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ABSTRACT

TRAINING LAITY TO MINISTER TO INACTIVE
MEMBERS IN THE NORTH TAMIL CONFERENCE

by

Paulraj Masillamony

Adviser: Nancy Vyhmeister

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: TRAINING LAITY TO MINISTER TO INACTIVE MEMBERS IN
THE NORTH TAMIL CONFERENCE

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Date completed: September 2000

Inactive and uninterested members are common in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the North Tamil Conference. They are the aching, anxious persons who have great difficulty in living in anxiety-provoking settings. The church, if it is going to be an effective instrument to its own membership, needs to be sensitive to what is going on in the life of its members. This presents a problem because the members are ill-equipped for the task.

In this study a theological basis for equipping laity was developed. Interviews with pastors and both active and inactive members in the local church and study from the church growth literature were used to describe the need for ministry to the inactive members and to ensure the training

of active members. Considering the kind of trainers, trainees, goals and objectives, and adult education methods as essential factors, a training program was developed to equip laity. The training program was implemented in the local church at Vellore, providing hands-on experience for the task.

The result of the theological study for equipping laity showed the ministerial nature of laity and God's provision of the Holy Spirit and pastors as equippers. God's design for lay ministry suggests lay training as vital for effective ministry. The results of the study on inactive members showed various anxiety-provoking, conflict situations in and out of the church. Sociological issues, institutional church-oriented issues, and decline in personal spirituality were identified as contributing to attrition. As a result of unresolved conflicts some inactive members suffer feelings of anxiety, anger, guilt, shame, and a sense of loss. They cry for a response from the church. The active members are called to be sensitive to what occurs in the life of the inactive members and accept their ministerial responsibility in resolving their conflicts.

This study determined four major areas of training active members for the task: the status of the inactive member and the responsibility of the laity, developing a

genuine love for the lost, interpersonal communication skills, and methods of contacting. Twelve active members were trained in the four major areas during the twelve sessions scheduled on four Sabbath afternoons. Trainers, from within and without the church, contributed to clergy-laity team ministry in the training program.

In being equipped for ministry, the laity's potential for ministry was realized and utilized. They were spiritually strengthened by accepting their ministerial responsibility. The clergy-laity team ministry changed the attitude of both active and inactive members. Five lost members were restored through a caring ministry. The pastor's skill in equipping was sharpened. The ministry of restoration developed in this study will contribute to the spiritual health of the Body of Christ.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

TRAINING LAITY TO MINISTER TO INACTIVE MEMBERS
IN THE NORTH TAMIL CONFERENCE

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Paulraj Masillamony
September 2000

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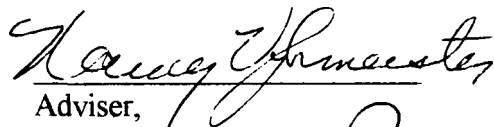
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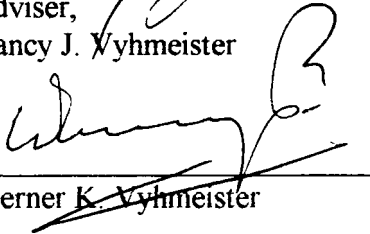
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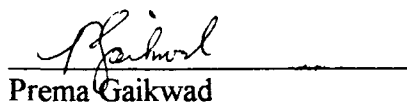
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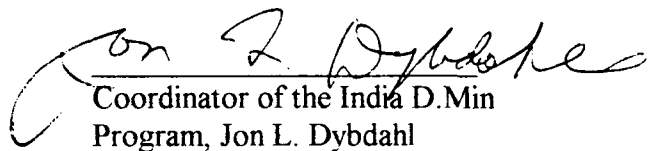
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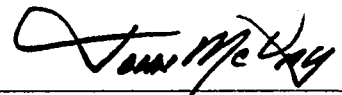
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to develop an effective program for training lay members to reach inactive members in the North Tamil Conference.

Justification

Public evangelistic campaigns have been used as the principal method to effect church growth in the North Tamil Conferences. The present condition of the churches clearly indicates that the evangelists and pastors have concentrated on the conversion of as many persons as possible rather than the conservation of the converted ones. Either ignorantly or deliberately, several local church pastors have not nurtured and encouraged members to be actively involved in the life of the church.

Due to lack of nurture, warm fellowship, meaningful interpersonal relationships, and various other personal and institutional church-oriented issues, conflicts among the members have arisen. Those who could not cope with conflict

have lost interest and grown cold in their church life. This condition is dangerous because it is a stumbling block for the progress of the church and its mission. But the church has not placed much importance on limiting the causes of attrition or to stopping the pain of the backsliders.

In the established churches most active members demonstrate involvement by participation in annual church elections, regular church board meetings, and other administrative affairs. This is seen as effective lay involvement in ministry. The active members are not trained and equipped to understand their Christian status, privileges, and responsibilities to one another, especially toward the members weaker in faith. With their notion of ministry, the active members have lost sight of the ministerial function of "the people of God" who are called to be involved in the ministry of restoration.

Ministry is not limited to the pastor alone. It is the responsibility of every Christian. My observation is that the Seventh-day Adventist Church members in the North Tamil Conference are yet to accept God's design for them as ministers and God's provision for their ministry. Most of the pastors are concerned about baptisms for their reports and consider the training of laity for ministry as not very profitable. Thus neither laity nor clergy have the vision

to see the importance of equipping. Neither have the pastors prepared themselves for the task of equipping.

This study considers the role of laity and clergy in the context of the inactive members in the church. It seeks to develop a training program that equips laity to minister to the inactive members.

Methodology

In order to design a training program for equipping the laity for ministry, biblical materials on equipping and literature on training programs were carefully examined. Coupled with my personal pastoral experience, interviews with both active and inactive members and church pastors contributed to this paper.

Overview

Chapter 1 presents the purpose of the study, with an outline of the major problem and a description of the methodology to be used.

Chapter 2 discusses the biblical and theological foundations for equipping laity for ministry. The ministerial nature of the laity, God's purpose of equipping, and God's provision for equipping are the key concepts traced from the Scriptures, clearly showing that the ministry of equipping is a biblical imperative.

Chapter 3 evaluates the need for ministry to inactive members and lists various factors that cause members to become inactive. Describing what happens in the life of the inactive church member, a need for ministry is viewed from psychological, theological, and church growth perspectives.

Chapter 4 provides a theoretical framework for the development of a training program to equip the laity for ministry and considers key factors in the development of a training program. Four major areas of training are outlined in this chapter.

Chapter 5 narrates the strategy and implementation of the training program in the local church. Evaluation of the training program is also discussed.

Chapter 6 contains the summary of the study. It also presents the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the research.

CHAPTER II
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR
EQUIPPING LAITY FOR MINISTRY

Ellen G. White's concept of the church as "God's appointed agency for the salvation of men, . . . organized for service"¹ implies three vital facts about the nature of church life: (1) ministry is the ultimate objective of the church; (2) every believer, in becoming a part of the Christian community, must participate in the service of God; and, (3) the believers fulfill the purpose of God in their involvement in the ministry. However, training is absolutely vital if people are to function effectively in ministry.

This chapter deals with four major aspects in the life of the church. First, the biblical concept of the laity describes the biblical basis for the ministry of the whole people of God. The second part deals with the purpose of equipping. The third section lists God's provision for equipping laity. The fourth part covers the biblical model

¹Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 9.

of equipping. These four parts are put together to establish one major point: Ministry is the obligation of all the people of God, both laity and clergy.¹ A basic role of the pastor in ministry is to equip the laity for service.

The Ministry of the Laity

The ministry of the church must involve all the people of God. This section deals with the biblical concepts of laity and the role of the laity in God's design.

The Biblical Concept of Laity

The term laity is derived from the Greek laikos which means belonging to the laos, the people.² Its basic meaning is "the people of God."³ Kraemer states that "the word laos is in the sense of people of God, applied to Israel in order to express God's special relation to this people."⁴ According to Richards, Israel's identity as a people and God's relation to this people could be understood only by

¹While there is no superiority of one over the other, for convenience sake, laity denotes the church members, and clergy, the paid leaders or pastors.

²Hendrik Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (London: Lutterworth, 1958), 155.

³Russell Burrill, Revolution in the Church (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center, 1993), 33.

⁴Kraemer, 155.

reflecting on who God was to them, and who they were to God.¹

Whole People of God

Pointing out the uniqueness of the use of the term, Oosterwal stresses this special relation between God and the laos.

Laos has a particular meaning found nowhere in Greek literature. This makes the biblical concept of laos unique. Laos means "a special people" clearly distinguished from other peoples by its origin. Its special loyalties and task, its language and behavior, and its principles and goals. . . . It comes into existence as a direct act of God. Laos means God's people, a peculiar nation. He has chosen his laos from the multitudes of people, nations, cultures, tribes, families, and language groups.²

Considering the unique concept of laity as the people of God, Kraemer's view of "the people of God" as a "title of honour"³ is correct. He further contends that "this title of the 'people of God' for the church as a whole is very significant for the understanding of the church."⁴

¹Lawrence O. Richards, A New Face of the Church (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970), 15.

²Gottfried Oosterwal, Mission Possible (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing, 1972), 108.

³Kraemer, 155.

⁴Ibid.

In the New Testament the singular form of the word laos is used almost exclusively when referring to the church as God's people (Heb 4:9; 11:25; 1 Pet 2:10).

"Saints" (Rom 1:7), "elect" (1 Pet 1:2), and "true Israel" are expressions for the church found in the epistles.¹ Gibbs affirms, "To the early Christian, church meant people, people like themselves, the people of God, a community, a fellowship."² Oosterwal claims, "By the act of baptism, then, a person becomes a member of the laity, the chosen people of God, and thus shares equally in its calling, fellowship, and government."³ Thus anyone who is part of the people of God is considered laity. "By this definition" Burrill declares, "even clergy are laity."⁴

The characteristics of the biblical view of laity do not refer to a group within the church but to the entire church.⁵ Gibbs's position adds to Johnsson's view: "When we talk about the laity we are talking about the

¹William G. Johnsson, Religion in Overalls (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing, 1977), 68.

²Mark Gibbs and T. Ralph Morton, God's Frozen People (London: Collins, 1964), 12.

³Oosterwal, 116.

⁴Burrill, 33.

⁵John Fowler, "What Is the Biblical View of the Laity?" Ministry, December 1997, 8.

church. . . . The laity is not a part of the church. It is all the members of the whole church, the people of God."¹ Thangasamy would agree with Gibbs, "The total members of the church are the church. All are called and chosen. So we must have no dichotomy in the church."² It was difficult to separate the laity from the clergy in the New Testament church.³ Thus the "laity," the entire church, as Bromiley claims, denotes "the whole people of God."⁴

Ministerial Nature of Laity

The ministerial nature of the laity is exhibited in God's calling of the laity. The doctrine of the "priesthood of all believers," in revealing the glorious privilege and responsibility of the laity, provides the theological foundation for the ministry of the laity. Edwards claims: "When one enters the priesthood of believers, he is thereby

¹Gibbs and Morton, 22.

²D. A. Thangasamy, Towards Involvement (Madras: CLS, 1972), xi.

³B. V. Subbamma, Christ Confronts India (Madras: Diocese Press, 1973), 17.

⁴G. W. Bromiley, "Laity," Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1984), 617.

uniting with Jesus in God's redemptive purpose in the world."¹

In Revelation (1:5, 6; 5:9,10; 20:6), Christians are referred to as "kings and priests." Burrill uses these passages to show the connection between the redemptive ministry of Christ on the cross and the restoration of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.² He further stresses, "In Christ's kingdom there is only one class--the priestly class into which all believers are born when they accept Jesus Christ as the Redeemer."³

In 1 Pet 2:5, Peter declares that each believer must offer a spiritual sacrifice to God. Commenting on this, Edwards counsels, "It is important that this be clearly understood, for the nature of the sacrifice will determine the nature of this ministry."⁴ On Rom 12:1 Minear writes, "His sacrifice is defined as doing God's will. It was His body that God desired, not sacrifices and offerings."⁵ The apostle Peter agrees with the dual purpose of the laity, to

¹Rex D. Edwards, Every Believer a Minister (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1995), 66.

²Burrill, 24.

³Ibid.

⁴Edwards, Every Believer, 66.

⁵Paul S. Minear, Images of the Church in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 100.

be a holy priesthood and to declare the wonderful deeds of God. "Thus the missionary task of the church is not optional; for by its very nature, the church is mission."¹

Paul's notion of ministry in 2 Cor 5:16-20 suggests that the work of reconciliation has been committed to all Christians. If all believers have been reconciled, obviously the work of reconciliation, which is the work of ministry, is for all.² The church is the agency of reconciliation, for the church possesses the gospel of salvation and every Christian is an agent in the ministry of reconciliation.³ If ministry is the natural result and obligation of being a Christian, it follows logically and biblically that all Christians are ministers.⁴ Pointing out the nature of the laity, Kraemer claims that all laity have a calling and a ministry since the indelible characteristic of laity "is ministerial."⁵

¹R. L. Omanson, "The Church," Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1960), 233.

²Burrill, 34.

³Arnold B. Come, Agents of Reconciliation (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964), 13.

⁴Burrill, 34.

⁵Kraemer, 153-154.

God's Design for the Laity

God's design for the laity is revealed in the metaphoric description of the church as the body of Christ.¹ The spiritual gifts are closely identified with the biblical concept of the church as the body of Christ. A discussion of the body concept in the light of the doctrine of spiritual gifts points out the following principles: unity in diversity, mutuality of ministries, and the importance of leadership.

Unity in Diversity

God's act of distributing his gifts entrusts to every believer a personal responsibility to fulfill in the context of the body.² Diversity of gifts also indicates that each member has an individualized ministry.³ Paul projects the proper function of the whole body as the objective of the distribution of various gifts.⁴ Jenson and Stevens observe in Paul the principle of unity in the midst of diversity. To better understand Paul's concept of unity in diversity,

¹Richards, 109-111.

²Ron Jenson and Jim Stevens, Dynamics of Church Growth (Singapore: Campus Crusade, 1981), 127.

³[Gerard P. Damsteegt], Seventh-day Adventists Believe: A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines (Washington, DC: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988), 212.

⁴Jenson and Stevens, 127.

Towns notes that "gifts may be viewed as the building blocks of the church."¹

Mutuality of Ministries

The New Testament speaks of ministry as the whole people of God serving one another according to their God-given gifts.² Ernest Best observes that the body metaphor places an emphasis on "the internal relationships of members to one another."³ He further writes:

The metaphor looks inward and not outward; it is not used to express a truth about the place of the church in the world, but about the relationship of the church to Christ and to one another. . . . Thus in calling them members of the Body Paul seeks to teach their relationship and duties not to the world, but to one another.⁴

Best seems to hold the view that there is a caring ministry within the church. Logan recognizes that "a church body is designed to function as a mutually dependent team, together discovering and fulfilling the assignments that God has given to them."⁵

¹Elmer L. Towns, "Spiritual Gifts," in Evangelism and Church Growth, ed. Elmer L. Towns (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1995), 320.

²Richards, 99-100.

³Ernest Best, One Body in Christ (London: SPCK, 1955), 189.

⁴Ibid., 113.

⁵Robert E. Logan, Beyond Church Growth (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1989), 162.

Emphasizing the need members have of each other, Paul writes: "And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you" (1 Cor 12:21). Paul's plea for personal help in Rom 1:12 is an example of depending on each other for strength.

Describing mutual ministry, Richards points out its result in the individual.

It is the members of Christ's body in being with each other, and in their shared love and shared life discovering that the Spirit within flows out. That the Spirit within taps the special ability He has given each to contribute, and so nurtures the life of God and forms the character of God in each believing individual.¹

Mutuality of ministry is neither self-chosen nor man-determined. Richards further affirms, "It is divinely appointed and directly God-given."² God's purpose in this arrangement calls for caring for and equipping one another.

The Concept of Leadership

The call of all believers to minister and the appointment of some believers to leadership are both features of the life of the New Testament church. Jenson and Stevens stress that this as a biblical and practical imperative.³ In the context of spiritual gifts, Paul says

¹Richards, 101.

²Ibid., 93.

³Jenson and Stevens, 115.

that some are called to a special ministry (Eph 4:11, 12). He addressed his letter to Philippi, not to the usual "church of God," but "to the bishops, deacons, and all true Christians at Philippi" (Phil 1:1). Writing to Timothy, Paul gave instructions on the kind of persons to be chosen for local leadership (1 Tim 3:1-13; 2 Tim 2:2). The characteristics expected of a leader in 1 Tim 3:1-13 and 2 Tim 2:2 imply that "a Christian leader must exemplify the profession if he would convince others of the worthiness of his message."¹ Citing Acts 6:3 and 1 Tim 3:1-13, Cole suggests that the New Testament demands moral rather than intellectual qualities of Christian workers.²

In Rom 1:12 and in 1 Thess 5:11, Paul shows that the principle of mutual ministry and spiritual leadership stand side by side. In the Pauline churches all the members were equal. There was never a hierarchy but there were some who were outstanding.³ Leadership is thus an inevitable aspect in the life of the community.

¹"Must" [1 Tim 3:2], Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC), rev. ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1976-80), 7:297.

²R. Alan Cole, Exodus, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973), 141.

³C. K. Barrett, Church Ministry and Sacraments in the New Testament (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1965), 37.

The Ministry of Equipping

God's design for mutuality of ministries projected in 1 Cor 12:21-24 indicates the responsibility of the stronger members for the weaker ones. When a variety of gifts have been entrusted to certain individuals, these have the task of equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Eph 4:11,12).

The verb katartizo, which Paul used to describe the Christian leader's job in Eph 4:12, "prepare," is the same Greek word sometimes translated "to equip," which literally means "to put in working order" or "to repair." It is used in the classical Greek in reference to setting a broken bone.¹ Paul's usage of katartizō has the notion of bringing the saints to completion by restoring or training.²

Pothirajulu's study on lay training, from the documents of the Assemblies of the World Council of Churches, suggests that "training," "enabling," and "equipping" can be used interchangeably. Equipping suggests that there are in the church those who train or equip and others who need to be

¹Logan, 40-41.

²Andrew T. Lincoln, Ephesians, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 254.

trained or equipped.¹ Jenson and Stevens note that the tragedy in our churches today is the "lack of training."²

Pothirajulu's recommendation for equipping the laity for their task has two implications: (1) the laity is "ill-equipped" and (2) ministry is the ministry of the whole people of God.³ Agreeing with Pothirajulu, Edwards points out the urgency of the ministry of equipping. "The ministry of the laity as the whole people of God is the long overdue direction for the church, and only an equipped and challenged laity can respond."⁴

It is a biblical imperative that "every born-again Christian is called to and capable of ministry,"⁵ according to the gifts the Spirit has granted. If the members are called to accept their role as the performers of ministry, those entrusted with the gifts of the ascended Christ listed in Eph 4:11 accept their role as trainers and equippers, putting God's people to work. Writing on the role of

¹Doraisamy Pothirajulu, Laity Formation (Madras: CLS, 1993), 72.

²Jenson and Stevens, 169.

³Pothirajulu, 70-71.

⁴Rex D. Edwards, "A Strategy for Pastoral Renewal," Ministry, October 1998, 26.

⁵Raoul Dederen, "The Priesthood of All Believers," in Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 21.

ministers, Archibald claims, "As ministers we are pastors, teachers, with responsibilities of oversight, development, and training."¹ White compared the pastor to an overseer, supervisor, or superintendent of a job whose task is to train and guide those under his direction in accomplishing the task.² Both laity and clergy participate in ministry, resulting in the ministry of the whole people of God.

Purpose of Equipping Laity

If equipping laity for ministry is God's plan, the purpose for equipping has to be understood in the context of the ministerial nature of the church. Steinbron stresses that it is imperative for the laity to be equipped for the task to which they commit themselves. Equipping maximizes the laity's potential for ministry.³ Excellence is achieved through training.⁴ In this section the purpose for equipping laity is considered in the light of Paul's concept in Eph 4:11-13 and Jethro's model in Exod 18:16-22.

¹Arthur C. Archibald, Establishing the Converts (Philadelphia: Judson, 1952), 18.

²Ellen G. White, Gospel Workers (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1948), 197-198.

³Melvin J. Steinbron, Can the Pastor Do It Alone? (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1987), 93.

⁴Come, 105.

Eph 4:11-13

Paul lists the gifts of the ascended Christ in Eph 4:11: "And he gave some, apostles, and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers." The structure of the phrase "pastors and teachers" in the Greek suggests that "Paul intends to speak of two phases of one office."¹ Jesus, the good shepherd, was a master teacher. Milton holds that these gifts are "endowments of special abilities which will equip them for service."² The gifts of the spirit are granted to all Christian believers for the good of the church as a whole (1 Cor 12:7). According to the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,

Paul is not so much saying that certain gifts were given to men in order that they might become apostles, as that they who had received the gift were themselves being given to the church. The church was receiving to its ministry men who were properly equipped for their functions.³

These equipped and gifted persons are identified as equippers of the saints of God.

The purpose of the task of the gifted ones is explicit in vs. 12: equipping the saints for the work of ministry. Those who have the teacher-pastor gift are not to do the

¹"Pastors and Teachers," SDABC, 6:1023.

²C. Leslie Milton, Ephesians, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973), 149.

³"Apostles," SDABC, 6:1023.

work of the saints, but to enable the believers to become themselves God's ministers within and through the life of the church.¹

In Eph 4:12 Paul does not mention the ministries for which the saints have to be equipped. But the task of equipping strongly suggests the imperative of the involvement of pastor-teachers in equipping and the need for members to be equipped.

Edwards observes that there is a progression and development of thought in the three prepositional phrases: "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (vs. 12). He claims that "the second growing out of the first, and the third suggesting the ultimate goal of Christ's ministration through his servants reveal the ultimate purpose in equipping the saints for the work of ministry."² Lincoln affirms: "In carrying out their service the saints play their part in building up the body."³

Eph 4:7 indicates that all have received grace for service. In vs. 16 Paul implies a team ministry. In other words, the building up of the body is the work of believers

¹Milton, 151.

²Edwards, Every Believer, 53.

³Lincoln, 253.

and leaders. Vs. 13 emphasizes that this process continues until "we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." In these texts Paul's purpose for equipping has strong implications for lay involvement spurred on by the leader's job of equipping the laity for the work of ministry.

Exod 18:16-22

Exod 18:16 indicates that Moses regarded his judicial task as a teaching ministry, telling the Israelites of God's statutes and laws, making decisions and giving instructions on specific occasions. Cole observes that Jethro's critique of Moses was that he was wearing himself out unnecessarily in trying to do everything himself. Another problem was that the people were also wearing out because of delays in receiving justice.¹

Jethro proposed a solution to Moses' "do-it-alone" approach. Jethro's model has four basic parts: (1) Moses was to be the top leader; (2) Moses was to teach all laws to the people; (3) men capable of leadership must be selected; and (4) leaders of different ranks must be appointed. In

¹Cole, 141.

Jethro's model, Dybdahl observes, the responsibility for leadership and justice is widely shared with the people.¹

Jethro's instruction to Moses in Exod 18:20 implies that people will not know what to do unless they are equipped. In structuring his administrative plan, Jethro equipped Moses by instructing him to equip the people. Jethro specified that Moses' selection of helpers was to be made with great care. In vs. 21 Jethro lists the qualifications that leaders should have: "piety, moral integrity, and fairness."² The task of selection of able persons and delegation of responsibility argues for the inevitability of the leaders being equipped. This is implied in Jethro's instruction, "Thou shalt teach them . . . the work they must do" (vs. 20). Their leadership course was to include (1) decrees: specific enactments, (2) laws: general enactments, (3) the way to live: lifestyle and the path of duty, and (4) the duties which each was to perform.

In equipping the people and the leaders for their responsibility, Logan observes three spectacular results: (1) unlimited growth potentials, (2) equipped leaders, and

¹Jon L. Dybdahl, Exodus, The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1994), 160.

²"Able Men," SDABC, 1:591.

(3) high quality care for the members.¹ The above views imply that in Jethro's model there are explicit purposes (in teaching people) and in Paul's concept there are inherent purposes (in selecting leaders). Jethro's model argues for the necessity of efficiency for effective ministry.

God's Provision for Equipping Laity

God's provision for equipping is a vital part of His design for the laity. The Holy Spirit with His spiritual gifts is a powerful agent in equipping the laity for fulfilling the purpose of God. In addition, the Holy Spirit bestows gifts on God's people.

Holy Spirit

God's act of giving His Spirit provides a biblical basis, not only for the ministry of laity, but also for the ministry of equipping in which the Holy Spirit is the source of all power and the equipper Himself. Without the Holy Spirit all human efforts will be futile (Zech 4:6; 10:1). Green writes, "The whole equipping of the Christians for service is the realm of the Holy Spirit."²

When Moses complained to God, "I am not able to carry all this people alone, the burden is too heavy for me" (Num

¹Logan, 134-135.

²Michael Green, Evangelism Now and Then (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1979), 140.

11:14), God promised His Spirit would be upon the seventy elders of Israel (vss. 16, 17). It was the Spirit of God that enabled the leaders in the wilderness for their work of ministry. God gives the Spirit to every true believer and this Spirit calls each one into ministry and makes each one's ministry fruitful (1 Cor 12:7,11). Paul argued that all who belong to Christ have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them (Rom 8:9-17).

In the Gospel of John the Holy Spirit is a "Helper" (John 14:16), "Teacher" (John 15:13), and "Counselor" (John 16:7). Luke reveals the Spirit as the one who empowers for witness and ministry (Luke 24:48, 49; Acts 1:18). Mwansa claims, "Whatever the believers were to do would be a direct result of the presence of the Holy Spirit. This was simply because the Spirit is the means by which all ministry for Jesus is done."¹ Then it is logical to conclude that the "Acts of the Apostles" are the "Acts of the Holy Spirit" in the early church equipping the believers, resulting in an explosion of evangelism.

¹Pardon Kandanga Mwansa, "A Training Program in Pastoral Responsibility for Church Elders in Lusaka, Zambia" (D.Min. project, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI: 1993), 19.

Spiritual Gifts

Joel's prophecy about (Joel 2:28,29; Acts 2:17-20) and Jesus' promise (Acts 1:4,5,8) of the shower of the Holy Spirit found fulfillment on the day of Pentecost, resulting in an incredible display of spiritual gifts (Acts 2:4). Three main sources give information about spiritual gifts: Rom 12; 1 Cor 12-14; and Eph 4. In all these passages, descriptions of spiritual gifts appear in the context of the body of Christ. The lists of the gifts in these passages are placed in columns to show those that are repeated.

Rom 12:6-8

prophecy
teaching

service
giving
leadership
mercy

1 Cor 12-14

prophecy
teaching

service

wisdom
knowledge
faith
healing
miracles
discerning of Spirits
tongues
interpretation of tongues
helping
administration

Eph 4:11

prophecy
pastor/teaching
apostles
evangelists

These lists of gifts are most certainly not complete. Paul seems rather to have given enough examples to serve his

purpose.¹ Just as he mentioned only a few parts of the physical body to make his point, so he points out a few spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:14-26). Though spiritual gifts are granted individually to every person (vs. 7), Paul maintains that the purpose of the distribution of gifts by the Spirit is the common good (vs. 7; Eph 4:11-13).

The Holy Spirit distributes His gifts to believers in accordance with His knowledge of their capacities and the needs existing in the experience of each individual.² White assures believers that, "if they are connected with Christ, if the gifts of the Spirit are theirs, the poorest and the most ignorant of His disciples will have a power that will tell upon hearts. God makes them the channel for the outpouring of the highest influence in the universe."³

Flynn defines spiritual gifts as "a spirit-given ability for Christian service."⁴ Spiritual gifts are described as skills or abilities that enable each Christian to perform a function in the body of Christ with ease and

¹John Calvin, Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, vol. 1, Calvin's Commentaries (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1948), 1:401.

²"As He Will," SDABC, 6:772.

³Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1940), 746.

⁴Leslie B. Flynn, 19 Gifts of the Spirit (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1976), 21.

effectiveness. Spiritual gifts are the tools to do the job well,¹ qualifying the believers to serve as ministers in the church and in the world.² Jenson and Stevens view God's act of giving spiritual gifts as God's design for equipping the church for ministry.³

Pointing out the purpose of these gifts to equip or develop individuals fully into Christlikeness, Jenson and Stevens urge believers to exercise their gifts for the maturing of the body.⁴ Come claims, "It is only by the proper function of each of these many diverse parts that the whole body has unity and strength."⁵ Commenting on the function of spiritual gifts, White writes: "God has set in the church different gifts. These are precious in their proper places, and all these may act a part in the work of preparing a people for Christ's soon coming."⁶

¹Damsteegt, 212.

²Mwansa, 24.

³Jenson and Stevens, 24.

⁴Ibid., 159-160.

⁵Come, 81.

⁶White, Gospel Workers, 481.

The Role of Pastors

Studied in the context of Paul's overall notion of ministry, Eph 4:11-12 affirms the role of a pastor as an equipper (2 Tim 2:2). The punctuation, in the RSV as well as the KJV, after "saints" creates serious consequences for the theology of the lay persons and the pastor.¹ Commenting on this text, Edwards writes: "Christ has given His servants to equip the saints themselves for the work of ministry." He observes that the gifted persons are equippers or trainers of the believers. The church leaders, headed by the pastor, have the special ministry of equipping the believers. Edwards claims that they might as well be regarded as "ministers" to ministers.²

The doctrine of spiritual gifts places the responsibility for the training of the congregation on the shoulders of ministers.³ Lincoln would agree with Edwards, for he claims that the officers are Christ's gifts to the church. He cautions that such a perspective on their role should never lead to self-gratification.⁴ Dederen also agrees with this position:

¹Burrill, 47.

²Edwards, Every Believer, 53-54.

³Damsteegt, 211.

⁴Lincoln, 254.

Some are called and set aside, ordained to the sole occupation of stewards in the household of God and shepherds of his flock. They are gifts of God to the church. They are believer priests chosen by God and recognized by the church as endowed with appropriate gifts for leading God's people in fulfilling the commission entrusted to the whole body (Eph 4:11-16).¹

Their position is special because of their function, not because of their status.

Ellen G. White positively defines the role and function of the minister with startling specificity:

Christian ministers . . . have a broader work than many have recognized. They are not only to minister to the people, but to teach them to minister. They should not only give instructions in right principles, but educate their hearers to impart these principles.²

She further emphasizes that the teaching or the equipping role of the pastor should take more time than the preaching role.³

White locates the reason for the nonparticipation of many members when she says, "Many would be willing to work if they were taught how to begin."⁴ If the counsel, "every church should be a training school for Christian workers,"⁵

¹Dederen, 21.

²Ellen G. White, The Ministry of Healing (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1942), 149.

³Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 7:20.

⁴White, Ministry of Healing, 148-149.

⁵Ibid.

is heeded, the minister will be a "minister" in the business of training ministers. In agreement with White, Knowles suggests: "Two things must be done to create a productive lay working force: teach them how to begin and tell them where to begin."¹ White warns: "To neglect this work is surely to invite spiritual feebleness and decay."²

Biblical Models for Equipping

In the ministry of the whole people of God, the biblical models for the pastor's ministry of equipping both in the Old Testament and New Testament have growth implications for the laity, individually and corporately. This section examines three models of equipping in the New Testament. They are (1) methods Jesus used in the process of training his disciples, (2) Paul's model of leadership development, and (3) the small-group approach in the New Testament.

Methods of Jesus

Jesus was a master teacher and the greatest trainer of His time. He was a great strategist who equipped a handful of key persons, the Twelve. Mark 3:13 clearly indicates that in inviting His trainees to be with Him, Christ

¹George E. Knowles, "The Urgency of Territorial Assignment," Ministry, August 1977, 16.

²White, Desire of Ages, 825.

intended for them to successfully carry out the responsibilities entrusted to them.

Pointing to Christ as the model in selecting and equipping His disciples for ministry, Logan writes: "He did not select as His disciples men the religious establishment might have considered cream of the crop; instead He chose those diamonds in the rough in whom He saw great hidden potential."¹ A. B. Bruce observes that Jesus was willing to gain many disciples from the dangerous classes as well as from the despised. He was content with fishermen, publicans, and quarreling zealots for apostles.²

In describing Jesus as an ideal equipper, this section focuses on some of His training methods: instruction, demonstration, involvement, and evaluation.

Instruction

In instructing His disciples Jesus aimed at the development of their knowledge of the Scripture, their behavior and character traits, and their skills for effective ministry.³ When Jesus taught, He incorporated His life experiences with people from all walks of life: women,

¹Logan, 44.

²A. B. Bruce, The Training of the Twelve (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1971), 35-37.

³Jenson and Stevens, 170-175.

children, scribes, pharisees, prophets, beggars, and lepers into his teaching. The natural events of life--weddings, funerals, dinner parties, farming, Sabbath observance, praying, the market place--were turned into His training environments.¹ Bill Bright writes: "Jesus taught the multitudes through comparative analogy. Using concrete objects, He helped the people to picture the shedding of His blood and the breaking of His body."² Jesus made abstract biblical principles become visible to the mind.

Luke clearly states in Acts 4:13 that the disciples' association with Jesus and His quality of teaching impacted the unlearned. Commenting on Jesus' effective participation in the disciples' process of learning, White affirms: "Christ in His teaching dealt with men individually. It was by personal contact and association that He trained the twelve. It was in private, often to but one listener, that He gave His most precious instruction."³

¹Stephen Hoke, "Designing Learning Experiences," in Establishing Ministry Training, ed. Robert W. Ferris (Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 1995), 92.

²Bill Bright, Come Help Change Our World (San Bernardino, CA: Campus Crusade for Christ International, 1979), 192.

³Ellen G. White, Education (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1952), 231.

Demonstration

In the training of the Twelve for the apostolic work, hearing and seeing the words and works of Christ occupied an important place.¹ His disciples observed Him as He debated with the Pharisees (Matt 19:13), Sadducees, and scribes, and watched Him heal the sick and the blind. They accompanied Him on His journeys and shared His trials and hardships.² Jesus practiced what He taught theoretically. The disciples watched Christ practicing the principles He taught in real-life situations. In this regard He was quite different from the rabbis, who merely taught about God from the Torah,³ but could not tell their pupils to imitate them.⁴ Jesus recommended Himself as the model of what His disciples ought to become (John 13:15). His earnest teaching to love one another and to love the unlovable was effectively demonstrated in His vicarious death which impacted the disciples and motivated them for ministry (Rom 5:7, 8).

¹Bruce, 41.

²White, Education, 85.

³Michael J. Wilkins, Following the Master (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 86.

⁴Poovelingam R. Solomon, "Ashram: A Contextualized Model for Discipling the Hindus of Tamil Nadu" (D.Min. diss., Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 1993), 56.

Involvement

Jesus followed the principle of participant learning. He did not teach His disciples in a classroom during scheduled hours. He wanted them to have hands-on experience. He involved them in various projects to find out if they were able to apply the principles He taught them.¹

Logan observes that Jesus gave His apprentices various responsibilities in the group. The disciples failed in their attempt to free the demon-possessed boy (Mark 9:14-29; Matt 17:14-21). Discovering their inabilities, Jesus instructed them and further equipped them. Discovering in them deeper interest and commitment, Jesus gave the disciples significant responsibilities.² Jesus also sent His disciples on a short-term mission among the Jews. He commissioned the seventy, instructing them on the principles of visitation. They returned rejoicing over their successful attempts (Luke 1:1-25). After working with Christ for nearly three and a half years the disciples were able to disciple others.

¹Ibid., 57-58.

²Logan, 148.

Evaluation

Having taught and involved His disciples in ministry, Jesus evaluated their progress in a way that allowed them to go on to the next level of development.¹ In rebuking Peter, "Get thee behind me Satan," Jesus was pointing out the source of Peter's thoughts and innovations (Matt 16:28). Rebuking and correcting were integral parts of Jesus' approach. Evaluation is not synonymous with criticism and judgment. Evaluation is encouragement, help, and commitment.² In this way Jesus equipped the unlearned to be effective in ministry.

The Pauline Model of Leadership Development

Paul's model of leadership development resulted in congregations equipped to carry on the task (1 Cor 1:2, 7; 1 Thess 1:1, 8). He moved in an orderly way from place to place, forming new groups of believers. He revisited the groups, appointed elders (1 Tim 3:1-15), and gave instructions to them on how to nurture the flock (2 Tim 2:2, 15) so he could move on.³ Pierson observes dual planning in Paul's ministry: soul conquest and soul conservation through

¹Jenson and Stevens, 174.

²Ibid.

³Roger E. Hedlund, Evangelization and Church Growth (Madras: C.G.R.C., 1992), 167-168.

training strong church leaders.¹ Both Jesus and Paul, by practicing the imperative of raising up leaders from within the local body, allowed the church to learn and grow in its stewardship.

The mentor-apprentice relationship is characteristic of Paul's model, as indicated in 2 Tim 2:2. Leaders are mentored to mentor others, resulting in an ongoing process of mentoring.² Neighbour observes that Paul was anxious for Timothy to learn the art of equipping members. Paul urges Timothy to carefully evaluate those who are to be trained (mentored).³ Paul's instruction to Timothy implies carefulness in selecting the trainees. If the Pauline model is adopted in a cell-group approach to ministry, it will effect a never-ending process of equipping leaders. Leaders are developed through orientation, involvement, and equipping.⁴

¹Robert H. Pierson, So You Want to Be a Leader (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1966), 134.

²Logan, 131.

³Ralph W. Neighbour, The Shepherd's Guide Book: Spiritual and Practical Foundations for Cell Group Leaders (Houston: Touch Outreach Ministries, 1996), 46.

⁴Logan, 147-148.

Small Groups in the New Testament

Since the meeting places of the early church were the homes of the believers, the home churches' must have consisted of small groups (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Phil 2:2). The early church was organized on a small-group principle.¹

Equipping through interpersonal relationships is the characteristic feature of small groups. Because of its structure, the biblical functions of a healthy church can be effectively realized in a church made up of small or cell groups.² The house churches of the New Testament (Acts 2:46; 5:42; 20:20; Rom 16:5) could effectively carry out their functions, such as submitting to one another, caring for each other, teaching, admonishing, encouraging, and edifying, as instructed by the apostles (Acts 2:42-47; Rom 12:10; Gal 6:2; Eph 5:21; Col 3:16; 1 Thess 5:11). This resulted in both internal and external growth of the church.

One of the underlying purposes of the small-group approach is the goal of providing a lay pastor for every member of the congregation.³ Jenson believes in the

¹Burrill, 119.

²Logan, 121.

³Palmer Becker, Called to Equip: A Training and Resource Manual for Pastors (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1993), 47.

important objective of developing deep interpersonal relationships through members' involvement and commitment to each other. This also reveals the ministerial nature of the church. Jenson notes three functions of small groups: (1) intimacy, which is developed through deepening fellowship resulting in the growth of the individuals; (2) accountability, in which the "iron-sharpening-iron" principle is in action; and (3) stimulating and encouraging one another, for which the small group is uniquely equipped.¹

Both quality and quantity growth can be achieved in the small-group approach because of the group's structure and function. Becker points to the benefits of the cell-church model of equipping: "Hurting Christians are finding comfort, growing Christians are finding new opportunities to minister. New Christians are entering the church."²

The biblical and theological foundations for equipping the laity for ministry were traced in this chapter. The next chapter evaluates specific needs for ministry within the body of Christ.

¹Jenson and Stevens, 150-155.

²Becker, 11.

CHAPTER III

EVALUATING THE NEED FOR A DYNAMIC MINISTRY TO THE INACTIVE MEMBERS

What Jesus pointed out in Matt 24:12, 13 implies three vital facts describing the condition of His church:

1. There will be increasing wickedness in and around the church, hence it is inevitable that the active people of God, in the church, will face conflict.

2. In the body of Christ, there will be members who will not be able to cope with conflict situations but will grow cold and lose their first love (Rev 2:4) and become inactive.

3. There will also be members who will stand firm and cope with conflict situations. These consistent, active Christians have the responsibility of restoring spirituality among those who have grown cold and become inactive.

This chapter answers three major questions:

1. Why do church members become inactive?
2. What are the psychological and theological dynamics that occur in the life of inactive members?

3. What type of ministry is needed to activate members?

In order to answer these questions, interviews were conducted with active and inactive members, senior pastors, and conference leaders.

Church growth literature and literature from the areas of sociology, psychology, and theology were also examined.

From the interviews, one major point was clearly established: Those members who were unable to cope with anxiety-provoking conflict situations removed themselves from the conflict settings, but suffered a sense of loss and frustration. Their cry is that someone from the church would meet their needs and listen to their problems. It became very clear that a ministry of caring for one another and a ministry to the inactive members in the church are vitally important.

Factors Responsible for Members Becoming Inactive

What is it that causes pillars in the church to become pew sitters? Why do people leave the church? John Savage has carefully investigated the factors contributing to members becoming inactive. From his research on the psychodynamic movement of an individual from active to inactive status, Savage has developed an elaborate scheme called the "Anxiety-Anger Complex." He found that the movement away from active church involvement is often

triggered by some kind of initial anxiety. Hence for Savage, anxiety is crucial to the understanding of this subject.¹

Bandura holds that anxiety is the affect (feeling) produced by an arousal period of short or long duration when a person feels knocked out of equilibrium (emotional, psychical, or rational balance).² Schmale claims that anxiety is the first psychic awareness of discomfort and the first and immediate reaction to the perception of psychic tension in any situation.³ Citing Kierkegaard and Freud, Savage affirms that anxiety functions as a signal when danger is confronted or as a prod to action. It is neither destructive nor constructive.⁴

In an anxiety-provoking setting, in order to reduce anxiety and return to the state of peace or equilibrium, some people choose to leave the church, while others resolve their anxiety by coping with the conflict situation. The reasons why anxiety comes to the fore can be traced in

¹John S. Savage, The Apathetic and Bored Church Member (Reynoldsburg, OH: LEAD Consultants, 1976), 3-4.

²Albert Bandura, Aggression: A Social Learning Analysis (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1973).

³Arthur H. Schmale, Jr., "A Genetic View of Affects," The Psychoanalytical Study of the Child 29 (1964): 294.

⁴Savage, 20

the learning experiences from childhood to adulthood.³ Anxiety may come from a variety of settings and sources within the life of the church. What triggers anxiety, making the church member so uncomfortable that he or she becomes angry enough to leave the church, is the content of this section. There appear to be three significant issues that bring on anxiety: (1) sociological issues, (2) institutional church-oriented issues, and (3) personal spiritual issues.

Sociological Issues

From personal experience and after seeing the results of the conference evangelistic campaigns, I have come to realize that sociological issues are responsible for many people becoming inactive in the life of the church. Out of sixty members baptized in an evangelistic crusade in 1975 in my home village of Kamiseripudhur, only ten remain active in 1999. Those who left the church could not identify with the people of lower caste among whom the church building was located.

In 1992, I was appointed as pastor of a newly planted church. After one year, of the fifty-four members who were baptized and who had pledged to be active, thirty had become inactive and left the church. In this case, people from the

³Schmale, 294.

lower caste could not endure the pressures from those of the upper castes who seemed to be active in the church.

In 1998, the North Tamil Conference launched a "25 Village Program"¹ in four major districts (Karur, Panruti, Dharmapuri, and Chengelput). An average of 800 baptisms were reported in each of these four districts. In spite of the pastors' and lay workers' efforts to maintain what had been gained, after six months, over 60 percent of the membership had been lost.²

From the above experiences it seems that, in spite of changing times, caste has been an inevitable issue in determining the stability of church membership. Interviews with the ministerial secretary and executive secretary of the conference revealed three reasons why converts dropped out: caste barriers, family problems, and economic difficulties.

Caste Barriers

In his detailed study on the castes and tribes of India, Vasantharaj Albert affirms that "Indian society is the most complex society on the face of the earth. People

¹An intensive evangelistic campaign covering 25 villages around a town, similar to satellite evangelism.

²Pastor Anbalagon, executive secretary, and Pastor Mannasseh, ministerial secretary, of North Tamil Conference, interview by author, February 26, 1999, Tiruchi.

are vertically divided by the languages and horizontally divided by caste system."¹ Aravindan's view, that "Tamil Nadu has always been the hot bed of caste politics,"² indicates the seriousness of this social reality which also affects religious life. Because Christianity has been identified with the untouchables,³ many converts from the higher castes have found themselves as "fish out of water." For example, Mariadass's Adventism grew cold when his community did not allow him to bury his dead son in the Perambalur public graveyard because he had become an Adventist.

The social reality of casteism is not only a barrier to conversion but also keeps from remaining as active members those who have been pushed out from their own culture. Wagner, writing on the problem of holding new converts, arrives at this same conclusion.

Even if the message gets through and people become Christian believers, residual cultural differences make it virtually impossible to hold that new convert in any meaningful way in the fellowship of the church to which the evangelist belongs.⁴

¹Vasantharaj Albert, "Castes and Tribes of India," in Mission Mandate (Madras: Mission 2000, 1992), 605.

²D. Aravindan and L. R. Jegadhasan, "Burning Ambitions," India Today, October 19, 1998, 20.

³Albert, 602, 608.

⁴C. Peter Wagner, The Healthy Church (Ventura CA: Regal, 1996), 62.

Family Problems

Out of the ten inactive members interviewed, three blamed their non-Adventist spouses for stopping their active participation. All three also had some conflict with other members of their families while they were active in the church. Four members indicated that they were uncomfortable pretending to be well and attending services while they were suffering unresolved family problems. One divorcee had been conducting a house church. She is yet to be encouraged by the church to be part of the church fellowship. Another member, a lady from a highly affluent family, very active in the church for over ten years, dropped out when her husband died. Her Adventism perished because of pressure from her non-Adventist parents.

According to Savage, conflict with another family member over church issues was also one of the significant precipitants that brought on the feeling of anxiety.¹ In the South Indian context it is a cultural taboo to go against the wishes of the family.

Economic Difficulties

Church members, both active and inactive, are not free from the fear of economic crisis. Due to this, their participation in tithing and other activities is hindered.

¹Savage, 56.

To maintain the status quo, members seek government jobs, foregoing regular worship attendance. Those unable to attend worship services regularly became recognized as inactive by the active core in the church. Conflicts such as these, from a variety of sources, can pressure active members to become passive pew sitters and can even cause people to eventually remove themselves from their active church involvement.

Institutional Church-oriented Issues

It is often assumed that a person drops out of the church because he or she has grown cold spiritually and has no desire for spiritual things. Although this may be the ultimate condition when a person leaves the church, such persons may have been zealous in their search for an answer but finally concluded that the church is impotent to meet their need. Neighbour says that they are embarrassed and have become bitter because their attempts to meet God more intimately failed.¹ Their embarrassing experience implies that their emotional and spiritual needs were not met and they were pushed into an anxiety-provoking situation.

In the interviews, the inactive members were able to tell clearly what triggered their anxiety. It came from a variety of settings and sources within the life of the

¹Neighbour, 10.

church. Because of their status of helplessness, they tended to blame the institution for a lack of fellowship, conflict, lack of support, poor worship services, and lack of active involvement in ministry.

Lack of Fellowship

Several inactive members who were interviewed pointed out the spirit of warm fellowship that seemed to be effective and alive among Pentecostal and other evangelicals, but was lacking among Adventists. Dudley's survey affirms the lack of fellowship as the strongest factor in influencing a person to leave the church.¹

Quoting Somesekhar on church life in India, Subbamma contends that the quality of Christian fellowship in many congregations is not such as to attract newcomers or to bind the existing fellowship into a harmonious family. She further says that the warmth and reality of fellowship in Christ, expressing itself in care and concern for one another, are often sadly lacking.² Writing on the importance of fellowship which results in effective interpersonal relationships, Wagner claims that an essential part of being a Christian and a member of the body of Christ

¹Roger L. Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr., Adventures in Church Growth (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1983), 147.

²Subbamma, 7.

is developing relationships with other Christians. Many churches do not grow because they do not satisfy the deep need of men and women for meaningful fellowship which they expect to see fulfilled when they join a church. Fellowship is a crucial key to assimilating new members.¹

Conflict with Others

Dudley's research indicates that an unpleasant experience with other members or the pastor was another frequently cited event that moved individuals away from the denomination.² Discussing the issue of interpersonal relationship, Morgan agrees with Dudley when he says, "Interpersonal conflict is a primary cause of burn out."³ Feelings of anxiety intensify because of conflict situations which a member did not expect to find in the body of Christ. Savage's research showed that a member's conflict with the pastor was one of the significant precipitants that brought on the feeling of anxiety.⁴ Lauterback observed that the pastor's demand for members' spirituality not only created in them guilt for their spiritual weakness, but also pushed

¹Wagner, 129

²Dudley and Cummings, 147.

³Robert J. Morgan, "Keeping Leaders Aflame," Leadership 17 (Fall 1996): 46.

⁴Savage, 56

them into conflict settings.¹ In doing so, the pastor became the lightning rod for conflict. Many times such conflicts remain unresolved.²

Miller describes the seriousness of unresolved conflicts. He says that many conflicts which go unresolved in the congregations do so because the member holds a grudge of a hurtful memory.³ It is evident from interviews that these unresolved conflicts not only minimize a member's church involvement but also stunt the spiritual growth.

Lack of Church Support in Personal Crisis

Blaming the institutional church, inactive members repeatedly complain that neither the pastor nor other members cared about their personal crises. This implies that they expected the church to care for their unresolved conflicts.

In his pastoral ministry, Steinbron observed that members lost interest in church activities because their personal and family problems were not given due attention. People felt they were not being helped adequately with their

¹Mack Lauterback, "How I Realized I Was Hurting People," Leadership 14 (Spring 1993): 31.

²Jim Henry, "Character Forged from Conflict," Leadership 19 (Spring 1998): 26.

³Paul M. Miller, Leading the Family of God (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1981), 150.

social, financial, relational, and employment struggles. He stressed that "their cries were not being heard and hurts were not being healed."¹ Anderson blames the responsible community of believers. "There is no weeping, no special supplication, no fasting, no searching of hearts on the part of the church officer."²

Poor Worship Services and Programs

Traditional worship services that are irrelevant to the context do not quench the spiritual thirst of many. Hence people decide to stop attending. Rainer claims that members are hungry for a great touch of God's spirit.³ Commenting on the spiritual condition of churches, Wagner says, "The Church continues to exist but the power of God is notably absent."⁴ Hurting souls, therefore, find no soothing treatment in a meaningless service. Aldrich contends that fog in the pew is because of mist in the pulpit, pointing out the importance of the spirituality of the pastor.⁵

¹Steinbron, 53.

²Roy Allan Anderson, The Shepherd Evangelist (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1950), 589.

³Thom S. Rainer, Giant Awakenings (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 17.

⁴Wagner, 153.

⁵Joseph Aldrich, Life-Style Evangelism: Crossing Traditional Boundaries to Reach the Unbelieving World (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1981), 105.

Wagner argues that a poor worship service is a contributing factor to arrested spiritual development and an obstacle to church growth. He goes on to say that those who worship God must meet God, and His presence must be real to every individual.¹

In his book on the eight essential qualities of healthy churches, Schwarz affirms that when the Holy Spirit is truly at work He will have a concrete effect upon the way a worship service is conducted. Spirit-filled worship impacts the entire atmosphere of the gathering. He claims: "When worship is inspiring, it draws people to the services 'all by itself.'"²

Lack of Active Involvement in Ministry

Those who have become inactive did not show sufficient interest in regular attendance, church activities, tithe and offerings, nor had they been mobilized by the local church for ministry. Wilson observes that some skilled members who wanted to serve others exit the back door, possibly because there is no meaningful place for them to become involved.³

¹Wagner, 131.

²Christian A. Schwarz, Natural Church Development (Carol Stream, IL: Church Smart, 1996), 31.

³Marlene Wilson, "Turning Pewsitters into Players," Leadership 17 (Fall 1996): 42.

Lambdin contends that, "because they have not been enlisted for training they have become inactive."¹

It is the church's responsibility to mobilize members for ministry. If it does not, those who feel no burden will be continuously backsliding. Ellen White says that "the ability God has given if not exercised degenerates. More than this, when the churches are left to inactivity" Satan will destroy their spirituality and, "cause them to fall as dead weights upon the church."² Dudley claims that apostasies tend to drop if the church quickly involves new converts in the life and ministry of the congregation rather than ignoring them.³

Personal Spiritual Issues

Pastors have observed that there are also many personal spiritual issues that contribute to feelings of anxiety and that cause a member to become inactive. These include hurried baptisms, low-level nurture, and decline in personal spirituality.

¹J. E. Lambdin, Building a Church Training Program (Nashville: Convention, 1946), 64.

²White, Testimonies, 6:425.

³Dudley and Cummings, 136.

Hurried Baptisms

Blaming both the individual and the institutions, Anderson holds that hurried baptism is a vital reason why new members stray.¹ Bresee states that because of premature baptism, a baby may be "still born."² Even when it survives birth, a premature baby is in greater danger than one born after full gestation.

The four pastors interviewed held that the experience of being born again was lacking among the inactive members in their churches. Without the experience of being born again, as Wagner claims, "They may be church members, but they are not members of the family of God, nor will they be until they are born again."³ It is a huge challenge for the church to enlist and mature every member who comes into the fold. Yet doing so is indeed a preventive measure.

Low-level Nurture

A low level of spiritual nurture is a significant characteristic of most churches in the North Tamil Conference. People who responded emotionally to attractive advertisements were baptized but never really became part of

¹Anderson, 587.

²Floyd Bresee, "Maintaining the Harvest: Reaching the Unreached for God," Adventist Review, November 7-14, 1987, 19.

³Wagner, 121.

the church because of low-level nurture.¹ Bresee warns that "evangelism that is not followed by careful maturing and discipling of new converts will ultimately destroy itself."²

Warren distinguishes the active from the inactive in terms of spiritual maturity and commitment to the truth.³ White says that stony-ground hearers are not rooted in Christ. Their soul ceases to draw nourishment from Christ and spiritually dies out of the heart.⁴ Such members are to be enlisted and matured in the knowledge of Scripture and the love of God.

Decline in Personal Spirituality

When people have trouble holding their lives together or when they are unable to follow Jesus faithfully, they go away because of "the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things" (Matt 4:19). Warren says: "A barrier to spiritual growth for many people is not lack of commitment, but over-

¹Pastor Manual Manasseh, Ministerial Secretary for the North Tamil Conference, interview by author, January 10, 1999, Tiruchy.

²Bresee, 19.

³Rick Warren, The Purpose Driven Church (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 129.

⁴Ellen G. White, Christ's Object Lessons (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1941), 51.

commitment to the wrong things."¹ People must be taught to make wise commitments.

White accounts for the decline in personal spirituality by pointing out that people accept Christ as their Savior, but do not believe that He will give them power to overcome their sins. They do not have a personal relation with a living Savior and their characters reveal tendencies both hereditary and cultivated. White affirms that "lack of prayer is the slippery ground that Satan prepares for God's children to slip away from his fold."²

White sums up the spiritual reasons for backsliding as "trials, perplexities of life, striving for mastery, lack of confidence and peace, neglect of prayer, lack of knowledge, lack of experience with God and the exercise of sinful traits of character."³ Such people, as White writes, if there is no more transformation in their hearts, will drift away.⁴

Anderson's analogy clearly reveals human nature. He says, "Sheep wander, not because they are bad, but because they are sheep. They have a propensity for getting lost.

¹Warren, 344-345.

²White, Testimonies, 1:63.

³Ellen G. White, Sons and Daughters of God (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982), 89.

⁴White, Christ's Object Lessons, 50.

Sometimes sheer stupidity will separate one from the flock."¹ For whatever reason, a wandering sheep is at risk of becoming completely lost. An investigation into the behavioral patterns in the gradual stages of becoming lost is vital to a proper understanding of factors contributing to the decision to drop out of active church life.

Dynamics in the Life of the Inactive Members

An investigation into the psychological and theological dynamics that occur in the life of an inactive member clearly indicates emotional and spiritual needs.

The Psychological Dynamics

The issues in the previous section have a direct effect upon the behavior of persons who move from an active relationship with the church to a completely inactive status. This section deals with the psychological dynamics noted in the three stages of a member who gradually moves towards inactivity. The first is an initial stage of anxiety and anger, the second manifests feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, while the third is a stage of separation and boredom that leads to complete inactivity.

¹Anderson, 609.

Anxiety and Anger

In the early movement away from an active church relationship, an incident may produce some kind of anxiety that makes the individual very uncomfortable. The initial reaction to anxiety is to find a comfortable state again while seeking resolutions of the conflict.

The lack of resolution of the conflict or problem keeps the level of anxiety high, generates anger, and creates distance. When anxiety reaches the stage of acute discomfort, the church member attempts to resolve those feelings by rationalizing what is going on or by confronting the person, organization, or situation.¹ In its initial stage, anxiety is indicated by verbal signs such as: "It's too much"; "It's no use"; "I can't take it anymore"; "I give up." Such phrases indicate that a person is considering moving away from the church. If these signals are not picked up and no one helps resolve the anxiety, the individual becomes angry.

For a member moving away from active participation in the church, anger is a prominent experience that needs to be properly understood. Saussy states that "anxiety and anger are reactions to separation."² Anger, says Saussy, is

¹Savage, 56-57.

²Carrol Saussy, The Gift of Anger (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 31.

"difficult to isolate, difficult to express; anger is also difficult to define."¹ Pastor-theologian Andrew Lester defines anger as a response to the threat to selfhood: to the physical self, the social self, and self-esteem. This threat produces anxiety, which in turn produces both fear and anger.² Saussy further claims, "The emotion of anger struggles for recognition. It sometimes explodes in rage or violence before its message is heard."³

When the anxiety level becomes too great to tolerate, people give verbal signs for others to hear. If there is no response, the signals will change to anger. In the process, expressions of anger at others and the feeling of inward blame and guilt will be noted. As long as there is a chance for resolution of anxiety and anger, persons will remain active. When there is no resolution and the anger levels becomes too great to tolerate, active church members will change their behavior pattern. Absence from worship service is the first behavioral indicator of dropping out. Being discouraged, the member then decides to stop attending

¹Ibid., 15.

²Andrew Lester, Coping with Your Anger: A Christian Guide (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 22-23.

³Saussy, 14.

church. Absenteeism, Anderson notes, has the potential to lead to apostasy.¹

Helplessness and Hopelessness

Unresolved conflicts lead a person to hold feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. These feelings represent two distinct and separate ways in which individuals who are unable to find a solution to a perceived loss of desired gratification respond, causing many to want to give up.²

The feeling of helplessness is the most frequent symptom of neurotic disturbances.³ As the dropout suffers a loss of desired gratification, feelings of uneasiness, apprehension, tension, insecurity, and inferiority mount.⁴ Baker observes that the stage of helplessness causes individuals to believe that their person and action do not make a difference. As a result they give up, put forth no more effort, learn to be helpless, and become depressed.⁵ Baker's description of a depressed person is revealing: sad,

¹Anderson, 597.

²Schmale, 294.

³Dictionary of Behavioral Science, ed. Benjamin Wolman (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1973), s.v. "anxiety."

⁴Clyde M. Narramore, Encyclopedia of Psychological Problems (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1966), s.v. "depression."

⁵Don Baker and Emery Nester, Depression (Basing Stoke, UK: Marshall, 1984), 157-158.

empty, alone, hopeless, afraid, worthless, ambivalent, rejected, insignificant, and unworthy.¹

With all these feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, a person may no longer attempt anything and finally gives up. Even at this stage, it is evident from the interviews that the dropout views the church as a very important object in life and still talks about returning. At this stage, it is crucial that the active church be sensitive to what is happening in the life of the potential dropout. In doing so, Anderson affirms, "Often his confidence can be won back and before he goes too far he can be reinstated in the fold."²

Apathy and Boredom

Following the stage of helplessness and hopelessness come the effects of apathy and boredom. As helplessness and hopelessness indicate that a person is giving up, apathy and boredom represent the final stages of having given up.³

In the apathetic church member there is a form of survival when everything else seems lost. According to Ruch, apathy is indifference, lack of emotions, and loss of

¹Ibid., 18, 127.

²Anderson, 609.

³Savage, 63.

interest in one's surroundings.¹ This leads to a loss of contact with friends and institutional relationships resulting in loneliness. Savage observed that the bored individual has given up the possibility that there is strength within the self to bring about a change in the person's condition. Bored people have turned their anger inward without blaming the outward institution.²

In all the stages of movement towards inactivity, the person suffers a loss. It was very evident from the interviews, whether they blame the outward institution or the inward self, and it is evident from research that there is an inner urge to find solutions to the unresolved conflicts in the life of the church member.

The Theological Dynamics

It is often assumed that persons who have left the church have sinned in the eyes of God. Research indicates that these individuals are aching, struggling, anxious people who have great difficulty in living in an anxiety-provoking setting. They need, as Anderson claims, "warm, friendly, sympathetic understanding."³ The following

¹Floyd L. Ruch, Psychology and Life (Chicago: Scott Foresman, 1963), 641.

²Savage, 7.

³Anderson, 609.

theological dynamics operate in spite of their behavior: (1) they have the ability to articulate the Christian faith; (2) they have few conflicts with theological issues; (3) they maintain their relationship with Christ; and (4) they have an affinity with the institutional church.

Ability to Articulate the
Christian Faith

Savage's research indicates that the inactive can articulate their faith better than the less active. However, guilt, grief, shame, and blame orientation are evident in their behavior and suppress their ability to talk clearly. For some who were unsure of their faith, it may be because "the church was providing a difficult setting in which to live, and the ensuing disillusionment and anxiety challenged their faith."¹

At the initial stage when a person is moving away from participation, religious language is suppressed because of the anxiety-provoking event. When the individual has dropped out, he or she is able to recover some of the lost religious language and other theological dynamics.² This is because they cannot easily rid themselves of their spiritual experiences.

¹Savage, 59.

²Ibid., 94.

Conflict over Theological Issues

Interviews with inactive members reveal that church standards and theological matters were not vital reasons for members to leave the church. Instead, as I perceive, the lack of interpersonal relationships and unresolved conflicts among members were the vital reasons. Moreover, conflict over cultural practices considered inappropriate in the church also triggered spiritual problems.

Relationship with Christ

Several inactive members claimed to have a deep relationship with Christ. It was observed that they did not give up their central beliefs or stop being Christian witnesses to the world. They seemed to be strong outside the church. Of such members, Venden says, "they find strength in the mystical body of Christ. They never intend to backslide from God."¹

Affinity with the Church

It was observed that only a very few joined other denominations after leaving the Adventist Church. This may be because they felt rejected, not that they felt that the SDA Church was not the true church. Church pastors affirmed that most inactive members did not move to another

¹Morris Venden, Hard to Be Lost (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1991), 10.

congregation. They were not church hoppers. Though they decided to drop out, they were waiting for someone from the church to visit them, because they considered that "the Adventist church is the remnant church, and for them there is no better doctrine anywhere." My own experience suggests that such people are longing to be part of the body of Christ.

Need for a Dynamic Ministry
to Inactive Members

Diverse opinions exist on how to minister to inactive members. Warren holds that only nongrowing churches focus on re-enlisting inactive members. He observes that it "takes five times more energy to reactivate a disgruntled or carnal member than it does to win a receptive unbeliever."¹ Rhodes views missing members as

folks who don't come in and they don't go out, they just let the flies in. In many churches members have been visited, corresponded with, prayed, and pleaded with for years. They have never made an open break with the church, but neither do they attempt to keep in touch with the church.²

In contrast to this negative view, Anderson notes: "Many slip away with little or no notice being taken of them and practically no effort made to restore them." He upholds

¹Warren, 183.

²John Rhodes, Success Secrets for Pastors (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference Ministerial Association, 1995), 99.

the need for a caring ministry. "Many of these could be saved to the kingdom if our attitude as shepherds were only different or if our concerns for them were only greater." ¹

Having traced the behavioral pattern of the inactives, a need for a dynamic ministry is seen from the psychological, theological, and church growth perspectives.

Psychological Perspectives

From the psychological perspective, a ministry to the inactive must understand the following: a person's felt needs and his or her encounter with the conflict situation in and out of the church; the pitiable condition of being inactive; and the need for a caring ministry. In addition, freedom and responsibility must be exercised in dealing with the hurting inactives. Proper understanding of a member's inactive status aids in designing corrective methods.

Cry for Response

Feelings of anxiety produced by unresolved personal conflicts reach a high level, generate anger, and create distance when there is a lack of resolution. The verbal signs and agitated behavior are signals for help from the church. Feelings of helplessness intensify in the persons dropping out, causing them to seek help from outside sources

¹Anderson, 589.

for reconciliation. Feelings of hopelessness create low self-esteem.¹ At this stage of total inactivity, the person feels guilt, shame, blame, and a longing to return to a comfortable state. This demands a caring ministry at the earliest possible time.

At every stage that people move away from the church to total inactivity, they repeatedly cry for response from the church. Lim affirms this: "There is a cry for some response from the church. The depressed one needs someone who can provide a listening ear."² This illustrates why a dynamic caring ministry is so necessary. The aches and pains of being inactive and the longing to be attached to the body of Christ imply that (1) the inactives, through various behavioral patterns, send signals constantly urging the church to respond to them; and (2) with a well-designed visitation program inactives can be reclaimed at any stage.

Exercise of Responsibility

The apostle James affirms that sin is the failure to accept one's responsibility of doing good to the needy when there is a possibility (Jas 4:17). Very often this failure comes from the sin of pride and sensuality that restricts a

¹Baker and Nester, 132.

²Isaac Lim and Shirley Lim, Comfort My People (Singapore: Methodist Book Room, 1988), 1-2.

person from exercising this responsibility. Kierkegaard, as cited by Savage, affirms that "inherent in man is the freedom and potential of possibility, and sin is the retreat from the exercise of the potential of possibility."¹

Thus, an active member with the possibility of exercising freedom to restore, who fails to do so, is equally a sinner drifting away from the will of God. One of the major functions of this study is to sensitize the active group to the needs of the inactive group, for each has a responsibility to the other.

Theological Perspectives

From the psychological perspective, inactive members are in search of their lost identity in church life. From the theological perspective, God's people, like "lost sheep" (Jer 50:6), "have gone astray" (Isa 53:6). God is concerned for the lost (Jer 34:2-4), and God Himself is in search of the lost (Matt 14:24; Luke 15; 19:10). He urges the community of active members, the spiritual ones, to care for the weaker ones. Ministry to the inactive is crucial: (1) Christ gave a commission to search for the lost; (2) it is God's design that the body of Christ grow to maturity, helping those in need; and (3) God desires the restoration of the lost.

¹Savage, 20.

Commission

Considering the issue of "missing" members as the "most tragic of all," Dudley says that "each case represents a valuable human being turning from life to death."¹ God wills that none be lost (Matt 8:14; 2 Pet 3:9; 1 Tim 2:4). Venden confirms this: "God Himself gave all heaven in His Son, the most expensive offering. God Himself is determined that no one be lost."² In Luke 15, Jesus narrates parables showing how God seeks for the lost. In ministering to Zacchaeus (Luke 19:5-10), the Lord reclaimed a lost child. As an ideal servant of the Lord, Jesus fulfilled God's will through a caring ministry (Isa 58:6-8; Luke 4:18), setting an example to follow.

The prophets of the Old Testament were urged to minister to the backsliders. In turn they urged the straying to return to the Lord (Isa 25:6-7; Jer 3:12; Hos 3:22). Jesus commissioned His disciples to minister to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 10:6). Lenski observes a strong motif in the expression "lost sheep of Israel's house," which is repeated by Jesus in Matt 15:24. These are the perishing sheep that should be with the flock but are

¹Dudley and Cummings, 19.

²Venden, 19.

far from their shepherd.¹ "The wandering sheep is in danger of eternal loss; the pastor and all other church officers need to be rich in grace and experience themselves in order to restore straying church members to the great shepherd."² Lenski urges the importance of making every effort possible to help restore straying people to the flock.³

Matt 10:6 suggests that in commissioning His disciples Jesus limited their sphere of activity. It was necessary that the Word of God should first be spoken to the Jews. Only when they rejected it did Christ and the apostles turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46; 18:6; 28:28). Hendricksen affirms this as the "proper sequence in spreading the gospel."⁴ These views strongly urge a dynamic need for ministry among the lost within the body of Christ.

Ministry to One Another

Paul invites the whole church to be involved in the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18). Individual Christians are exhorted not to look only to their own needs but also to the needs of others (Phil 2:4). Paul reminds

¹R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel (Columbia, OH: Wartburg, 1943), 391.

²"Your Souls," SDABC, 7:567.

³Lenski, 392.

⁴William Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel Matthew (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1973), 456.

the Galatians that spiritual Christians have the responsibility of restoring the erring and bearing one another's burden (Gal 6:1, 2). He exhorts the Corinthians to forgive the guilty, to receive him back, and to encourage him in the Christian faith (2 Cor 2:5-8).

Paul's body analogy explains God's design for the growth of the individual and the church until they reach the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:11-13). Peter clearly indicates that Christians are living stones being built up into a spiritual house (1 Pet 2:4-5). Peter recognizes the importance of every stone in the building of the house. As "LIVING STONES, we are told to touch each other's lives in supportive ministry."¹ The concept of interdependence and interconnectedness among members, in Pauline and Petrine exhortations, urges sensitivity to the need of straying and weaker members. White's warning is clear:

We sustain a loss when we neglect the privilege of associating together to strengthen and encourage one another in the service of God. In our intercourse as Christians we lose much by lack of sympathy with another. He who shuts himself up to himself is not filling the position that God designed he should.²

When the church fails in this ministry of caring, active members may not only experience stunted spiritual growth but

¹Lim and Lim, 39.

²Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1958), 541.

also undermine God's design for the ministry of the whole people of God.

Restoration of the Lost

The restoration of the backslider to the flock is emphatically presented by the prophets of the Old Testament. Through Jeremiah, God appealed to apostate Israel to return (Jer 3:12-15). The story of Hosea's love for Gomer speaks of God's call for His people to return (Hos 1, 2).

As we await the second coming, the importance of ministry to the inactive is urgent. Venden claims: "Just before Jesus returns many, many backsliders will return and be dedicated Christians if they are gently presented the gospel."¹ Pierson urges that ministry in the last days should concentrate on retaining the gains in the church.²

Affirming the possibility of restoring the broken, Anderson claims: "And many of these could be saved to the kingdom if our attitude as shepherds were only different or if our concern for them were only greater."³ Anderson's indictment, that there is "practically no effort made to restore them," urges a significant ministry to the inactive. Thus the ministry of caring, enabling both the

¹Venden, 7-8, 48.

²Pierson, 135.

³Anderson, 589.

caller and the called to develop their responsibility to each other and to God, to whom they both belong, is an absolute necessity.

Church Growth Perspective

In his discussion of the ogre of apostasy in the Adventist Church, Dudley points out that ministry to the inactive is crucial to church growth, that the presence of inactive or backslidden members is a "plague spot on the Adventist mission."¹ He further contends that the "prevention of apostasy is as important to church growth as the baptism of the new convert."² In his view, "Church growth, both spiritual and numerical, moves forward when we control and eliminate apostasy."³

The priority, according to apostolic teaching, was clearly maintaining and building up the interconnectedness of God's people. Paul and other apostles realized that strong relationships between Christians, communicating and receiving love, would fit them to serve as a gigantic net to haul in the unreached.

The dynamic need for ministry among the inactives studied in this chapter stresses the importance for a caring

¹Dudley and Cummings, 2.

²Ibid., 3.

³Ibid., 4.

ministry. The ministry of restoration will be effective provided the members are trained. The next chapter deals with the factors considered in training members for ministry to the inactives.

CHAPTER IV

DEVELOPMENT OF A TRAINING PROGRAM:

FACTORS CONSIDERED

God's act of giving spiritual gifts involves provision for the ministry of the whole people of God. It also includes a spiritual empowerment or enabling by the Holy Spirit to equip or train members towards maturity in Jesus Christ as indicated by Paul in Eph 4:11, 12.

Training is the key to releasing the potential for ministry. It empowers both the trainer and the trainee to be effective in the job they have accepted.¹ This is the effect of a well-planned training program. Developing a plan is an important aspect of training since good planning increases the possibility for the participation to be effective.

This chapter considers eight essential factors in designing a training program: (1) the need for training, (2) the kind of people to be trained, (3) the training personnel

¹Alvin J. Lindgren and Norman Shawchuk, Let My People Go (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1980), 113.

involved, (4) the goals and objectives that are to be realized, (5) concepts of adult learning, (6) methods, (7) areas of training, and (8) evaluation. The factors described in this chapter come from a variety of fields, such as management, education, human relations training, and skill development. My experience in training lay persons is also reflected in this chapter.

Determining the Need for Training

The most essential element for designing the training program is determining the need for training. This need is considered from the biblical, church growth, and skill-developmental perspectives.

The ministry of the church is the ministry of the whole people of God. Both laity and clergy have a obligation to be involved in ministry. The purpose of the spiritual gifts listed by Paul in Eph 4:11-13 is strong evidence of the need for training. Savage's research indicates that in most congregations, apathetic and bored members number about one-third of the membership.¹ With this pathetic situation in the church, it is not easy for the pastor to do the work needed without lay help. It is God's design that His mission be accomplished by the joint endeavor of laity and

¹Savage, 79.

clergy. Thus the role of the laity is crucial to the effectiveness of programs in the church.¹

Pothirajulu observes an ignorance on the part of the laity regarding their role.² The ministerial potential of the laity will be exhibited if they are taught how to begin. Hence it is necessary that the laity be trained for ministry.

Peter exhorts the believers to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ (2 Pet 3:10). Pastors have but to help their members grow in knowledge and conviction, in maturity of character, and in competency for service. Good training not only sends the message to all church members that their ministry is important but also creates opportunities for further involvement. Archibald's contention strongly stresses the need for training: "When he departs, the pastor who trains others will leave behind him a strong, efficient church, but the pastor who has undertaken to do everything himself will leave for the next pastor a group of church cripples."³

¹Ibid.

²Pothirajulu, 70.

³Archibald, 73.

Determining the Kind of People to Be Trained

The purpose of the training program determines the kind of people to be selected for training. White clearly describes the kind of men Jesus selected and trained for ministry. His disciples were not angels who had never fallen, they were all men of like passions,¹ from all walks of life.² They had varied temperaments as indicated in His prayer for unity among them (John 17:21-23). They were men of native ability and teachable spirit who could be instructed and molded for the Savior's work.³ Only such people can respond to training.

White points out the qualities of those who are to be considered for training: "Men who will inspire with fresh zeal the flagging efforts of dispirited workers, men whose hearts are warm with Christian love and whose hands are strong to do their master's work."⁴ She insists that "those who work for Christ are to be upright and trustworthy, firm as a rock to principle and at the same time kind and courteous."⁵ Such people are as White puts it, "men who

¹White, The Desire of Ages, 296.

²White, Education, 296.

³Ibid.

⁴White, Ministry of Healing, 497.

⁵White, Gospel Workers, 121.

will not be bought or sold, . . . who do not fear to call sin by its right name, . . . whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole."¹

To adequately perform the functions of ministry, successful ministers have widely recognized the importance of calling and gifts rather than strict academic qualifications. People with a sense of call tend to volunteer. Leigh affirms that volunteers have effective learning interests and potentials.²

Jesus gave a model in choosing twelve men. They were a small group. Jenson and Stevens contend that an in-depth relationship in a small group results in the development of intimacy and accountability to each other. Jenson and Stevens further affirm that as a by-product of intimacy and accountability there will be stimulating and encouraging of one another.³ Thus, in a small group there is a possibility of success in turning all into disciples.

Training Personnel Involved

God's act of giving spiritual gifts determines the role of the pastors as trainers, equippers of the saints for the

¹White, Education, 57.

²David Leigh, Group Training, vol. 20, Encyclopedia of Practical Management Training (New Delhi: Crest, 1998), 17.

³Jenson and Stevens, 151-153.

work of ministry. While the task of training belongs to the pastors, Fuller contends that a training program cannot and must not be a private project of a single individual.¹ Hence it is imperative that the burdens laid on an individual for the task be shared with the other pastors, conference leaders, and believers who will assist in the training program as trainers.

The selection of trainers is considered one of the most important factors in the effectiveness of a training program. This requires a selection of persons who share the vision and are committed to training. To attain coherence and to maximize training effectiveness it is imperative that the trainers be united regarding the purpose and the commitments which guide its implementation.²

Emphasizing the qualities of the trainers, Ferris and Fuller insist that the trainers should be aware of the basic principles of human learning and be able to listen perceptively, to communicate accurately, and to negotiate towards consensus.³ Because adults have knowledge and

¹Louis Fuller, "Starting a Missionary Training Programme," in Establishing Ministry Training, ed. Robert W. Ferris (Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 1995), 130.

²Robert Ferris and Louis Fuller, "Transforming a Profile into Training Goals," in Establishing Ministry Training, ed. Robert W. Ferris (Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 1995), 15.

³Ibid., 44.

experience, it is also essential that the trainers listen to what the learners are saying. Beyond all, it is of utmost importance that the trainers be models as Jesus was.

Determining the Goals and Objectives to Be Achieved

Any training that is intentional and purposeful achieves determined goals and objectives. In designing the training program, determining goals and objectives is of paramount importance. Since goals are essential to determine responsibilities and approaches, they should be carefully identified. It is also imperative to have meaningfully stated objectives to succeed in communicating to the trainers. The three dimensions of balanced learning must be carefully considered: knowing, being, and doing.¹ The training goals and objectives in this section reflect the implementation of the training program that I attempted. The training was geared to equip a selected group of active members for dynamic involvement in reaching the inactive members in the local church at Vellore.

Training Goals

The goals for the program were:

1. To enlighten and equip the members for their ministerial responsibilities

¹Hoke, 72.

2. To develop an awareness of the anxiety-provoking conflict situations which trigger a member to become inactive

3. To get the members to commit themselves to a caring ministry to inactive members in the local church.

Objectives

Upon the completion of this training program members will be able to exhibit the following qualities in their church life:

1. Be sensitive to the condition of the aching inactive member and to develop a positive attitude towards the inactive who suffer because of unresolved conflicts.

2. Provide meaningful contact in a ministry of caring, enabling the trainer, the pastor, the trainee, and the member to develop their human responsibility to each other and to God.

3. Apply the skills of interpersonal relationship and resolve unresolved conflicts.

4. Experience a deepened burden for the lost, evidenced in growing thirst for souls and a ministry of restoration.

Concepts of Adult Learning

Understanding why and how adults learn facilitates insight into designing curricula for adult learning. Mwansa observes that adults undertake a learning project more in

the hope of solving a problem than with the intention of learning a subject.¹ Another strong motivational factor for learning is the specific will to learn a skill.² These concepts clearly indicate that adult learning is problem centered and need oriented.

Understanding how adults learn will allow the trainer not only to structure the material but also to understand the trainer's part in the process of learning. Adults resent and resist any kind of learning if they perceive that others are imposing their will on them.³ They prefer self-directed learning. For adults, to a large extent, learning builds on existing knowledge from known to unknown and from simple to complex.⁴ Hence, participative and interactive learning should take place.

Knowles views learning as an internal process controlled by the learner. If the input is the information passed on by the trainer, the output is the acquired learning. The level of learning is assessed in

¹Mwansa, 101.

²J. E. Leslie Rae, "Development of Programms," Encyclopedia of Practical Management Training (New Delhi: Crest, 1995), 10:133.

³Malcolm S. Knowles, The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species (Houston: Gulf, 1984), 57.

⁴Leigh, 17-18.

demonstration by the trainee.¹ Understanding this concept is crucial in the evaluation of the training program.

Methods

An adaptation of appropriate and contextualized methods ensures members' effective participation in a training session. It is also evident that the adult learner's involvement speeds up learning. While there are many teaching methods appropriate for adult learning,² this section deals with three specific ways through which instruction can be delivered.

Lecture

The lecture is one of the usual methods through which instructions are passed on in adult education. "For thousands of years it has been used as a way of transmitting knowledge."³ A lecture is a "speech, planned talk on a chosen subject, usually for the purpose of instruction."⁴ According to Brown, "a lecture consists of one person

¹Malcolm S. Knowles, The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy Versus Pedagogy (New York: Association, 1970), 50.

²See Kenneth Gangel, 24 Ways to Improve Your Teaching (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1985).

³Charles Betz, Teaching Techniques for the Adult Sabbath School (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 85.

⁴Ibid., 85.

talking to many about a topic or theme. The talk may be augmented by the use of audiovisual aids and by occasional questions."¹ In this process of teaching, Gangel points to three basic aims: (1) communication of information, (2) interpretation and clarification of information for the purpose of better comprehension, and (3) structuring of materials.²

Adult educators have noted some important advantages of the lecture method. Hutchinson, cited by Stephens, holds that a "lecture permits a speaker with special expertise to present it to an audience of small or vast number."³ Betz points out that a "good discussion presupposes some knowledge of the subject. This is where lecture makes its most significant contribution."⁴

Gangel describes the values of the lecture method. Good lecturers, he claims, "cover the most material in the least amount of time," with the possibility of the class

¹G. Brown, "Lectures," International Encyclopaedia of Education, ed. Torsten Husen and T. Neville Postlethwaite (New York: Pergamon, 1985), 5:2987.

²Gangel, 12-13.

³M. D. Stephens, "Teaching Methods for Adults," International Encyclopaedia of Education, ed. Torsten Husen and T. Neville Postlethwaite (New York: Pergamon Press, 1985), 9:5132.

⁴Betz, 86.

likely to stay centered on the subject matter.¹ He further claims that "the good lecturer can also adapt to the needs, interests, abilities and previous knowledge of his students."² Hutchinson, cited by Stephens, affirms: "A talented lecture can provide the initial stimulus to adult learning, sending away members of the audience determined to study further the subject of the lecture."³

Because of its monologue characteristics, studies have shown the lecture method to be less effective than other methods for presenting information.⁴ Betz identifies: "Its chief weakness: it usually fails to actively involve the learner."⁵ Gangel perceives that "some elements of learning such as attitudes, skills, and feeling are not best learned through 'telling procedures.'"⁶

Despite the problems in lecture method, Brown observes, "lectures are the stable academic diet of students in all industrialized and developing countries."⁷ According to

¹Gangel, 13.

²Ibid.

³Stephens, 5132.

⁴Brown, 2990.

⁵Betz, 86.

⁶Gangel, 13.

⁷Brown, 2988.

Brown, effective lecturing yields two essential features: (1) clarity of presentation involving the use of explicit language, repetition of main points, and paraphrasing; and (2) the stimulation of interest in the lecture. Aspects such as vocal tones, gestures, eye contact, and other nonverbal messages are taken into consideration. "The choice of apt examples, the skillful use of audiovisual aids, the variation of student activities, and the skill of narrating all contribute to stimulating interest."¹

Gangel's eight simple ways, the principles of effective lecturing, can improve an adult educator's use of the lecture method. They are: (1) combine the lecture with audience involvement methods such as discussion, reaction groups, or a question and answer period; (2) support the lecture with visuals; (3) have a clear and simple outline for the lecture; (4) practice good principles of speaking; (5) emphasize the important points; (6) use interesting illustrations; (7) specify clear objectives for the lecture; and (8) give the students a mimeographed outline to follow during lecture.²

¹Ibid.

²Gangel, 14.

Discussion

Discussion has been defined as a "cooperative venture in search of the truth."¹ Hendrickson observes the growing popularity of the discussion method: "Its emphasis on the informal approach prepares the way for deeper study and research into the behavior of groups and the factors involved in leadership."² Gangel holds that "when used as a teaching method, discussion is not conducted for the sake of therapy but rather for the sake of pinpointing answers and solutions."³

Betz points out advantages worth considering. Discussion can bring to a class a wide scope of information, insights, attitudes, and skills. It serves as a check on the thinking process of participants. A good discussion "teaches the learner to listen, to think, weigh evidence, and make sound judgments. It also develops skills in self-expression."⁴ According to Gangel this democratic process characterizes the involvement of students in the learning

¹Betz, 73.

²Andrew Hendrickson, "Adult Education," Encyclopaedia of Educational Research, ed. Chester W. Harris (New York: Macmillan, 1960), 1:38.

³Gangel, 32-33.

⁴Betz, 74.

experience.¹ Identifying and analyzing a problem and arriving at an appropriate solution are the essential features of discussion.

Group leaders have a vital responsibility to confine the discussion to the intended subject. Hutchinson, as cited by Stephens, gives sensible guidelines to ensure that discussion groups are educationally effective. There must be

defining the purpose of the group; providing factual material or indicating accessible sources from which it can be obtained--books, pamphlets, study plans, recordings, etc; offering guidance on physical arrangements for seating, lighting, etc; advising leaders about their role--avoiding over dominance, encouraging the less articulate, curbing, loquacity, etc; acting as a centre for "feed-back" if group findings resulting from discussions are intended to result in action.²

Role-Playing

Role-playing provides an invaluable learning experience for participants. It is memorable, enjoyable, creates understanding, and has a low-risk environment. It is the means of extending trainees' experience by presenting them with a commonly encountered situation and asking them to place themselves in the position of the parties involved

¹Gangel, 33.

²Stephens, 5132.

(the role) and act out the way in which the event might reach an appropriate conclusion.¹

Role-playing allows people to make mistakes in a non-threatening environment. Citing Fannie and George, Joyce observes that role-play helps students collect and organize information about social issues, and attempts to improve their social skills.² Gangel claims that this technique "fulfills some of the very basic principles of the teaching-learning process such as learner involvement and intrinsic motivation," also creating a sense of community within the class.³ Since this methodology is based on the philosophy that "meanings are in people, not in words or symbols," Gangel insists "we must first of all share the meanings, then clarify our understandings of each other's meanings, and finally, if necessary, change our meanings."⁴

Issues encountered in interpersonal communications, visitation, and church activities can be selected as cases for role-playing. As the participants exhibit their knowledge and skill in role-play, the trainers and other members can evaluate their performance.

¹Leigh, 36-38.

²Joyce, 6.

³Gangel, 23.

⁴Ibid., 24.

The efficient use of these three methods will equip members with team building and interpersonal communication skills because of the participative characteristics inherent in these approaches in training.

Areas of Training

Because need-oriented learning is vital in the adult learning process, members themselves must express the areas in which they need training. Being made aware of their Christian responsibility towards one another and the status of the inactive, members will be able to rightly identify the areas of training needed for effective ministry. More than research, earnest prayer impresses the mind to determine the training areas to minister to the felt needs of the callers and called.

From my personal pastoral experience and my interviews with active and inactive members, and local church pastors, four areas in which the members need training are evident.

1. Understanding the inactive members and the role of laity

- a. Why do members become inactive?
- b. What occurs in the life of the inactive?
(psychological and theological dynamics)?
- c. What is the role of the laity within the body of Christ?

2. Developing a genuine love for the lost.
 - a. What are the characteristics of God's love?
 - b. How can God's love be experienced?
 - c. What are the ways of reflecting God's love?
3. Interpersonal communication skills: Key components
 - a. Elements of active listening
 - b. Positive results in coping with angry feelings
 - c. Dynamics of self-disclosure in resolving conflicts
4. Methods of reaching the inactive members
 - a. Fellowship through small groups
 - b. Recognizing skills and talents for involvement
 - c. Earnest search for the lost.

In all these areas of training, the goal is the implementation of the knowing, doing, and being aspects of harmonious development in the learning process.

Evaluation

The task of evaluation closes the loop on program development. To observe the effect of training and to find out how training can be improved requires evaluation.

Ferris suggests that any evaluation should attend to three

distinct aspects of the training program: training process, training outcomes, and stewardship of resources.¹

Since the training program is geared to equip members for an effective involvement in ministry, evaluation attempted during or immediately after the sessions may not fulfill the purpose of evaluation. My personal experience affirms that evaluation can be best done by assessing the impressions of the members and the change in their attitude towards the inactive exhibited in their church life.

After consideration of the essential factors that needed to be considered for the development of the training program, the next step was to prepare and implement the program at local churches at Tiruchi and Vellore. The next chapter reports the implementation of the program.

¹Robert Ferris, "Evaluating Training Outcomes," in Establishing Ministry Training, ed. Robert Ferris (Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 1995), 106.

CHAPTER V

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

Over the past years I have had a growing desire to reach and restore inactive members in the district I pastored in Tamil Nadu. In 1997 I began to develop a training program for the active members to reach the inactive. This program not only involved the effective use of lay people in the church, but was also based on the concept that all members are ministers and have certain pastoral functions to perform for each other. Every item included in the program was designed to meet the objectives of the training program listed in the previous chapter.

Training Program

The training programs were implemented in two churches in the North Tamil Conference, Tamil Nadu, India: one at Tiruchi and the other at Vellore. This chapter gives a brief report of the program in Tiruchi and a detailed report of the implementation in Vellore.

Tiruchi

Having impressed on the members, through sermons on two consecutive Sabbaths, the biblical imperative of lay participation in ministry, as church pastor, I made an invitation to the members to participate in an informal training program for ministry. A church board action was not needed for this type of program, since it did not require finances.

Fifteen members volunteered to be trained. They met for the first time in September 1997. At that meeting they were challenged to lead a small group in each of their own homes, with the specific intent of reaching inactive members. The trainees were asked to assemble in the church for training on the fourth Sabbath of every month at 3:00 p.m. for four months. These sessions concentrated on sharing ministry skills, on encouraging the participants to share their experiences of ministry, and on times of special prayer for the Lord's leading.

By October, twelve small groups were meeting each week. Each group met during the week at a time that was convenient for the pastor to supervise. It was also intended that most of the training would take place in the group itself. Each group had at least five active members who were committed to visiting inactive members, either as individuals or in teams of two. The inactive members who were attracted to the

group were revitalized through genuine fellowship in the small groups.

By the fourth training session in December, each group had been able to regain at least one member into church fellowship. Christmas and New Year festivals, coupled with the church's attitude towards them, added to the spiritual strength of those who were reclaimed.

As a result of the work at Tiruchi, it became obvious that the group leaders needed further training. It was clear that the participation of the pastor in each group was important. Without pastoral care, the groups began to deteriorate after a few months. In March I was transferred to another district, Vellore. The groups may lose their vigor if the new pastor does not focus on small-group ministry.

Vellore

In June 1998 I was assigned to the Seventh-day Adventist Tamil Church at Vellore. Church attendance was thirty members, representing twenty families in contrast to the ninety members on the church elder's report.¹ As I studied the background of the church, I discovered that in 1994 there was a serious conflict between the church pastor

¹I had to interview the elders for the details of membership and church affairs because the record books had been lost during a period of conflict.

and the members, resulting in twenty-seven members being dropped from membership. When the members who were dropped found that the conference leaders did not bother to resolve the conflict, a few additional church members dropped out of church life. The interim pastor's reconciliatory attempts were in vain because of the bitter experience the dropped members had experienced.

In response to the situation at the Vellore church I investigated the contributing factors leading to the dropping of the members in order to mobilize the remaining active members. I was happy to discover that the active members were willing to become active in ministry once they caught the vision of restoring the inactive members. Because so many in the church at Vellore had dropped out of fellowship, an intensive session of training was given to the active members so that they could be directly involved in winning back the dropouts. A well-developed 12-hour training program was designed in the context of the church at Vellore.

Plan

After being instructed in the role of laity in the ministry of restoration, twelve people volunteered to participate in the proposed training program. They indicated their interest by filling out a response card (see

appendix C). Among the twelve active members who signed up, four were college graduates, four had two-year diplomas, and four had completed high school. The group consisted of two teachers, three medical workers, one engineer, two sextons, three counselors, and two housewives. All were married, each representing one family. They had been very active in the congregation in spite of various conflict situations in the life of the church.

In planning for the program the church approved the following items:

Dates March 6, 13, 20, and April 3, 1999.

Time 2:30 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.

Venue Seventh-day Adventist English church, Vellore

Finances For stationery and refreshments as approved
by the trainer

Resource Representatives from the North Tamil

persons Conference, TEE¹ instructors from the Church
of South India, Vellore church members, and
church pastor

Trainees The 12 active members who signed the response
cards

The North Tamil Conference approved the plan for the

¹TEE denote Theological Education by Extension, extensively used to train laity for ministry in the Church of South India.

training program as is seen in the letter in appendix B.

Sessions

The program schedules (see appendix C) were handed out well in advance to the members and trainers. The first program commenced at 2:30 p.m. on March 6, 1999, with an introduction by the pastor, followed by interaction among the members, singing, praying, and a listing of the purpose and objectives of the training program. The purposes of the training program were (1) to help the active members to be aware of their ministerial responsibility in the church, (2) to understand the need for a dynamic ministry to the inactive members, and (3) to equip members for an effective ministry to the inactive members. The outlines of the presentation appear in appendix C. They are given in English translation of the original in Tamil.

The discussion on that first day of the training program centered on the reality of church members becoming inactive. A list of the factors contributing to attrition was shared during that first session, while the various dynamics that occur in the life of inactive members were evaluated in the second session. I stressed the crucial role of laity for the restoration of the lost and encouraged the trainees to target at least one inactive member whom they thought they could reach. The trainees were divided

into groups of two. They prayed earnestly for their prospective candidates. When they left the training session, they pledged that they would continue to pray for the targeted inactive members.

On March 13, two items were identified as essential in this ministry: (1) Restoration is possible only through the exhibition of genuine love; and (2) genuine love can be developed and exhibited only when each individual personally experiences the love of God. It was emphasized that the Christian claiming to have genuine love must reflect it in caring for lost souls. In their prayer session the trainees prayed that the love of Jesus would fill their hearts as they went in search of the lost.

Many of the trainees felt a need to develop their skills to deal with problem situations so the sessions on March 20 focused on interpersonal communication skills. Active listening skills, techniques of coping with angry feelings, and self-disclosure were highlighted as essential for developing interpersonal relationships. The trainees entered the prayer session pleading for these skills and other spiritual gifts for the task entrusted to them. They were assured that if they would seek God earnestly, the heavenly agents would assist them in their ministry.

In order to give the trainees an opportunity to practice what they had learned, March 27 was set aside for

visitation. Some of the trainees called on the inactive members they had chosen during the week. On April 3, the first session was spent discussing the responses they had received from the visitation ministry. The trainees suggested several things that were important for an effective approach, and listed recovery approaches based on three felt needs in the life of the inactive members: (1) inactive members earnestly desired to have genuine fellowship; (2) they desired to have their talents recognized; and (3) they desired to have someone help them resolve their conflicts.

The group agreed with the suggestion that the formation of several small groups, meeting at convenient places and times, would be the right approach to attract the inactive members. Interpersonal relationships and fellowship were stressed as key elements in the restoration and conservation of members. These elements could be realized best through the small-group approach. In the final session the trainees were challenged to reflect Jesus. They were urged to implement what they had learned.

The trainees' participation in singing, praying, group discussions, sharing their ministry experiences, and lectures all combined to produce lively training sessions which facilitated an effective learning experience. The intensive prayer sessions on each of the four training days

presented prayer as a powerful strategy in the ministry of restoration.

Evaluation

It was intended that the program would be evaluated by requesting the trainees to fill out an evaluation sheet, but the context was not suitable for such an activity.¹

Nevertheless, by observing and interviewing the participants, the following reactions were identified:

1. The trainees pledged to further develop their skills and seek opportunities to use what they know in ministry.

2. Being involved in a training program such as this for the first time in their life, the trainees were excited about the assurance of spiritual gifts and the assistance of heavenly agents in their ministry. This new information encouraged them to be involved in ministry.

3. The trainees' attitude towards those who were unable to cope with conflict situations changed remarkably. This happened because of the knowledge they gained regarding different kinds of temperaments that help determine people's behavior.

4. After their visitation experiences the trainees affirmed the small-group approach as an effective method. Each pledged to consider forming a small group in his or her

¹The intended evaluation sheet appears in appendix C.

home, through which the trainees would not only attract the unchurched but also the lapsed. This willingness presented another training opportunity since none of the trainees was yet equipped as a small-group leader.

5. It was observed that the pastor-laity team ministry not only mobilized the active laity but also changed the attitude of the inactive members. By the end of May 1999 five inactive members had been reclaimed to church fellowship. These reclaimed members were happy the church had reached out to them through this ministry of equipping laity.

6. The elders wholeheartedly acknowledged that their view of the biblical purpose of the church and the biblical role of laity had been changed by their experience in the pastor-laity team ministry.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of an investigation that resulted in the development and implementation of a training program to minister to inactive members. An evaluation of the need for the development of a training program and its implementation influence the conclusions arrived at. Also included are recommendations for improvements of the training program.

Summary

The biblical basis for the development of a training program to reach the inactive members not only involved the concept of the effective use of laity but was also based on the concept that all members are ministers. The laity have pastoral functions to perform for each other. The ministerial nature and function of the laity are clearly shown in God's design for the laity. The purpose for equipping identified in the Jethro model and the Pauline concept of leadership development not only stress the need

for efficiency but also the sharing of ministry with the members.

Members who are unable to cope with anxiety-provoking conflict situations in their church life remove themselves from the setting and suffer a sense of loss and frustration. From personal experience, interviews, and church growth literature, various anxiety-provoking events were identified as the contributing factors for attrition. The following issues were identified as key factors for attrition: (1) sociological issues such as caste barriers, family problems, economic difficulties; (2) institutional church-oriented issues such as lack of fellowship, conflict with others, lack of church support in personal crises, poor worship services and programs, lack of active involvement; and (3) personal spiritual issues such as hurried baptisms, low-level nurture, and decline in personal spirituality.

To empower the laity to be more effective in achieving their goals in ministry, a well-planned training program was developed. When designing the program, consideration was given to determining the need for training, the goals and objectives to be attained, the kind of people to be trained, the training personnel involved, the learning concepts, areas of training, methodology, and evaluation. Need-oriented learning and participant learning were stressed as key elements in an effective adult learning

process. Such a process allowed the trainees and trainers to experience mutual interaction and group learning.

The implementation of the program was done as part of the Sabbath activities both at Tiruchi and Vellore. The choosing of a convenient time facilitated members' regular attendance and active participation. In addition to the church pastor, local church members and resource personnel from other denominations were used as trainers. They not only equipped the trainees with the necessary skills, but also provided opportunity for hands-on experience. Earnest prayer marked every session and affirmed that prayer is an effective weapon in attempting the impossible.

In evaluating the program I noted the trainees' impressions about the program in the course of the sessions. The trainees expressed their appreciation not only for the wealth of information acquired but also exhibited a change in their attitude towards inactive members by determining to work with them. Several expressed a desire to hold a similar program again. As a result of the mobilized twelve workers, five inactive members were reclaimed into the church fellowship at Vellore.

Conclusions

The biblical imperative of lay participation in ministry and the effectiveness of lay involvement in the

ministry of caring for one another make urgent the need for the ministry of equipping. Pastors must be identified as ministers of ministers.

Those who removed themselves from the anxiety-provoking conflict setting and became inactive suffer a sense of loss and frustration. Those persons will remain inactive until someone from the church meets their needs and listens to their pain. The body of Christ, if it is going to be an active instrument to its own members, needs to sensitize itself to what is going on in the life of the those who have dropped out.

Church members lack knowledge and experience in the ministry. Efficiency can be realized only through training, which demands a well-designed program, focused on instruction and inspiration for effective participation in ministry.

This study showed that in the process of need-oriented and participant learning, the adult learners' knowledge and experience can be channeled effectively to realize the targeted ministry. Prayer sessions aimed at confirming and strengthening the ministerial potential of the laity not only fitted the members to commit themselves to bring back into fellowship the inactive members, but also helped the members to recognize their status and privilege in being a part of the body of Christ.

This study emphatically showed that ministry to the inactive is not only a possibility for the laity, but also a necessity from the perspective of quality church growth. This is so because when a church loses a member, it loses a percentage of its ability to be an active witness for Christ in the world.

Recommendations

To reduce the anxiety-provoking conflict situations in the life of the church, there is a need for regular seminars on effective interpersonal communication skills. These seminars should be held in the church as often as possible to promote deepened fellowship among members.

While it is essential to clean the church record books, it is also urgent to view the inactive members as wounded soldiers to be visited, cared for, and prayed for. Hence every effort must be taken to train the church members so that they see in every inactive member a potential Christian with a crying need for restoration. Every church should have a team of members committed to restoring the inactive members. This team should be an integral part of the life of the church.

A lay training program for church elders should be conducted at the district level. This could be a one-day seminar lasting approximately six to seven hours. During

the workshop, individuals can be exposed to a considerable amount of experience and data. On returning to their local churches the elders can help others prepare for this specific ministry.

At the conference level there is an urgent need for the training of the clergy to equip their members for ministry. The laity must understand the equipping function and be trained for this pastoral responsibility.

Students in the Department of Applied Theology at Spicer College need to be taught how to train laity to carry out their pastoral responsibilities within the body of Christ. A well-planned syllabus for training and equipping laity must be prepared and must cover the various problems that arise in the life of the church.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW FORMS

INACTIVE MEMBER INTERVIEW FORM

1. Personal Data

Name: _____ Sex: _____
Age: _____ Marital Status: Married/Single _____
Occupation: _____

2. When did you become an Adventist? Year _____

3. The factor which most attracted you to be an Adventist _____
- a. I was raised as an Adventist.
 - b. The truth and beauty of the Church's belief.
 - c. The warm fellowship among members.
 - d. The charisma of ministers.
 - e. My relatives' and friends' upward mobility.
 - f. Others _____

4. How long were you active in the church since the time you were baptized? _____ years

5. Why did you leave the church when you left? Indicate how important was each of the following factors in your decision to leave the church. (1=weak, 2=moderate, 3=strong)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| a. Education and unemployment problems due to Sabbath. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| b. Family ties. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| c. Social pressures. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| d. No church support in my personal crisis. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| e. Lack of sufficient pastoral visit. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| f. Decline in personal spirituality. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| g. Lack of warm fellowship in the church. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| h. Lack of spirituality in the church program. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I. Traditional church services. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| j. Gossiping and backbiting among church members. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| k. Pastor's style of administrations. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| l. Politics among members and leaders. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| m. Unpleasant experience with SDA friends. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| n. Recognized for any church activity. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| o. Conflict with theological issues. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| p. Conflict over financial issues. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| q. Become involved in other institutions. | 1 | 2 | 3 |

TRAINING AREAS FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS

1. Name of the church member _____
Occupation: _____

2. Listed below are some of the areas in which active members need training to minister to the inactive members. If there are some additional areas you would suggest please add them to the list. Please use the following code:
1=very important, 2=important, 3=less important
 - a. ___ Developing self-confidence in communicating with others.
 - b. ___ Interpersonal communication skills.
 - c. ___ Visitation skills.
 - d. ___ Counseling the hurting and guilty.
 - e. ___ Evaluating the reasons for being inactive.
 - f. ___ Preparing Bible study to nurture the weaker members.
 - g. ___ Methods of affirming the worth of an inactive member.
 - h. ___ Mobilizing the inactive member for ministry.
 - i. ___ Prayer and interceding.
 - j. ___ Sharing the privileges and responsibilities of membership.
 - k. ___ Ministering to the hurting at the falling out stage.
 - l. ___ Others _____

3. Choose four out of the above list of areas in which you want training. List in order of importance, number 1 being the most important.
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____

CHURCH PASTOR INTERVIEW FORM

1. Name of the pastor _____
 Name of the Church/District _____
 Pastoral service: _____ years.

2. Factors responsible for church members to become inactive.

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| a. Education and unemployment problems due to Sabbath. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| b. Uncomfortable in being separated from family ties. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| c. Social pressures in being outcast from the community. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| d. No church support in my personal crisis. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| e. Lack of sufficient pastoral visit. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| f. Decline in personal spirituality. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| g. Lack of warm fellowship in the church. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| h. Lack of spirituality in the church program. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I. Traditional church services. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| j. Gossiping and backbiting among the members. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| k. Pastor's style of administration. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| l. Politics among church members and leaders. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| m. Unpleasant experience with SDA friends. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| n. Not recognized for any church activity. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| o. Conflict with theological issues. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| p. Conflict over financial issues. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| q. Marital problems. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| r. Overworked in church activities but not recognized. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| s. Becomes involved in other institutions. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| t. Spiritual and emotional needs not met. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| u. Under nurtured to withstand conflicts. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| v. Selfish motives not met. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| w. Inability to recover from bad habits. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| x. Immature baptisms. | 1 | 2 | 3 |

3. Do inactive members desire to be visited and be reclaimed back to the church? Yes No

4. Listed below are some of the areas in which active members need training to minister to the inactive members. If there are some additional areas you would suggest please add them to the list. Please indicate which of these area you consider most important. Please use the following code: 1=very important, 2=important, 3=less important

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. Developing self-confidence in communicating with others. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| b. Interpersonal communication skills. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| c. Visitation skills. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| d. Counseling the hurting and guilty. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| e. Diagnosing the reasons for being active. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| f. Preparing Bible study to nurture the weaker members. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| g. Methods of affirming the worth of an inactive member. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| h. Mobilizing the inactive member for ministry. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| i. Prayer and interceding. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| j. Sharing the privileges and responsibilities of membership. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| k. Ministering to the hurting at the falling out stage. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| l. Others _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 |

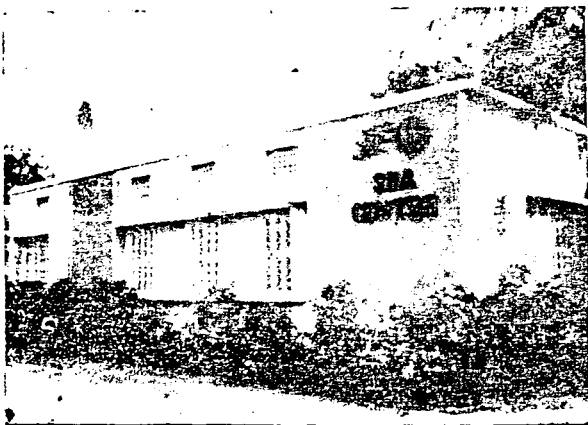
5. Choose four of the above list of areas in which you want training. List in order of importance, number, 1 being the most important.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

APPENDIX B
CORRESPONDENCE

Seventh - Day Adventist Church

Otteri Road, Bagayam,
VELLORE-632 002. South India.



Paulraj Masillomony,
Church Pastor.

Pastor Anbalagan, Exec. Secretary,
North Tamil Conference of SDA,
20/2 Williams Road,
Trichy-1.

Respected Pastor,

I am grateful for every bit of assistance the Conference renders towards my ministerial training (D.Min).

In collecting data for my research project, information from your office and survey among our pastors active and inactive members will be the primary source of information in developing a Training program.

Skill training in dealing with inactive members in the North Tamil Conference is the focus of the Training program I am developing. The purpose is to train active members in effective methods of changing the behaviour of and resolving issues among the inactive members. This research will be used as a basis information in developing new training modalities for a Doctoral Dissertation which I am now writing as a part of my doctoral requirements at Adventist Theological Seminary.

As a part of my research project I am required to implement the Training program, among our Church members in Vellore District. This might require an official permission in as much as I have to involve members and pastors of churches around Vellore. May I then request your letter of permission at the earliest possible.

Thanking you.

Yours Sincerely,

Paulraj Masillomony.



Seventh-day Adventists

20/2, WILLIAMS ROAD, TIRUCHIRAPALLI - 620 001.

PHONE: 460656

GRAMS: ADVENTIST

*Mr. Paulraj Masilamony
SDA Church
Ottam Road
Bhagayam
Vellore - 2*

Dear Mr. Paulraj Masilamony:

Greetings to you in the name of Jesus Christ!

I am happy to come to know about the Lay training programme you are interested to conduct at Vellore. I do appreciate your good intention and hereby permit you to conduct lay training programme at Vellore church. You may call the members of nearby churches also so that they also can avail this opportunity. Please send me your plan of the programme such as dates & timings, resource personnels, finance arrangement, etc.

I am here with enclosing the Church Pastor Interview Form.

May God bless you abundantly as you endeavour to train up our members of the churches.

Thanking you.

Yours sincerely,

*M. Anbalagan
8-3-99
M. Anbalagan
Secretary*

sd

Enc: A form.

APPENDIX C
TRAINING PROGRAM

RESPONSE CARD

Dear Pr. Paulraj,

I would like to take part in the training you have designed to minister to inactive members. I would like to be present for all the training sessions.

Name: _____

Address: _____

**TRAINING MEMBERS TO REACH
THE INACTIVE MEMBERS**

SDA ENGLISH CHURCH, VELLORE.

Date	2.30-3.00	3.00-3.50		4.00-4.50		5.00-5.50	5.50-6.10
Mar. 6, 1999	Introduction Interaction	1. Why Members Become Inactive? (Paulraj/Johnson)	R	2. Dynamics in the life of the Inactive (Prema)	R	3. Role of Laity in the Ministry of Restoration (Paulraj)	Prayer for the Inactive Members
Mar. 13, 1999	Review DEVELOPING GENUINE LOVE	4. Characteristics of God's Love (Rev. Vincent)	E	5. Experiencing the Genuine Love of Jesus (Rev. Vincent)	E	6. Reflecting the Love of Jesus (Nelson)	Prayer for experiencing God's Love: Genuine and Reflective
			C		C		
Mar. 20, 1999	Review SKILLS FOR MINISTRY	7. Active Listening (Thangaraj)	E	8. Coping with Angry Feelings (Vijsyakumar)	E	9. Self- Disclosure Resolving Conflicts (Paulraj)	Prayer for spiritual Gift's and Communication Skills
April, 3 1999	Review SHARING MINISTRY EXPERIENCE	10. Fellowshiping through small Groups (Paulraj)	S	11. Recognising Skills and Talents for Involvement (Prema/Franklin)	S	12. Earnest Search for the Lost (Paulraj)	Commission Session
			S		S		

OUTLINES OF PRESENTATIONS

SESSION 1

WHY MEMBERS BECOME INACTIVE

PAULRAJ/JOHNSON

I. INTRODUCTION

Ephe 6:1 Paul challenges us to fight against the wiles of the devil appearing in different forms.

Rev 2:4 Some of us will grow cold and lose our first love and become inactive

The active, consistent Christians are responsible to evaluate the factors for attrition.

II. REASONS WHY MEMBERS BECOME INACTIVE

Members remove themselves from anxiety provoking events.

A. Socio-economic Situations

1. Caste Barriers
2. Family Problems
3. Economic Difficulties

B. Institutional Church-Oriented Issues

1. Lack of fellowship among members - poor interpersonal relationships.

2. Conflict with pastor, organization

3. Conflict with church standards and some theological issues

4. Lack of church support in personal crisis

a. Fellow members did not care for them

b. Lack of effective pastoral care

c. No financial support from the church

5. Failure to recognize them for ministry

a. Talented people are not mobilized

b. No appreciation for what they have done

6. Poor worship services - Spiritual needs not

met

7. Lack of involvement in ministry

C. Personal Spiritual Issues

1. Hurried baptism - Both the evangelist and the converts are to be blamed

2. Low-level nurture

3. Decline in personal spirituality (Mt 13:22)

- a. Dual allegiance
- b. Lack of fervent prayer
- D. List other factors

III. CONCLUSION

1. Knowledge of these factors for attrition help to check the various conflicts in the church.
2. Believers need to watch out to visit the straying at the right time.

"Sheep are never lost suddenly. Before one is a lost sheep, he is a strayer." (Anderson, 609).

SESSION 2**DYNAMICS IN THE LIFE OF THE INACTIVE****(PREMA)****I. INTRODUCTION**

Hanging on the skirts of Zion; Members who don't come in and they don't go out.

Remain in the local church rolls but have gone inactive and suffer with their unresolved conflicts.

Their aching setting and behavioral patterns have to be confronted by the active church.

II. WHAT OCCURS IN THE LIFE OF THE INACTIVE MEMBERS?

A. Indicate their inability to cope in a setting of high anxiety. Even after having removed from their active church life.

B. Express strong feelings about the events that provoked their anxiety.

C. Blame the pastors and other church members

D. Attack the environment and hope to change it sufficiently so they can live more comfortably

E. Guilt, grief, shame - these suppress their ability to talk clearly about their faith.

F. Experience giving up complex and suffer from a sense of loss and gratification.

G. Wait passively to see if anyone will come to them to find out why they have become inactive.

H. They want to have their conflicts resolved.

1. They left because no resolution in the church.

2. Resolution occurs rationalizing and by confrontation

3. Demand visitation from the church

I. Maintain Christian perspective, though inactive

J. If there is none to help in resolving their anxiety, the individual becomes angry

Anger does not resolve the conflicts, the resulting and pain will be too great to bear

III. CONCLUSION

Inactives wait until someone from the church meets their needs and listens to their aches and pain

The active church needs to sensitize itself to what is

going on in the life of the church\
Loss of members should cause alarm

SESSION 3**ROLE OF LAITY IN THE MINISTRY OF RESTORATION****(PAULRAJ)****I. INTRODUCTION**

An effective church must respond to what is going on in the life of its membership

Loss of members must alarm the others

This work will never be finished until laity and clergy team together

This demands a call to be convicted of the ministerial role of the laity

II. GOD'S PLAN FOR MINISTRY

A. All Christians are ministers

1. Partners with Jesus in the work of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:17-20)

2. Privilege and responsibility

B. God's provision for ministry

1. Holy Spirit's enabling power

2. Spiritual gifts

C. Early Adventism and its rapid growth

1. Pastors freed from pastoral care to evangelize new territory

2. Members totally involved in church ministries

III. FACTORS MOTIVATING CHRISTIANS TO BECOME INVOLVED IN MINISTRY

A. Deep love for Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord

B. Sharing Christ's burden for lost humanity

C. Recognizing that there is a command to be involved in ministry

IV. LAY INVOLVEMENT AND THE SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

A. So long as church members make no effort to give to others the help given them, great spiritual feebleness results

B. Opportunities to resolve conflicts created due to poor interpersonal relationships.

C. With the distributed load, the church will be active instead of passive

D. With "one another ministry" the Body of Christ will be built up to its matured status.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Lay involvement in ministry is a Christian responsibility

Lay involvement is crucial to the ministry of restoration. It is a Biblical pattern.

SESSION 4

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S LOVE

(Rev. VINCENT)

I. INTRODUCTION

I John 4:16. God is love.

Love is the essential character of divine nature.
We can related to God through God's love.

The doctrine of pure love of God is the moment of truth for Christian thinking and living

II. BASIC DIMENSIONS OF GOD'S LOVE

A. Benevolence: God's provision for his creation (Ps 145:16; Matt 6:26,28; 10:29; 6:25, 30-33; 10:30-31; Matt 5:45; Acts 14:17)

B. Grace: God deals with people not on the basis of their merit or worthiness, what they deserve, but simply according to their need. (Exod 34:6; Eph 1:5-8)

C. Mercy: God's tenderhearted, loving compassion for his people. (Ps 103:13; Deut 5:10; Matt 9:35,36; 14:14; Mark 1:41)

D. Persistence: (Ps 86:15; Rom 2:4; 9:22; I Pet 3:20; 2 Pet 3:15)

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF "AGAPE" LOVE

God's love, described in I Cor 13 as agape loves despite even the repulsiveness of its subjects.

A. Care: Patient and long suffering, kind and thoughtful, not selfish, happy with truth.

B. Respect: Not boastful or proud, not rude, not ill mannered or irritable

C. Acceptance: Always preserves regardless of problems and difficulties, never fails

D. Forgiveness: Keeps record of no wrongs

E. Trusts

IV. SELF-GIVING UNCONDITIONAL QUALITY OF DIVINE LOVE

A. It is seen in what God has done.

- While we were yet sinners (I John 4:10; Rom 5:6-10)

- B. It also continuously seek out the missing
 - Jesus' three parables in Luke 15

V. CONCLUSION

Knowledge of God's divine nature of love reveals God's loftiness and human humbleness

"The greatest happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved, loved for ourselves, or rather, loved inspite of ourselves." (Victor Hundo)

SESSION 5

EXPERIENCING THE GENUINE LOVE OF GOD

(Rev. VINCENT)

I. INTRODUCTION

Hosea 11:4 God initiates binding us with His love.

2 Cor 5:14 Paul's experience of the constraining power of God's love

Ps 34:8 The psalmist's confession of his taste of God's love

II. HOW DO WE FILL OUR "LOVE CUP" - WITH THE LOVE OF JESUS?

A cup (life) of feeling and emotions when filled makes worth living. It is a psychological well-being. It is crucial for filling others with the love of Jesus.

A. Biblical model: as did the apostles

1. Bear the marks of Lord Jesus (Gal 6:17)

The attitude of Jesus (Phil 2:5-7)

2. Simple life style of selfless service - In filling love with others love will be poured back into us.

3. By beholding Jesus, we become like Him -

Loving

B. Psychological perspectives

Love is something like vitamins, required as daily dose that will assure a psychologically healthy cup.

Vitamin A - Attention that is positive and focused

Vitamin B - Bear hugs each morning and evening

Vitamin C - Compliments throughout the day

Vitamin D - Discipline to learn how to fill others

love cup

Vitamin E - Encouragement as often as needed

especially good for the hurting

III. EXPERIENCING THE GENUINE LOVE OF JESUS: IMPLICATION IN CHRISTIAN LIFE STYLE AND MINISTRY

A. Zacchaeus's confession and decision to care for the needy (Luke 19:8,9)

B. Stephen imitated Jesus in his death state (Acts 7:60)

C. Peter wept bitterly when pierced with the genuine love of Jesus (Luke 22:62)

D. The experience of forgiveness in Mary's life (Luke 7:40-48; John 12:3)

E. The apostles' being with Jesus (Acts 4:13,20)

F. John expresses that their experience with Jesus is the basis of their authority in ministry. They have experienced the genuine love of Jesus

IV. CONCLUSION

While God initiates in providing his forgiveness, genuine love, we should high value it and experience the love of God

This experience not only revitalizes us but also energizes us to fill other empty souls with the love of Jesus

SESSION 6

REFLECTING THE LOVE OF JESUS

(NELSON)

I. INTRODUCTION

Matt 10:8 "Freely you have received, freely give."

John 15:2 "Love each other as I have loved you"

Absence of practical acts of concern is an indication that one's supposed Christian experience is not genuine and not God's love and does not abide in him

(I John 2:7-11; 3:11-18)

The experience of love is God's gift in us. It is an entering wedge.

II. CARE: IT IS LOVE IN ACTION. IT IS ATTITUDE PLUS BEHAVIOR.

- A. Time spent in caring is never time wasted
- B. Care builds self worth
- C. Care helps develop and bond family loyalty
- D. Care giving versus enabling
- E. Give care, love, even though it may seem wasted.
- F. These are physical and psychological needs that must be cared for.

III. JESUS' WAY OF CARING FOR PEOPLE'S NEED

Jesus first cared for the people's needs and then He spoke of spiritual matters

- A. Value of touch in caring for people's need
 - 1. Touch is a very important aspect in the healing process
 - 2. Touch is the most important way to say, "I love you."
 - 3. Loving touch, bonds, comforts, promotes security, smooth conflicts and hastens reconciliation
- B. Caring for physical needs
 - 1. Examine your motives (Matt 5:43-47)
 - 2. Share with what you have to others (Matt 5:42)
 - 3. Share and sin not (Jas 4:17)
- C. In sharing God's love, always point to the source
- Jesus

V. CONCLUSION

The love of God compels no one to feel loving but be loving

No one is beyond God's healing power to love and be loved

Service to others is one of the traits of a strong and healthy Christian life. This involves caring and sharing the life of Jesus

SESSION 7

ACTIVE LISTENING

(THANGARAJ)

I. INTRODUCTION

Listening is one of the key components that contribute to effective interpersonal communications

James 1:9 - Swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath

Prov 18:13 "He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him."

Listening is not easy. It effectively requires concentration and energy. Though it wastes time, its worth.

II. TWO TYPES OF LISTENING

A. Non-verbal listening: Guide lines for effective non-verbal listening

1. Be quiet
2. Maintain eye contact
3. Display openness using body gestures
4. Listen without response. It means wait
5. Send acknowledgments

B. Verbal listening. It is also necessary to facilitate listening

1. Feedback. Paraphrase the communication
2. Listen beyond words: Motives and intentions
3. Take care of yourself: Don't pretend to

listen

III. GUIDELINES FOR ACTIVE LISTENING

Listening is a skill. It can be learned

- A. Have a reason and purpose for listening
- B. Be interested and show it. Have genuine concern and lively curiosity.
- C. Understand other's viewpoints: assumption, needs and systems of beliefs.
- D. Hold your fire
- E. Look for main ideas
- F. Monitor your feelings and point of view
- G. Notice non-verbal languages
- H. Give the other persons the benefit of the doubt
- I. Get feedback
- J. The listener should resist distractions, noises,

views, people and focus only on the speaker

IV. CONCLUSION

"Do you listen to others as you'd like to be listened to" - Christopher

"Good listeners make good friends"

SESSION 8

COPING WITH ANGRY FEELINGS

(VIJAYAKUMAR)

I. INTRODUCTION

Anger is an emotional fact observable in every individual

For those moving away from active participation in the church anger is a prominent experience

Understanding and coping with angry feelings is essential for effective resolution

II. UNDERSTANDING ANGER

A. Feelings of anxiety leads to anger

1. Development of childhood: Perception of pleasure and gratification

2. Implication for the adults in the church: gratification, anxiety and anger

B. Associated with anger is frustration

C. Emotion of anger struggles for recognition

D. Angry people are boisterous and hostile: explode in rage or violence before its message is heard

E. Appears in language, action, body reaction, and entertainment.

D. Inward directed anger result in guilt and shame leading to the feeling of hopelessness

III. GUIDELINES IN VISITING AND COPING WITH ANGRY MEMBERS

A. Identifying underlying feelings

B. Empathetic listening has great power to diffuse the emotional intensity of a speaker's anger

C. Monitoring one's emotions without denying them

D. Be willing to accept responsibility for what you do with them.

E. Do an rebuttal to win an arguments

F. Help the angry members to find arguments communications which means an accurate match between what you and the person are saying and experiencing.

G. Lighten up your restrictive nature (Demanding, commanding, dictating and bossing people around empties one's love cup)

IV. JESUS' METHOD IN DEALING WITH ANXIOUS PEOPLE

- A. Waiting for an opportune time (Mk 10:15)
- B. Teaching by parables (Mk 4:9,12)
- C. Accepting and friendly method:
 - 1. Enhanced and strengthened their self-esteem
 - 2. Infinite tenderness of His dealing with hurt

people

V. CONCLUSION

Anxiety is produced by unresolved personal conflict.

The lack of resolution keeps anxiety high, generating anger and creating distance.

Angry people cry for response to resolve their conflicts

SESSION 9

SELF-DISCLOSURE IN RESOLVING CONFLICTS

(PAULRAJ)

I. INTRODUCTION

A revelatory dynamic that leads to effective interpersonal communication

An ability to talk truthfully and fully about one's self

An individual cannot really communicate with other person, unless in the midst of the communication there is an engagement in self-disclosure

II. ESSENTIALS OF SELF-DISCLOSURE

A. Stimulation provided by the visiting member

1. Visiting member is a help agent

2. The inactive member finds a suitable climate

to open himself

B. Self-disclosure takes place when the parties trust each other

1. Trust begets trust

2. Self disclosure begets self-disclosure

III. IMPORTANCE OF BEING TRUSTWORTHY

A. "To be trusted is a greater compliment than to be loved" - James MacDonald

B. Trust is the foundation for love. It is glue for a lasting relationship

C. Learn to maintain a trustworthy environment

D. Trust is the key to psychological health

IV. MEMBERS IN GROUPS OF TWO PRACTICE SELF-DISCLOSURE

About their personal life and conflicts in the church

V. CONCLUSION

Vital means to effectively deal with anger

With this key to psychological health a relationship of trust can be established

Though self-disclosure is painful, it is healing

SESSION 10

FELLOWSHIPING THROUGH SMALL GROUPS (PAULRAJ)

I. INTRODUCTION

"The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort has been presented to me by one who cannot err." (EGW, Christian Service, p. 72)

Early church was organized on small group principle (Rom 16:5; I Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Phil 2)

There is also great service potential. The four men who carried the cot and brought the palsy patient to Jesus is an example (Mark 2:1-5)

II. "ONE ANOTHER" MINISTRIES THROUGH SMALL GROUP STYLE OF MINISTRY

One another relationship strengthens every member.

- A. Offer hospitality (I Pet 4:9)
- B. Receive one another (Rom 15:7)
- C. Care for one another (I Cor 12:25)
- D. Serve one another (Gal 5:13)
- E. Comfort one another (I Thess 4:18)
- F. Encourage and build up one another (I Thess 5:11)

III. FUNCTIONS OF THE SMALL GROUP

- A. Intimacy - interconnectedness
- B. Accountability (Heb 13:17)
- C. Stimulation and encouragement (Heb 10:24-25)

IV. IMPLICATION FOR CHURCH GROWTH

- A. Small group is central to the development or relationship
- B. Relationship is crucial to contract the converts
- C. Small group revolutionize the church with its leadership development feature

V. CONCLUSION

We rarely lose a person who joins a small group because of the relational bridges have been built in this

Lost members brought into small groups can be encouraged and nurtured for active participation within the group.

SESSION 11

RECOGNIZING SKILLS AND TALENTS FOR INVOLVEMENT

(PREMA/FRANKLIN)

I. INTRODUCTION

Spiritual gifts are God's provision for ministry (Matt 25:14-30; I Cor 12:4-11; Eph 4:8-12; Rom 12:6-8)

Gift based model of ministry is foundational for lay involvement

Discovering and exercising one's spiritual gift is crucial element in Christian life

II. LESSONS ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS FROM THE PARABLE OF TALENTS

- A. The talents represent spiritual gifts
- B. The gift of talents is prerogative of God
- C. Talents used becomes talents multiplied
- D. Everyone receives some gift
- E. A talent is valuable
- F. Utilizing talents means taking risk
- G. Those who fail to use what is given them lose what they have
- H. Those who use their spiritual gifts are preparing to enter heaven; those who don't suffer an eternal loss

III. DISCOVER YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS. DO-IT-YOURSELF BASIS

- A. Pray that God will guide you in discovering your spiritual gifts
- B. Renew your commitment to dedicate your gifts to Christ's honour and service
- C. Make a list of all the spiritual gifts
- D. When your list is completed underline the gifts you possess
- E. Arrange your gifts in order of priority, so that number one will be what you feel is your strongest
- F. Discuss spiritual gifts with other individual Christians, or in small groups and ask for the opinion of others as to what gifts you possess
- G. Compare your opinion with that of others regarding your gifts
- H. Exercise your gifts and you will discover they grow with use.

I. Remember all the gifts are for the ultimate purpose of winning souls

J. Test the exercise by following questions

1. A closer walk with God
2. Harmony with church organization
3. Unity with fellow church members
4. Contention and strife
5. Pride and glorification of self

K. Does your understanding of spiritual gifts make you a most devoted witness for Christ, or does it give you an excuse to avoid active service.

IV. EXERCISING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

A. List the ways your gifts might be used to win souls

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

B. List three activities you could engage in harmony with your gifts

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

V. CONCLUSION

Members who have discovered their spiritual gifts and placed themselves in gift based ministry are the full Christians

Spiritual gifts not only empowers the laity for ministry but also enforces on laity its ministerial responsibility

SESSION 12

EARNEST SEARCH FOR THE LOST

(PAULRAJ)

I. INTRODUCTION

The lost ones want to be restored
 Heaven delights in restoring the lost
 The love of God must constrain every believer
 The lost are not found because they are not earnestly
 searched

II. TRUE SERVICE IS INSPIRED BY LOVE: LESSONS FROM THE
 JESUS' PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON (Luke 15:11-32)

- A. Father's Response: A burning desire of a loving
 father's heart is to restore the lost
1. God wants us to know that He is always in a
 hurry to receive sinners. He does not wait until we come
 all the way to Him He goes to meet us. His greatest joy is
 to welcome us.
 2. Forgiveness is more than penalty remitted.
 It means relationship restored.
- B. Unconditional reception. Father
1. Covered up his's rags
 2. Gave him full authority as a son
 3. Brought him into the joy of his fellowship

III. HOW TO GET STARTED. SEARCHING FOR THE LOST AMONG US

- A. Surrender your life to the work of the Holy Spirit
 - Have an "Upper Room" experience
- B. Realize the greatness of your debt to heaven ad
 the ministerial responsibility
- C. Enlist and pray for those whom you want to reach.
 Prayer is a powerful strategy to reach the unreachable.
- D. Attempt with all strength what you can. Pray for
 them, visit with them
- E. Be assured of the heavenly agents in the work of
 restoration

IV CONCLUSION

The heaven searches for the lost. An active member
 called to be heaven's agents in the ministry of
 reconciliation

Ministry is thus a responsibility and a privilege.

EVALUATION

Please help me to evaluate this training program by giving your reaction and comments.

1. To what extent did the sessions meet the objectives of the training program.
 - a. To a large extent
 - b. To some extent
 - c. Very little

2. Write down the areas of presentation that you personally found most useful.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

3. What parts in the program were least beneficial?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

4. How do you assess the trainees' presentation?

poor				excellent
1	2	3	4	5

5. Do you experience a change in your attitude towards ministry to the inactive member.
 - a. To a large extent
 - b. To some extent
 - c. Very little

6. What is your overall assessment of the training program
 - a. Enjoyable
 - b. OK
 - c. Waste of time

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