in 10 people who left the Adventist church were never contacted by their pastor after they stopped attending.
1. Sacred Cows Syndrome

2. Pilate Syndrome
Pontius Pilate syndrome
PONTIUS PILATE SYNDROME

1. The Great Commission Issue
2. Pastoral Issue
Role of Pastor

- Care for spiritual needs: 26% Ideal Role of the Pastor, 37% Emphasis of real ministry
- Both: 46% Ideal Role of the Pastor, 36% Emphasis of real ministry
- Training for outreach: 28% Ideal Role of the Pastor, 27% Emphasis of real ministry

Global SDA Church
Pastor's Use of Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Ideal focus for Pastor's time</th>
<th>Time spent in ministry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministry to members</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading to outreach</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Members Leaving the Church

- Not too serious--most stay 40%
- Fairly serious problem 34%
- Very serious problem--many lost 26%
What Age Groups is Most Likely to Leave the Church?

- Teenagers: 33%
- Young adults: 59%
- Middle-aged members: 8%
What Three Types of People are Most Likely to Leave the Church?

- Recent converts
- Young adults without families
- Young adults with families
- People with SDA higher Education
- People without SDA higher Education
- Converts from public evangelism
- Converts from media ministries
- Converts from relational evangelism
- Converts from personal evangelism

**Type n. 1**
- Recent converts: 21%
- Young adults without families: 20%
- Young adults with families: 8%
- People with SDA higher Education: 6%
- People without SDA higher Education: 9%
- Converts from public evangelism: 12%
- Converts from media ministries: 6%
- Converts from relational evangelism: 4%
- Converts from personal evangelism: 2%

**Type n. 2**
- Recent converts: 28%
- Young adults without families: 21%
- Young adults with families: 18%
- People with SDA higher Education: 12%
- People without SDA higher Education: 9%
- Converts from public evangelism: 19%
- Converts from media ministries: 12%
- Converts from relational evangelism: 4%
- Converts from personal evangelism: 2%

**Type n. 3**
- Recent converts: 34%
- Young adults without families: 21%
- Young adults with families: 14%
- People with SDA higher Education: 12%
- People without SDA higher Education: 10%
- Converts from public evangelism: 19%
- Converts from media ministries: 12%
- Converts from relational evangelism: 4%
- Converts from personal evangelism: 2%
Means to Retain Members in the Church

- Training in College: 47%
- Training in Seminary: 47%
- Training by in-service seminars: 69%
Most Important Reason People Leave the Church

- Lack of friends: 41%
- High level of conflict in local church: 15%
- Personal conflict with church member: 11%
- Marital difficulties: 8%
- Perceived hypocrisy of other church-members: 8%
- Family or personal tragedy: 6%
- Disagreement with Adventist doctrines: 5%
- Personal conflict with pastor: 2%
- Moved to a new city/church: 2%
- Decision taken by higher leaders: 1%
- Dislike of worship styles in local church: 1%
PONTIUS PILATE SYNDROME

1. The Great Commission Issue
2. Pastoral Issue
"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20
participle
πορευθεντες  βαπτιζοντες  διδασχοντες

going  baptizing  teaching
"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20
imperative
μαθητεύσατε  make disciples
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Matthew 28:18-20
Disciple-making
The end product of the Great Commission must be disciples.
The Great Commission is not to baptize; it is to baptize to make disciples.
"The idea that the minister must carry all the burdens and do all the work is a great mistake. Overworked and broken down, he may go into the grave." (6T, 435)
"Christ intends that His ministers shall be educators of the church in gospel work. They are to teach the people how to seek and save the lost." (DA, 825)
"Let the minister devote more of his time to educating than to preaching. Let him teach the people how to give to others the knowledge they have received..." (7T, 21)
“The best help that ministers can give the members of our churches is not sermonizing, but planning work for them.” (9T, 82)
The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort has been presented to me by One who cannot err.—Testimonies, vol. 7, pp. 21, 22.
In every city there should be a corps of organized, well-disciplined workers; not merely one or two, but scores should be set to work.--General Conference Bulletin, 1893, p. 37.
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. If in one place there are only two or three who know the truth, let them form themselves into a band of workers. 7T, 22
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