

This article is from the book
Evangelism Intelligence: Why Adventist Churches Grow Differently

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Chapter 4

8 Myths of Evangelism

“What do you do for work, Aaron?” I broke ground to start getting to know Aaron as he’d been coming to our seminar.

“Oh, I’m in business.” His answer was vague and I wondered why. The aloofness of his answer, made us wonder if he was really serious about the seminar.

Aaron and his wife Stacy had been attending our seminar since opening night. They were driving over 20 minutes each way to attend. They brought their two kids and came every night. At the end of each evening, they seemed in no hurry to get home. Aaron loved to engage the evangelist and me in questions, looking for understanding, etc. yet, when we asked if we could come visit him at his home, or at work, the answer was always no.

Unbeknownst to us, Aaron called his brother to talk about this incredible seminar where he was learning so much about the Bible. His brother, who had recently become a Seventh-day Adventist and hadn’t shared it with any of his family, was concerned that Aaron may have wandered into some cult or something. However, he encouraged him to keep learning and to make sure the Bible is the true rule of thumb.

As we came near the end of the seminar, we still weren’t getting any response cards from Aaron and Stacy. So, my evangelist friend and I made an appointment with them to stay after the seminar one night. “Aaron, you’ve been here every night. What are you thinking about all we’ve been talking about here?” we asked.

Aaron let out a long sigh. “Okay, here goes...I believe what you are saying. I want to join your church, but I can’t. I want to be baptized, but I can’t...not yet anyway.”

When we went on to question and push as to why he couldn’t, Aaron went on to outline a complicated story that began with, “I own a strip club.” Wait! Did he say a strip mall? No he didn’t – our minds were racing now. No, this was the strip club that comes with the girls, alcohol, tips stuffed into skimpy clothing, etc. Aaron wasn’t comfortable getting baptized until he had released his hands from it.

To get out of the strip club took almost four years. It was complicated by his dad’s death and fighting for control with his step mom, and then with his brothers who wanted to stay in the business. He eventually was able to close the business, sell the building to a local church, and that now-closed strip club has become a church. Amazingly, that meant that the only strip club in Ft. Collins, Colorado was no more. There were no strip clubs in the city at all!

Today, I have a key to that old club. I carry it with me everywhere I go. It's a constant reminder to me that evangelism may change one life at a time, but it can also change a whole community just as quickly. Evangelism changes everything.

Too many people think a lot of things about evangelism. Too many think things that are just outright wrong. They are myths.

I often refer people to the website www.snopes.com. It's a fabulous website that has made a name for itself as a truth checker for urban myths. Did the president really say...? Does peanut butter have rat hairs? What happened at the JFK Shooting? Who shot JR? So much information is appropriate in light of the many forwarded emails we get on a daily basis. Cute stories, evil stories, doctored pictures, etc. Snopes.com has it all and has become a reliable fact checker online.

I sometimes wish we had an AdventistSnopes.com to check the various myths about things that get driven home via email, videos, church lobbies and pastors' meetings. I hope to dispute some of the myths in this chapter about evangelism. If we are really going to focus on Evangelism Intelligence, then the myths need to be addressed and documented as to why they are not true.

MYTH #1: Evangelism only teaches doctrine, and doesn't present Jesus.

There are a number of problems in this statement. First and foremost, when I say, "Jesus is Lord." I've just expressed a doctrine that not everyone believes. When I say, "Our salvation comes because of the grace of God alone," I've expressed a doctrine. So, I'm not sure how you could express any belief without expressing doctrines.

Doctrine, at it's very basics, simply means something that is taught. Doctrine isn't necessarily a bad thing. I believe what the critics are really asking, "Is our teaching formulated and based in Jesus, or simply based in theological argument?" This is a great question and one that needs to be answered. If our beliefs are not based on Jesus and only founded in a clear argument, we aren't any different than the Pharisees of the Old Testament.

I believe that the more we know, the better we are able to understand God. I also believe that if our doctrine isn't founded in Jesus and doesn't lead us to Jesus, then we are on the wrong track. Ellen White expressed, that "Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world."¹ Absolutely! If we aren't centered on Christ, then where are we really going?

Yes, we do present quite a few theological arguments in our evangelistic meetings. However, frequently our new members say, "You've presented a fuller picture of Jesus to me!" Our doctrines are based on Jesus. The Sabbath is about spending time with Him. The state of the dead and hellfire is about God's mercy and grace and not burning people for eternity. The second coming is all about Jesus and salvation. I could go on, but you get the picture.

Doctrines are an important part of understanding Jesus. They are also an important part of understanding salvation. Doctrines make us unique and as the previous chapter expressed, Adventist churches grow differently, our theology demands it. I'm not afraid of our doctrines, but they do need to be focused on Christ and Him crucified.

¹ White, E. G. (1915). *Gospel Workers* (p. 156). Review and Herald Publishing Association.

MYTH #2: It only turns active Christians into Adventists, it's not reaching the unchurched.

This one comes out of the previous myth that all we ever really teach is doctrine and people don't find Jesus at our meetings. The thinking is, true evangelism is about people finding salvation, not being convinced of right doctrine. It's only the "Metho-pisto-bapti-terians" who come, and then we teach them the Sabbath and they become Adventists. Yet, they were already convinced of Jesus. They were already walking with the Lord, right? We're not attracting the unchurched, right?

My personal study and documentation in this area, after being a part of more than 40 evangelistic events is that roughly 75% of the people who join our church after an evangelistic seminar come from an unchurched background. However, most unchurched people in America used to have some church in their background. According to ABC News, 83% of Americans still say they are Christian.² The New York Times reports more than 90% of Americans claim this, yet only about 40% nationwide actually attend, maybe less.³

In personal conversations I've had with two previous directors of the North American Division Evangelism Institute (NADEI)⁴ Their understanding of the numbers I've experienced is essentially the same. We are primarily baptizing unchurched people, not currently church.

We haven't always tracked church vs. unchurched category. But when we added that data to our spreadsheet, we came up with these numbers in the chart below:

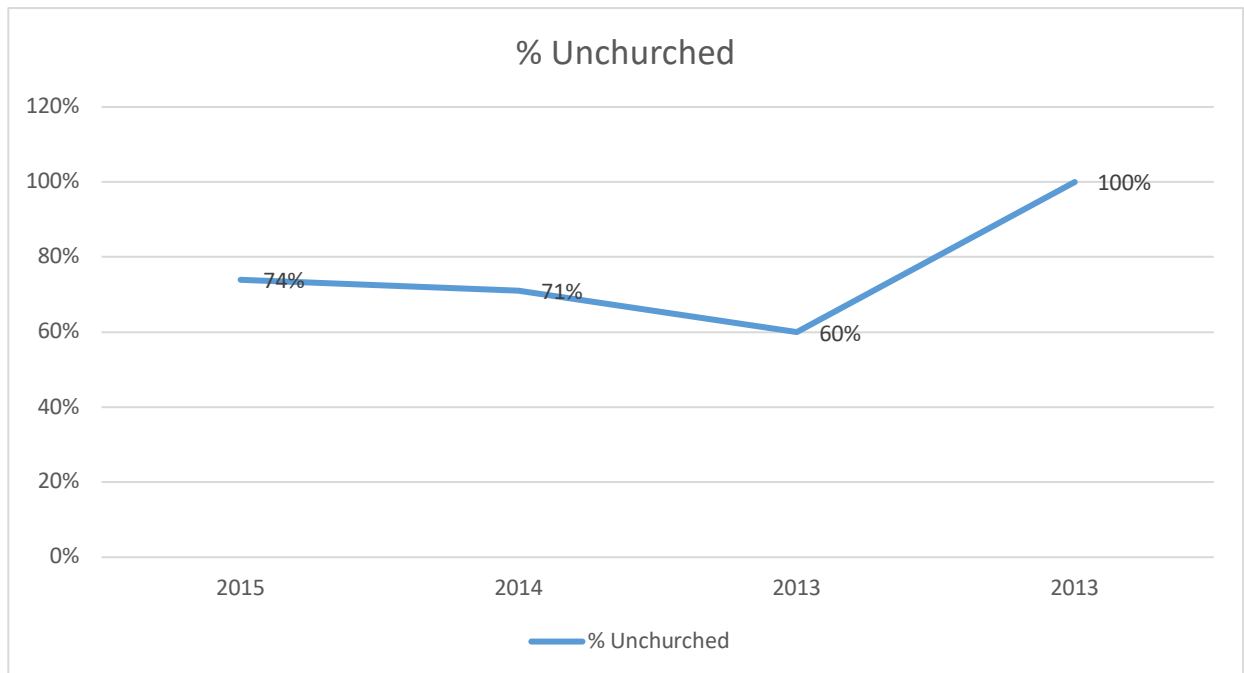


Chart 1: Most Recent Numbers, from when we began tracking church category

² See <http://abcnews.go.com/US/story?id=90356&page=1>

³ <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/18/upshot/americans-claim-to-attend-church-much-more-than-they-do.html>

⁴ From Personal Conversations with Russell Burrill and Ron Clouzet

Finally, according to Regele's book, *Death of the Church*, he says Seventh-day Adventists are very poor at stealing sheep.⁵ A non-Adventist church-growth expert says that this myth is simply not true.

MYTH #3: No one Stays!

Joe said to me after church one day, "No one is here from the _____ seminar? Why do we even do these anymore?"

I said, "Sure there is! What about Bob? Dan? Susan?" "Oh, they were from those meetings?" I then rattled off another ten names while my friend stood there slack-jawed. Actually, I too walked away stunned. I was shocked that it wasn't as obvious to him as it was to me that the people really were still here.

It was from that conversation that I started keeping a spreadsheet on evangelism. This spreadsheet covers a variety of things like how much does it cost to bring a person through the front doors of the church, how much does each baptism cost, the retention of people, response rates for the brochures and a few other things.

From that spreadsheet, I've tracked every seminar my churches have done since 2001. The numbers say our long-term retention rate hovers around 65-70%.⁶

So, I started analyzing why people say "No one stayed after a year." I've talked to countless people and analyzed just as many conversations of members. Here's my take on the issue.

1. We are keeping 65-70% of the people we baptize. I have that much documented.
2. Of those that stay 70+% are from an unchurched category.
3. The ones who leave, are primarily those that were active in another church already before they came to our meetings.
4. The ones who stay, get integrated into the life of the church very quickly.

That last one, the people get integrated into the life of the church, is key to this issue, I believe. We've discovered, the new people are so excited about their church, they get involved quickly and after a year or two, the "old" members subconsciously think, "We couldn't do church without Bob and Jane, so they must have been here a long time." In other words, the new people get so integrated into the life of the church that they don't seem new anymore.

This seems to be the core message around people not staying. I'm sure there are people who have a different experience. However, I like what one of my ministerial guys said, "People come to me and say 'We baptized 10 people at the last seminar and there is no one here from that seminar anymore. Evangelism doesn't work.' I simply say, back to them, Wait! You said that 10 people got baptized. It sounds like the evangelistic seminar did the job it was intended to do. Evangelism worked, but the church didn't."⁷ What did the church do about discipling people once they were brought in. That's a topic for a future book, I'm sure....

It is true that people leave after evangelism. There are two general groups of people who leave. The first group are those that are tied into another church with family, friends, or service

⁵ Regele, Mike, (1995) *Death of the Church* (p. 155) Zondervan Publishing

⁶ This is from a personal study of my own, but is also similar to the numbers I get from personal conversations with Ron Clouzet and Russell Burrill.

⁷ From a conversation in the Evangelism Committee of the Oregon Conference.

already. They come because they are interested in learning more about the Bible, going deeper. They are under conviction of the Sabbath or other ideas and they decide to join, but their attachment is so strong with the other church that they soon drift back. What I've found is that most of the people we lose within the first year, were strongly attached to their previous church. This, again, seems to back up Regele when he says we aren't good at getting people from other churches. It is simply hard to get people to break away from their social and emotional support of their church.

The second group of people who leave within the first year, are people that are already members of our churches. We've found that every time we do an evangelistic series and bring in new people, some of the members who were already here at our church, yet on the fringe, leave. Some of them go to another church, some of them drop out of church altogether. But this isn't a problem with evangelism, this is a problem with discipleship and that's a subject for another book. I do believe this is more pervasive than just my churches. The people, within the Adventist Church who are on the fringe, are very close to leaving. Again, this isn't a problem with evangelism, but of discipleship and congregational care.

Sure there are unchurched people who leave after joining. But that isn't the norm. That is not a major problem in our evangelism across the NAD.⁸ The chart below shows our retention over the last 6 years averages out to 71%. The previous 8 year's retention rate was at 66%.

Here are my statistics:

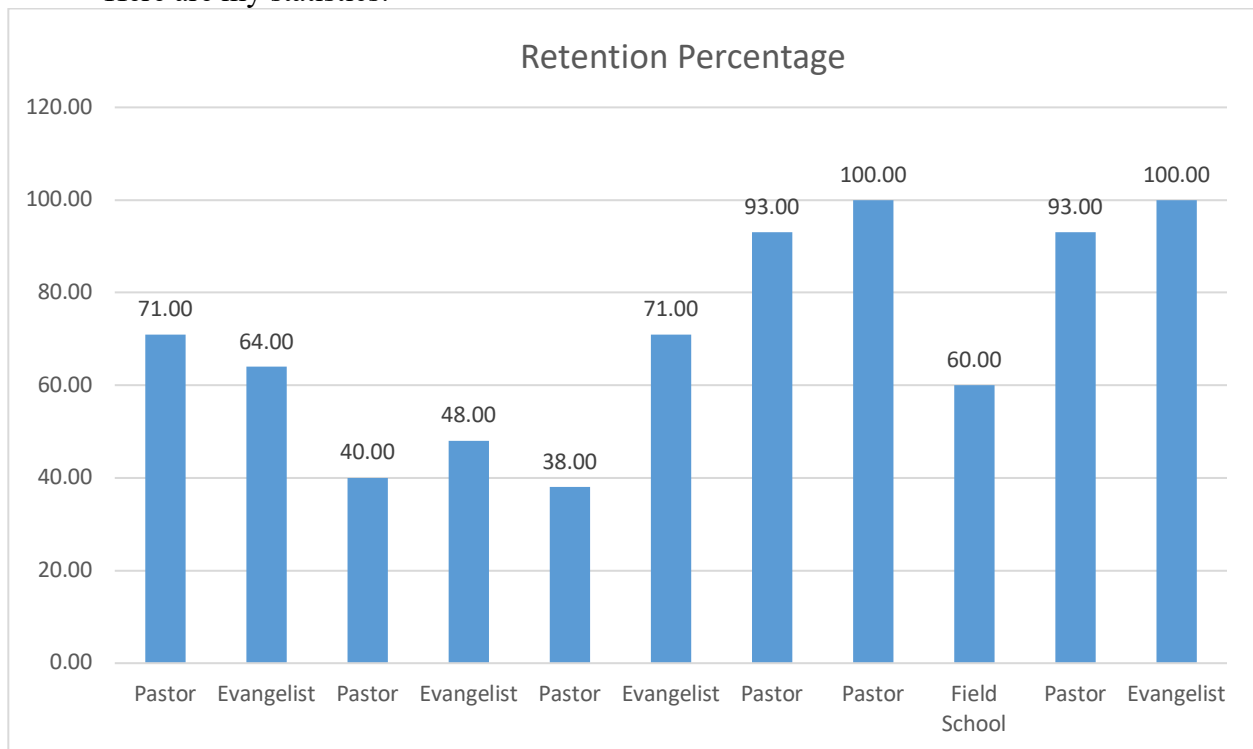


Chart 2: Simply labeled as to whether the local pastor or a hired evangelist did the seminar

MYTH #4: The only people who come are the Retired, Unemployed or Socially Unique

⁸ Sahlin, M. (2008). Adventist Church Growth & Evangelism Research: Briefing for Presidents Council of the Pacific Union Conference (p. 26). Westlake Village, CA: Monte Sahlin Live Presentation.

This myth comes from the idea that the only people who can afford to take five nights a week for 3-5 weeks are those who don't have a day-job or who are simply weird. It's the idea that no normal person can afford that kind of time away from their TVs, Facebook or their families.

My only answer to this would be to walk you through my list of names where we've baptized people holding good jobs, in their 30s, and with plenty of kids coming night-by-night. I can only show you that the names and number of people who come and show that the majority of people we've baptized have been young families through our evangelism.

Mike and Sara were my neighbors. We had spent some time with them and other friends and were just getting to know them. One day, about a week before the seminar, we were all together and I simply asked them, "Did you see the prophecy seminar that is coming to Greeley?" Mike and Sara seemed genuinely interested in coming. They were in their young 40s and had five kids. Even though it was about a 20-minute drive, they came every night and brought their tribe with them each night. My statistics show that the average age of those people we are baptizing is approximately 42. Monte Sahlin says the average age for new members is 44.⁹ Yet, within the Adventist church, there are twice the percentage of people over the age of 50 than the general population.¹⁰ The Adventist church is aging faster than the population around us.¹¹ There only two ways to keep it young – having more children or doing more evangelism!

What we have found is that meeting times that begin at 7:00 or 7:30 pm are getting too late for the school week and for people to bring their kids night-by-night. We've experimented with meetings beginning as early as 5:15 pm, 6:00pm, and 6:30pm. Lately, we've kind of settled on around beginning at 6:00 or 6:30 pm with a simple, hour-long program. We've discovered with these earlier time slots.

First, the early time gets people home at a decent hour to put their kids to bed. We are also finding that people eat afterwards if we are done by 7:00 or 7:15 pm. The earlier time slot gets them home in time for their family.

Second, the early time slots actually bring out more of our unchurched crowd. We've seen this time and again, where more non-Adventists, more unchurched come to the early time slot, more members to the later. The earlier time slots are disliked more by the members and volunteers at the meetings. There is a fine balance to play between keeping your volunteers happy and getting more new people to come. However, I usually land on the side of more unchurched. So we've kind of settled on starting around 6:00 pm or 6:30 pm and ending 60-75 minutes later.

In the end, when the four to five nights a week are over, the members go "Whew!" And the new people are saying, "What am I going to do with my time now?" The new people love what they are learning for the first time and want to continue to come 2-3-4 nights a week. They

⁹Sahlin, M. (2008). *Adventist Church Growth & Evangelism Research: Briefing for Presidents Council of the Pacific Union Conference* (p. 27). Westlake Village, CA: Monte Sahlin Live Presentation.

¹⁰ Sahlin, M. (2003). *Adventist Congregations Today* (p. 29). Lincoln, NE; Nampa, ID: Center for Creative Ministry; Pacific Press.

¹¹ Sahlin, M. (2007). *Adventists in North America—A Situation Estimate*. Riverside, CA: Adventist Today.

aren't missing their TVs, they aren't missing Facebook. They want to keep learning and keep coming. This is where follow-up is important and we will discuss that later.

MYTH #5: It costs too much!

Now, it's true, mailing brochures, bringing in an evangelist, and doing an evangelistic series is expensive. Yet, not nearly as expensive as you might think. What we've found, dollar-for-dollar, evangelism is the cheapest, least expensive and most effective thing we've done to bring new members into the church. Around North American Adventism, it's costing around \$5,000-7,000 per baptism.¹² As I look at my spreadsheet we're spending about \$2,400 per baptism. Even Monte Sahlin's numbers back this up – where our most effective means of bringing new people to the church is through our direct mail brochures.¹³

My church in Colorado spent roughly 40% of their monthly budget on outreach. We tried all kinds of things to bring people to church: seeker services, small groups, kindness projects, outreach softball, and many, many creative outreach projects, events, speakers, etc. What we found is that dollar-for-dollar evangelistic seminars were the most cost effective thing we did.

Lately we've been experimenting with other forms of advertising: online, Facebook, yard signs, etc. Those other ways are so cheap, and certainly must work, right? We have found that those only back-up the mailed brochure. I must admit, Facebook is interesting. You can save a lot of money and really hand-pick your target audience by choosing age, ethnicity, income level, and even location. Yet, in our recent trials, we've found that even though 5,000 people click on and look at our ad, no one – literally no one – is coming out. Our conclusion is two-fold. First, Facebook advertising is working for online places where people can click on the ad, go to the website and buy something from the website, but lately, that's even being questioned by the experts. However, it's certainly not working much at all for those that require people to move away from their computers, get into a car, drive to an unfamiliar location and attend a series of meetings. Second, if it's backing up a brochure that has been put in the mail, it's inexpensive and may help some as a reminder of the brochure people have on their kitchen counter.

People are really beginning to question online advertising and are coming to the conclusion that the direct-mail campaigns are still reaping better rewards. One article suggests that direct mail advertising is 34 times more effective than email for return on investment.¹⁴ Here is a list of articles that discuss the issues pertaining to this:

- <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/06/a-dangerous-question-does-internet-advertising-work-at-all/372704/>
- <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/average-rate-return-direct-mail-campaign-23974.html>

¹² Joe Kidder's Numbers are significantly different when you factor in all costs of running the church/denomination vs. all new members. The combined numbers are \$42,000/baptism in 2010 vs. \$8,000 in 1948. See <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2011/02/the-long-view-of-church-growth.html>

¹³ Sahlin, M. (2008). Adventist Church Growth & Evangelism Research: Briefing for Presidents Council of the Pacific Union Conference (p. 19). Westlake Village, CA: Monte Sahlin Live Presentation.

¹⁴ <http://printinthemix.com/Fastfacts/Show/575>

- <http://www.mccarthyandking.com/direct-marketing-tutorials/learning-direct-mail-response-rates>
- <https://www.onlinemarketinginstitute.org/blog/2013/06/why-direct-mail-still-yields-the-lowest-cost-per-lead-and-highest-conversion-rate/>

Now, let me say something more about the cost. When I moved to Colorado, I asked my Ministerial Director if I could have \$8,000 for evangelism. He nearly choked and his eyes popped out when I mentioned that sum. They had never given anyone that much money before. Yet, because he wanted to support this new evangelistically focused church plant, they gave it to us. What he didn't know then, and was going to find out later, was that I was going to ask for more the next year, and more after that.

Almost everything has gone up in price over the years. Everything that is except what we are willing to pay for evangelism.

To illustrate, I gave a testimony at a church in Michigan. During the potluck lunch afterwards, a guy came and ate with me. He said, "We started our church the same time you started yours. Our church only has 35 people coming. Yours has 250. Why? What's different?"

I began to tell him about the value of outreach and evangelism. However, his immediate response was, "We tried evangelism, that doesn't work anymore."

I probed a little deeper, "How much did you spend on your last evangelistic seminar?" His answer was \$5,000. "That's why your evangelism isn't working," I shared with him. "I wouldn't even bother to do evangelism unless I spend \$25,000 and I've spent upwards of \$60,000. You can't even draw a crowd with \$5,000." Public evangelism is one ministry that is meaningfully benefitted by significant increases in resources.¹⁵

Sadly, this gentleman walked away not believing what I was saying. It makes sense to ask questions of people who are ahead of you in whatever game you play. It makes sense to ask someone questions who is better at something than you. It makes sense to seek out more information. Yet, whenever I seek out someone more knowledgeable to ask questions, I don't argue with the person about why their idea is stupid, rather I take notes on what they are saying. I don't think I will ever understand why people do this.

Everything costs more these days. My parent's first house cost about \$8,000 in 1958. My first house cost \$60,000. Today the average house is over \$250,000. Cars cost a lot more, so do staple food items. Everything costs more today than it did in 1950. You know all that, so why am I telling it to you now?

You can't spend like it's 1950 in 2016 and expect to get the same results we got in in 1950 for evangelism. I tell my conference president all the time, "I'm the only Anglo church keeping up with the Hispanic Churches on baptisms. Why? Partly because we, as a church, have been willing to invest what it takes to make it work. I won't spend less than \$30,000 anymore. It just doesn't work.

When NADEI¹⁶ came to do a Field School in Loveland Colorado, Russell Burrill called in the seven area pastors who would be helping conduct the seminar. He presented his budget, it was in the neighborhood of \$75,000. While all the other pastors gulped and began to wonder and

¹⁵ Sahlin, M. (2007). *Adventists in North America—A Situation Estimate*. Riverside, CA: Adventist Today.

¹⁶ NADEI is the acronym for the North American Division Evangelism Institute, based in Berrien Springs, MI.

sweat about how it was going to affect their church's budget, I raised my hand and said, "That budget is not large enough!"

Russell's jaw dropped clear to his knees. He asked me what I meant. I told him, "Do the math. Spend \$75,000 and we're going to get 30 baptisms. That's awesome. But when you divide that by 7 churches, that means everyone walks home with 3-4 new people. I'm not trying to belittle that effort. There is much to be applauded for that. However, bringing all 7 churches together is a BIG deal. You are bringing in 25 students to learn that evangelism works and with that you want to have the various churches go home thinking their effort was worth it. We want to have a bigger harvest for all this work."

As I was talking, the other pastors were listening and beginning to nod their heads. They were catching the vision and forgetting about their bottom line budget for a moment. Russell exclaimed, "I've never had a pastor say my budget was too small before." When he returned, he had a budget of \$100,00. The next time it was \$125,000. We eventually lifted his budget to over \$200,000 and baptized 90 people in that series. That was a cost of \$2,200 per baptism.

Evangelism doesn't cost too much. But it does cost and we need to be willing to pay that cost for the kingdom growth we want to see. We pay our ministers more today, we pay more for buildings, we pay more to do our worship services, our kids programming, etc. Why not pay the right amount to get the crowd, to get the results in our evangelism?

Evangelism Intelligence means that if you aren't willing to spend the money, stop saying it doesn't work.

MYTH #6: It interrupts the life of the church

Okay, this one may actually be true in a lot of churches. Church is going along smoothly like a family. All of a sudden about every three years or so, we stop everything we usually do in order to do evangelism. Then after that's over, we can finally get back to "normal." Evangelism becomes an interruption.

Churches that don't integrate the life of the church around the constant theme of reaching lost people do find this to be true. However, is that the way it should be? What if we integrated evangelism into the church schedule and made it a part of the process, not an interruption.

For us, we have a yearly cycle in our church. They look like this:

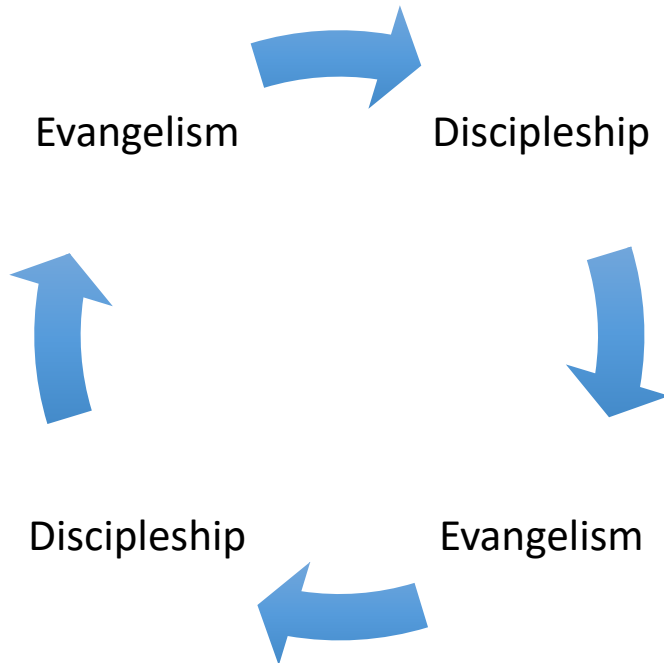


Figure 3 Life-Cycle of The Church

The idea behind this, is that we really plan on leading up to evangelism with discipleship and prep work. Which naturally flows into the discipleship and back. In other words, the life-cycle of the church ebbs and flows around evangelism and discipleship. Both are valid and important. If a church only focuses on discipleship, they soon become ingrown. If they only focus on evangelism, they become tired and less full themselves. Both are important.

The real myth is that we do church without regularly integrating evangelism into “normal.” Why is it okay that churches can go along for years without ever reaching lost people as part of their plan of ministry? The Great Commission is to GO, not stay in our own little holy huddle. The myth is really that churches that don’t reach out are just okay.

Evangelism ought to be part of the process and cycle of the yearly schedule, not an interruption to the life of the church. If we planned for it, if all our events were leading up to it, this one wouldn’t be true. Unfortunately, this myth is too often not a myth.

MYTH #7: It doesn’t work in today’s world

The theory behind this myth is that people have changed over the years. Evangelism worked, supposedly, with the WWII generation, but not in today’s postmodern world. It’s only the retired, unemployed, or socially unique who still come (*see above, Myth #4*).

Jim and Jerri came to our seminar in Sweet Home, Oregon. They came and introduced themselves to me the first night. Jim and Jerri came every night and were baptized at the end. Turns out, during the course of the seminar, Jim quit smoking. As we got to know them, we found out that they babysat for some close friends of ours. Our friend was troubled by Jim and Jerri’s decision. She was even more troubled by his quitting smoking. You see, Lisa had talked herself into believing that religion was no longer valid and no longer of anyone’s personal interest. Then the people watching her kids are so changed, she struggled with understanding and coming to grips with her philosophy of life.

Basically what people are saying with this myth is that people don't have an innate desire to know truth at its core anymore. To a large degree, that is true. We live in a world of relativity these days. That means people say, "What's right for you isn't right for me. Truth is relative. Truth is whatever you mean or I mean for it to be. It might be different for you. It might be different for me. That's okay. Truth is relative, there are no absolutes."

However, what we are finding out is that there are about 7% of the population that has a biblical worldview, part of which says there is a moral, absolute truth, found in the Bible.¹⁷ Only about 4% of people actually say they would be interested in attending a seminar to learn more about the Bible.¹⁸ These are primarily the people we reach, who already believe the Bible, and want to know more about it. Monte Sahlin points out that that four out of five new members say that the "truth and beauty" of what we teach is what attracted them.¹⁹ They want to know more and want to understand more. Shane Anderson says that the "unique beliefs of the Adventist Church are immensely compelling to many people."²⁰ This small crowd believes there may still be an absolute truth. This is the crowd of people who come to our prophecy seminars. This is primarily the crowd that we have reached within Adventism. On a broad scale, it's what most of Christianity has reached as well. There are pockets of the other 90% being reached, but nothing consistently and nothing that seems to be reproducible from place to place.

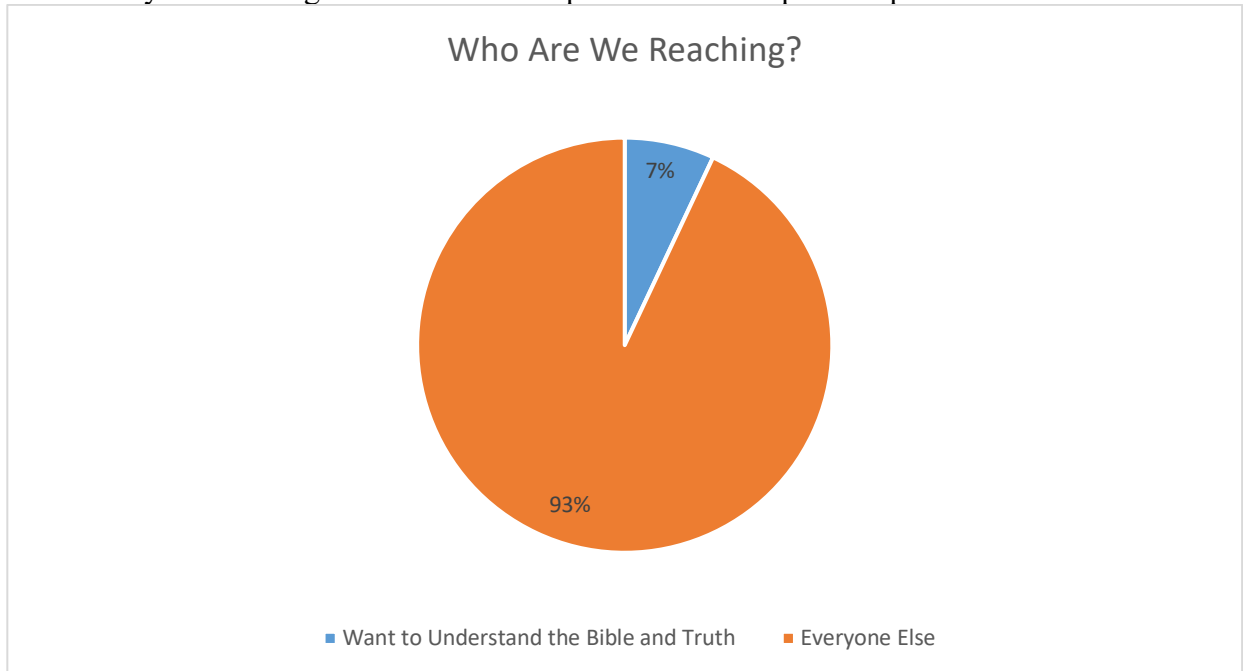


Figure 4: Worldview Percentage

¹⁷ <https://www.barna.com/research/barna-survey-examines-changes-in-worldview-among-christians-over-the-past-13-years/>

¹⁸ Gladden, R. (2003). *The 7 Habits of Highly Ineffective Churches* (p. 49). Lincoln, NE, AdventSource

¹⁹ Sahlin, M., & Richardson, P. (2002). *Converts to the Adventist Church* (p. v). Milton Freewater, OR: Center for Creative Ministry.

²⁰ <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2014/02/learning-about-evangelism>

I understand that 7% isn't much of society, yet in my community, that translates into 8,000-12,000 people that are open to hearing more. We have barely begun to reach that portion of society. Yet, in the last 6 years, my church baptized 220 people who are active and vital to our ministry. This has made us one of the fastest growing churches in North American Adventism.

I understand that 7% isn't much in the overall scheme of people, yet when I Pastored two churches in Lebanon and Sweet Home, Oregon, in a town of 30,000 and 12,000 respectively, we took those two churches from 80 and 40 respectively to 185 and 75 in attendance in a matter of six years. In one year alone, we saw 96 people join our church.

I understand that 7% isn't much of the population base, yet when we church planted in Colorado at a church called The Adventure, we grew that church from four families at the beginning to over 400 in monthly attendance and 250 on a weekly basis. We baptized about 60 people per year. This made us one of the 10 fastest growing churches in the NAD.

My point? 7% doesn't sound like very many people, but there are still quite a few people to reach. Let's get busy reaching them.

According to Shane Anderson, nothing works as well to commit people to Christ as a full-message series.²¹ If it only reaches 7% of the population, don't stop, just figure out how to get those people at least.

Two small, traditional churches. A contemporary church plant. A large metropolitan church with a blended worship style. All have been some of the fastest growing churches because of using traditional evangelism, by primarily reaching the small 7-10% of the population.

Evangelism still works, when done properly. There are plenty of people to reach. True, it doesn't reach every segment of our society, but we can sure capitalize on where it does.

Evangelism Intelligence means though, that we need to understand who we are reaching. We'll cover that in our next chapter.

Ron brought his wife Crystal to our seminar. However, about half-way through the seminar, we learned that they were not married. They used to be married, but had been divorced for over two years. When Ron received the brochure in the mail, he called Crystal and invited her to attend with him.

One night, Crystal showed up and she had the wildest makeup on, and strange clothes. I wondered silently to myself, "Is she okay?" It was so strange, that it was a distraction to my preaching. About half-way through the sermon I remembered, "Oh yeah, it's Halloween...doh!"

At the end of the seminar, we baptized them in church and at the end of the church service, we did a surprise wedding for the congregation as well. God brought these two people – in their mid 40s – to the kingdom and healed a very broken relationship.

Myth #8: We need more compassion ministries, not another seminar

This is Lifestyle Evangelism, or compassion ministries and hope ministries. This is about the idea that we must show the world that we are Christians. It's similar to the idea that you should never have to preach, but simply "live the Christian life" and people will somehow come flocking to church. It is defined as kindness evangelism, friendship evangelism, community services center, God's Closet, food pantries, clothing banks, etc.

²¹ <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2014/02/learning-about-evangelism>

There are several problems with this. First, these ministries are necessary. We do need to walk-the-walk, not just talk-the-talk. We need to be serving the community, helping and providing compassion ministry in our cities. No doubt about it. However, these ministries are not primarily set up to bring people to the point of decision. That's what our traditional evangelistic seminars are designed to do. They must go hand in glove together. If you only have the preaching and no compassion or healing ministries, you are preaching heartless truth. If you only providing help, hope, compassion and never get around to preaching, you aren't giving the full message of what the Adventist Church was raised up to preach.

Second, if we never preach, we are ignoring what Paul calls the foolishness of preaching.²² Further, Paul clearly says that some will never hear unless we preach and the preaching is beautiful.²³

Please hear what I'm saying, we definitely need ministries of compassion, hope and healing. Those are vitally important to the process, but they must also be accompanied at some point in the year by the message of preaching. George Knight says, "Thus, while He continued to feed the poor and point out the need for social justice, *Jesus' principal focus was the "irrelevant" one of the radical cross and the preaching of the gospel of full redemption from a world of sin.*"²⁴

Daniel and Jessica didn't receive a brochure in the mail from us, because they didn't have an address. They lived on a boat on the Columbia River. They were homeless. They came, because one of my members was walking down the street, while he was on the phone. As he passed them, he didn't break stride or stop his phone call, but he handed them a brochure. My friend looked at them, nodded, and kept walking. Daniel and Jessica didn't recognize my friend until almost the last night of the seminar. When they saw each other, they embraced in a bear hug and Daniel just kept saying, "Thank you for giving me that brochure! Thank you!" That's when I heard the whole story. During the course of the seminar, we were able to get them an abundance of food, clothing, a DVD player and many other useful and needed items of compassion. They came night-by-night and we later married them and baptized them.

People who say it doesn't work in today's world, either aren't doing it by the book (See Chapter 5), or they aren't spending enough money to get it done (see Myth #5 above). Our church definitely does need compassion, hope, healing and preaching to work hand-in-hand for success.

²² See 1 Corinthians 1:21

²³ See Romans 10:14-15

²⁴ Knight, G. R. (2008). *The Apocalyptic Vision and the Neutering of Adventism*. (G. Wheeler, Ed.) (p. 99). Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald® Publishing Association. (*emphasis his*)