Effective Church Communication

By Jon Cicle
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JOIN THE DISCUSSION ON FACEBOOK

Cultivating Adventist Giving: But We're Different, Right?
By Michael J. Brown

*Giving is a transferable habit that happens to be cultivated in religious settings* ~Jonathan Hill, Calvin College Sociology Professor

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Stories We Tell

Traditions: Why Do You Do That?
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It was the young priest's first church and he had a great desire to do well. After he had been at the church for several weeks when he began to sense that the people were upset at him and this was troubling to him. Read More

Attracting and Engaging Millennials In Local Church Communities
By Rajkumar Dixit, Rajinie Dixit, Kyle Stiensma
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This trend has led denominational leaders to focus attention on OAC as they ask the question, "What attracts young people and keeps them engaged in church life?" Read More

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Newsflash from Cactusville Austin
By Sherri Uhrig

Attention all Ma's and Pa's! Cactusville Round-up is for all Buckaroos (ages 6-9) and Wranglers (ages 10-12) each evening 7:00.

Sunday evening Sheriff Dusty deputizes all the Buckaroos and Wranglers
as Cactusville Deputies. In Cactusville, Buckaroos and Wranglers are CALLED to be Deputies and will learn how God has CALLED each of them for a special purpose.... a Round-up concert with Mighty Magic Pants ends the first evening in Cactusville. This is more than your usual concert ... the Buckaroos and Wranglers will be actively involved with knee slappin' joyful music!

That's not all! Monday evening at the Cactusville Round-up Buckaroos and Wranglers will participate in more music and hear a life-changing message from Nana Puddin'.

Tuesday evening is designed to put into action .... And I mean really big action!... God's calling to them ... KidsBlitz will involve the whole posse! Yee-Haw! See your Buckaroos and Wranglers soon in Cactusville Austin for a Bible treasure seeking adventure that is sure to be rip roarin' fun!

Pastors/Spouses and kids can still register for the June 28-July 1 CALLED Convention in Austin Texas.

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Events, Resources, Announcements

Beyond the Search is a 14 part documentary which explores some of life's biggest questions with gripping cinematography and Bible-inspired scripts. Free sample DVDs are available.

6 Things to Do When You Feel Overwhelmed - Practical steps for getting balance back in your life.

What Are You Living For? - In this prop-enhanced sermon Francis Chan shows us how life is like a small red piece of tape at the end of a long
rope of eternity.

Previous Resource Links:

- Old Fashioned Preorders
- You Are a Pizza Box
- Why Aren't Black Millennials Leaving the Church?
- Adventist Youth Ontario
- Prophecies of Revelation Made Simple
- Nine Traits of Church Bullies
- Nine Ways to Deal With Church Bullies
Effective Church Communication

By Jon Cicle

As a pastor, “good” communication seems to be an almost constant struggle. I have heard questions on Sabbath such as “Is it potluck today? I had no idea! Why don’t we announce these things?” Comments like these are discouraging because extra effort was put forth to ensure that the secretary had listed the potluck announcement three consecutive weeks. A lot of work goes into planning special events and ministries. It’s a shame for that work to go to waste when the right people don’t know about the event or service we’re working toward. Systems are imperative if we’re going to communicate effectively.

This scenario repeats itself too frequently. It may be potluck, a spring social, a school fundraiser, a church work bee or a quarterly communion. With all of these church events there are some assumptions: 1—Pastors want people to be informed and attend. 2—People are busy. 3—Posting an announcement in the bulletin and reading that announcement during the worship service are the ways to address the need for communication.

Pastors often feel like a broken record when communicating to the elders and church leaders about important announcements. With advance planning we might list an event in a monthly or quarterly newsletter. We might even post something on a church website. And still we have to drive congregants to those information outlets. Many pastors will attest that bulletin announcements often go unread. Announcements from the front are either so short that they leave out pertinent info or so long that they become boring and tedious. Some churches feel a real tension about announcements in worship. Kind of like a necessary evil – announcements detract from the worship service but if we don’t mention upcoming events then no one shows up.

So I ask you, how effective is your church communication? Answering that question for my church, I would say that the typical methods are not as effective as I would like.

Let me tell you about a tool that has proven to be effective in my local congregation. To put it simply, HeroLoop is a very easy, inexpensive way to text individuals in your congregation with just one message inputted from whomever you may designate. If an individual does not receive text messages, there is also an option to email the message or send via a voicemail. It is easy to learn, quick to implement, and effective. A recent study conducted by mobilesquared[1] reported that there was a 90% open rate within 3 minutes of users receiving the SMS. It is impressive to consider that 90% of your congregation will potentially read your announcement/reminders via text message within 3 minutes of being sent. Another recent study from the New York Times[2] has noted trends of email open rate in decline.

What are people saying about HeroLoop? One recent comment noted “So thankful for Heroloop on Sabbath when we needed to cancel the baptism on short notice due to weather. Quick. Easy. Done. Another comment spoken from an administrator that was designated to send messages “Woo hoo! Love that I can see who received messages and how they responded!”
Our own congregation is using HeroLoop to effectively communicate important information and upcoming events to our members. One impressive use was when we needed to have an emergency clean up session following a recent winter storm at our church and school. A record number of volunteers showed up, more than double the expected turnout. And the volunteers appreciated the info. Even elderly members who couldn’t physically help told me that they loved being informed regarding what was happening in the church and school family.

Disclaimer: This has been such a useful tool for our congregation that I’ve become a consultant for HeroLoop.

From a pastor’s perspective, we must always remember that the two most important types of communication are between man and God and between human beings. We must constantly examine how we communicate with each other, with the goal of communicating about Jesus to a world that desperately needs to hear it (Matthew 28: 19-20). I challenge you today to set goals to find new ways to increase communication in your church. As it says in 1 Peter 3:15, as the church, the collected believers, we should put Christ first and be prepared to communicate our hope in Him. Effective communication with your congregation is the first step to becoming a “1 Peter 3:15” church.

If you are interested in learning more about HeroLoop and how it may help you in your ministry, you may sign-up at HeroLoop to receive more info. Feel free to contact me at jon.cicle@nccsda.com.

Jon Cicle is pastor of the Orangevale, CA Church

[1] mobilesquared.co.uk
Cultivating Adventist Giving: But We’re Different, Right?

By Michael J. Brown

**Giving is a transferable habit that happens to be cultivated in religious settings** ~ Jonathan Hill, Calvin College Sociology Professor

The Seventh-day Adventist church is a unique group of people. The Spirit of Prophecy is unique. The Sanctuary Message is unique. The Three Angel’s Message is also unique. According to publication *Faith Communities Today*¹, Adventists have been characterized as one of the most philanthropic groups in North America. So it is no surprise that when contemplating the applicability of philanthropic best practices, some may say: “That’s fine for secular organizations or for other religious organizations, but you know … we’re different.”

Well, you may be surprised to learn that the *Connected To Give*² survey found no statistical difference in giving based on religious affiliation. In other words, we are more similar than different in how and why we give. These conclusions have major implications for the philanthropy segment at large and in your local congregation. Here are some important points to consider when cultivating giving:

1. People with differing religious affiliations, whether in faith or denomination, have been shown to give at similar rates and for similar reasons.

2. Research shows there are three dimensions that influence giving decisions: Organizational purpose, religiosity of organizational identity, and one’s self-perceptions about being religious or spiritual.

3. Secular giving motivations parallel religious motivations, even across differing religious affiliations of U.S. and Canadian donors.

Historically, the philanthropy sector was broken down into two macro areas. The first, and largest, was the religious segment. It was defined as religious congregations focusing solely on spiritual development. The other segment was the secular segment. It was thought to handle everything else, including health and human services, education, and so on. This sharp split inadvertently understated the magnitude of the impact of religious sector giving. Donations to church affiliated ministries like food pantries or health and wellness centers were not counted as part of the religious segment. Since they fulfilled broader “nonreligious” needs, the donations were rolled into the secular segment.

Fortunately the *Connected To Give* study recognized the broader breadth of program support attributable to religious nonprofits. The finding of this nationally representative survey of 5,000 participants was startling. Of the total individual contributions to U.S. philanthropy, 73% are in the religious segment. That total is composed of...
Congregations, which receive 41% of U.S. philanthropy donations, and Religiously Identified Organizations (RIOs) which receive 32% of U.S. philanthropy donations. Non-religiously Identified Organizations (NRIOs) receive the remaining 23% of U.S. philanthropy contributions.

Even more interesting is who gives to Congregations, RIOs, and NRIOs:

From the Deseret News graphic above, we see that Religiously Affiliated Donors lead giving in Congregation, RIO, and NRIO contributions. We also see that Non-affiliated donors participate significantly in both Congregation and RIO giving. An important take-away from the above is that Religiously Affiliated Donors tend to lead in donation rates across the board. Moreover, Connected to Give also shows that Religiously Affiliated Donors tend to lead in median donation dollar amounts as well. The main implication for your church is that cultivating a culture of generosity in your local congregation also spurs the generosity needed to fuel the growth of RIOs and NRIOs with mission projects synergistic with Christian community service values. It is also an excellent reminder that many of your members are likely supporting, and will continue to support, multiple charities in addition to your local congregation and its other nonprofit ministries.

By the way, it is also noteworthy that giving rates among Protestant denominations, Catholics, Jews, and the myriad of other religious affiliations were about the same. A Chronicle of Philanthropy article states that about half of all members of each faith group contribute to their religious congregation. The only exception is for Jews, for which thirty-seven percent contribute.

So what are the key drivers in donor motivations? Connected to Give identifies three dimensions that influence giving decisions: Organizational purpose, religiosity of organizational identity, and one’s self-perceptions about being religious or spiritual. Additionally, the report shows the importance of the following motivators by religious affiliation:

Affiliated and non-affiliated Americans saying "extremely important" or "very important" to the following:
When developing your key messages(s) it is important to consider the above. It is also important to remember that *Connected to Give* further shows that frequency in attending religious services positively correlates with donation support.

Interestingly a *New York Times* article mentions that philanthropic psychologist—Jen Shang—suggests making conscious decisions about integrating a subset of these nine key adjectives into your philanthropic messaging as appropriate: kind, caring, compassionate, helpful, friendly, fair, hard-working, generous and honest. In effectively doing so, she has seen nonprofits see an average increase in giving of 10% by women. She further recommends additionally layering on language signaling: strong, responsible, and loyal qualities when messaging males. These findings have practical application as you transform your organization's mission, values, and cause into a compelling "case for support." That case becomes a rallying point for your donors, your organization, and your messaging about your project or cause. It is an important key driver in how strongly your members feel compelled to support your local church ministries.

Although geographic differences are often important, research also shows that Canadian charitable giving mirrors that found in the United States. Like its neighbor to the north, the largest nonprofit segment in Canada is Religion. Both Canadian and U.S. donors have been found to behave in strikingly similar ways. The Charitable Giving by Canadians report shows there is a strong positive correlation between age, religious activity/attendance, and volunteerism with level of donations. Donor motivations for giving also align well with those previously discussed in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>all donors</th>
<th>non-affiliated</th>
<th>Black Protestant</th>
<th>Evangelical Protestant</th>
<th>Jewish</th>
<th>Mainline Protestant</th>
<th>Roman Catholic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>feeling that those who have more should help those with less</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a belief that my charitable giving will help make the world a better place</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the feeling that I am fortunate and want to give back to society</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a belief that my charitable giving can achieve change or bring about a desired impact</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a desire to meet critical needs in the community and support worthwhile causes</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a desire to support an organization that benefitted me or someone close to me</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a desire to live up to values instilled in me by my parents or grandparents</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a spontaneous reaction to help people in an immediate disaster, such as an earthquake or hurricane</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a desire to set an example for children, future generations, my community, or my social network</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a commitment to support the same causes or organizations on a regular basis</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a commitment to being [religious affiliation]</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a belief that my giving will help improve [religious affiliation] life and the [religious affiliation] community*</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the desire to leave a lasting legacy</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the understanding that giving is expected within my social network</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being asked to give by a friend or associate</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>charitable giving can help me in my work life</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Respondents saw the term corresponding to their stated religious affiliation.
When cultivating a culture of giving, consider using a three-legged platform of mission, message, and method of communication. Create a compelling case for support. Allow members multiple ways to donate their time, influence, and financial support. Show your ministry partners how their valuable support is helping to change lives. Finally, thank donors as early and often as possible.

Remember, we really are more similar than we are different. So before you invite someone to partner in supporting your local ministry opportunities, ask yourself how you plan to incorporate the common motivational threads discussed above. Whether a church, foodbank, or any other flourishing charitable organization, the fundraising best practices remain fairly consistent within the North American philanthropic sector.

**Michael J. Brown is associate director of Philanthropic Service for Institutions**

**Notes**


Stories We Tell Traditions: Why Do You Do That?

By Bruce Nicola

There was a small-town church in upstate New York. They’d had a priest in that church for over thirty-five years. He was loved by the church and the community. After he retired, he was replaced by a young, brand new, inexperienced priest.

It was the young priest’s first church and he had a great desire to do well. After he had been at the church for several weeks, he began to sense that the people were upset at him and this was troubling to him.

Eventually he called aside one of the lay leaders of the church and said, "I don’t know what’s going on, but I have a feeling that there’s something wrong."

The man said, "Well, it’s true. I hate to say it, but it’s the way you do the Communion service."

"The way I do the Communion service? What do you mean?" the young priest asked.

"Well, it’s not so much what you do as what you leave out."

"I don’t think I leave out anything from the Communion service" said the young priest.

"Oh yes, you do," the church member replied. "Just before our previous priest administered the chalice and wine to the people, he’d always go over and touch the heating radiator. And, then, he would …"

"Whoa, whoa — just a minute — touched the heating radiator? I have never heard of that liturgical tradition."

So the young, new priest called the former priest. He said, "I haven’t even been here more than a few months and I’m in trouble."

"In trouble? Why? What’s happening?" the priest asked.

"Well, it’s something to do with you touching the heating radiator during the Communion service. Could that be possible? Did you use to do that?"

"Oh yes, I did. Always before I administered the chalice of wine to the people, I touched the heating radiator to discharge the static electricity so I wouldn’t shock them."

Bruce Nicola is pastor for seniors and visitation at the Paradise, CA Church
ATTRACTION AND ENGAGING MILLENNIALS IN LOCAL CHURCH COMMUNITIES

A qualitative study of the trends among young people at Oakridge Adventist Church and British Columbia Conference

Rajkumar Dixit, Rajinie Dixit, Kyle Stiemisma
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## ABSTRACT
This study explores the trends among young adults at Oakridge Adventist Church in Vancouver, British Columbia and the wider British Columbia Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in order to develop strategies to increase attendance and engagement of young adults in local church congregations around the world. Collecting 130 responses from a 62-question survey, this study compiles the revealed data to assess the key factors that attract young adults and keep them engaged. The study focuses on eight major areas: involvement of friends and family, church climate, outreach and community involvement, transformative experience, spiritual authenticity, Ecclesial Leadership, Adventist distinctives, and evangelism. This report outlines the thoughts, opinions, and behaviors of the church-engaged — young people who are actively attending and participating in the communal and spiritual life of their local church.
GOD WANTS THE YOUTH TO BECOME MEN [AND WOMEN] OF EARNEST MIND, TO BE PREPARED FOR ACTION IN HIS NOBLE WORK, AND FITTED TO BEAR RESPONSIBILITIES.

Ellen White, Messages to Young People, page 21
An unusual phenomenon is occurring at Oakridge Adventist Church (OAC) in Vancouver, Canada. The number of young adults, ages 18-35, is defying the typical trend of rampant decrease. Rather, the number of young adults is increasing as displayed not only by their attendance at weekly worship services, but also their active service in all areas of ministry at OAC. This trend has led denominational leaders to focus attention on OAC as they ask the question, “What attracts young people and keeps them engaged in church life?”
The Seventh-day Adventist Church, like all other denominations, is experiencing a hemorrhaging of young adult membership. One study suggests that 50% of all young people begin leaving the church after age 15. Another grimmer study found the percentage to be even higher, as high as 70%. The research is clear; young people are leaving the church in droves.

These startling statistics have caused church administrators to pause and focus on this alarming trend, allocating more resources and time for further study. The North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists asked researchers to study this issue and provide some insight on ways to address the problem. In recent years, the majority of research conducted has been focused on why young people are leaving the church. The two questions addressed in this particular study take a different approach. The following data collected seeks to ask why young adults are attending church and what keeps them engaged in the church community.

As denominational administrations seek to empower local churches to reach young people more effectively, is it possible to pinpoint common trends that compel young adult attendance and involvement in their congregations?

AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF RESEARCH HAS BEEN CONDUCTED YIELDING DATA SHOWING WHY YOUNG ADULTS ARE LEAVING THE CHURCH; HOWEVER, NOT MUCH EMPHASIS HAS FOCUSED ON WHAT KEEPS THEM ENGAGED.

This study focuses on Oakridge Adventist Church and provides a unique glimpse at Canadian young people. The church is located in the heart of one of the largest metropolitan centers in the nation. The urban environment of Vancouver, populated by a majority of foreign-born residents, is known as a rapidly growing secular society. The Vancouver Sun reported, “Only 41 per cent of Metro residents are Christian, compared to a national average of 67 per cent. British Columbia has the fewest Christians on average of any province or territory.” Furthermore, more than 41% of metro Vancouver residents indicated that they have “no religion.”

The sturdy influence of secularization, globalization, and postmodernism is a well-known deterrent to proselytizing individuals. The other unique aspect of Oakridge Adventist Church is the diverse population in attendance. The congregation is representative of the surrounding community with a multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-generational mix.

COMPARING A LARGER SAMPLE GROUP

While this study focuses on trends among young people at OAC, the British Columbia Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (BC Conference) allowed the survey to be extended throughout the vast territory of British Columbia and An enormous amount of research has been conducted yielding data showing why young adults are leaving the church; however, not much emphasis has focused on what keeps them engaged.

1 The survey by the Barna Group highlighted that one out of every five Christians (59%) disconnect either permanently or for an extended period of time from church life after age 15. This landmark survey was published in a book by David Kinnaman, President of Barna Group, entitled You Lost Me: Why Christians are Leaving the Church and Rethinking Faith (Baker Books, 2011). See also Roger Dudley, Why Our Teenagers Leave the Church (Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1999).


4 This study follows the Canadian Press standards for spelling and grammar.
the Yukon. The results of this study will feature the OAC data against the comparative and contrastive backdrop of the data gathered from the wider BC Conference survey. While the OAC results represent one particular church culture in a micro setting, the BC Conference results will serve to provide a broader view.

THE YOUNG ADULTS OF OAC

Young adults are attending Oakridge Adventist Church in large numbers. Many of these young people are serving in all areas of ministry; they are contributing to the life of the church as Sabbath School teachers, soundboard engineers, deacons, hospitality team leaders, etc. These OAC young adults are entrusted with great influence, representing approximately 50% of the church board.

WHO ARE THE VISITORS?

OAC has gained a reputation as a safe haven for young people who are on a spiritual journey. As a result, the majority of the visitors attending on Sabbath are young adults. Each week, visitors are invited to the front two pews to receive a free gift bag during a post-service element called “7 minutes or Less.” In less than seven minutes, a trained hospitality team member welcomes those who come forward and asks them to fill out a brief survey card in exchange for a gift bag.

The survey results provide church leaders with crucial information about the visitor’s experience along with key demographic information. This year (2014), the 7 Minutes or Less survey results revealed 63% of all visitors were between the ages of 18-35. A majority (56%) of the visitors were unmarried. We found that 43% of visitors came...
to church with a friend or family member, and 42% found the church through an Internet search. In addition, 15% of the respondents claim to have no Seventh-day Adventist background, while 13% say they have no religious background whatsoever.

With the overwhelming majority of visitors being young adults, the congregation has intentionally positioned itself to reach this generation known as the millennials.

**RESEARCH METHODS**
The primary tool for gathering the data in this study is a 62-question survey administered through mobile devices (such as smartphones, laptop computers, and tablets) via polldaddy.com. OAC young adults were invited to participate in the survey after the worship service for two consecutive weeks. The same survey was administered at the BC Conference camp meeting in Hope, British Columbia during the week of July 26-August 2, 2014. The two pools were kept separate for contrastive analysis purposes. The results of both pools were then analyzed through a series of filters through polldaddy.com to investigate the relationship between different questions and the answers they provoked.

In addition to the survey results, several interviews were conducted privately with young adults in a confidential environment for the purpose of teasing out some of the trends in the survey. These young adults were chosen for interviews based on their church involvement, demographic information, and representative nature.

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5 See Appendix A for a sample 7 minutes or Less information card.
6 OAC has a strong web presence through social media and is using strategic methods to maximize its ranking in Internet search engines. In 2014, the church changed its online brand presence to ChurchInVancouver.ca.
What are the key factors that attract young adults and keep them engaged? The respondents were asked 62 questions that reflected eight broad areas of church life. This report outlines the thoughts, opinions, and behaviours of the church-engaged (i.e., young people who are actively attending and participating in the communal and spiritual life of their local church).
BEYOND INDIVIDUALISM

QUESTION: HOW DO RELATIONSHIPS MOTIVATE YOUNG ADULTS TO ENGAGE WITH THEIR LOCAL CHURCH?

SURVEY QUESTIONS: 02, 03, 22, 23, 33

Family connections are important to the makeup of a congregation. Do church-engaged young adults attend church because a family member attends with them? In other words, are they active due to family influence? When asked whom they attend church with, 48% of respondents said they attend with a parent, sibling, or family member (54% BC young adults). An additional 9% (13% BC young adults) said they attended church with a spouse or significant other; 28% stated they attend church with a friend (22% BC young adults), whereas only 15% said they attend church alone (11% BC young adults). Putting all that together, 85% of respondents (89% BC young adults) reported they attend church with somebody they were in a relationship with.\(^7\)

Relationships are a critical element to church attendance for millennials. This drive for community can be seen in the shifting structures of workplaces. Unlike other generations who are accustomed to working alone in private cubicles, millennials thrive when working in teams.\(^8\) The correlation between personal relationships and church engagement is firmly intertwined. Today’s young adults do not compartmentalize their lives to the extent seen in previous generations.

Their approach to life is holistic — religion, politics, and career all intersect. They are, therefore, less likely to be secretive about their faith, and they will more than likely choose to live out their spirituality within a community. This idea is also supported by the question of self-identification and relatability. When given the statement, “There are other people like me in church,” 88% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed (82% BC young adults).\(^9\) Young adults are attracted

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\(^7\) Question #3


\(^9\) Question #13
to people who are similar in age and life stage, people who they feel can understand and relate to them.

**CHRISTIAN WITNESS OF THE PARENT**

Our data confirms that a significant relational factor influencing the attendance and engagement of young adults relates to a consistent religious parental upbringing. The importance of the witness of a Christian parent cannot be overstated. In a major study called the National Study of Youth and Religion, one of the key revelations was “the young person’s parents practiced the faith in the home and in daily life, not just in public or church settings.”

When asked if, “One or both of your parents attends a church” an overwhelming 81% of the respondents (92% BC young adults) said yes.

The spiritual influence and consistency of a Christian parent is a critical element to the future success of their child’s activity level in church.

**CHURCH CLIMATE**

**WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF AN ACCEPTING CHURCH THAT WELCOMES THE CHURCH-ENGAGED?**

**SURVEY QUESTIONS: 15, 16, 17, 26, 48**

One of the most important indicators of engagement relates to how young people feel towards their church. Most Seventh-day Adventist young people remain committed to denominational doctrines. Rarely do they break ties with the church over theology; their motives almost always have to do with church climate. When asked, “I am proud of my church,” an overwhelming 95% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed (85% BC young adults).

When asked if “My church cares about its members,” 95% agreed or strongly agreed (87% BC young adults). Again, the vast majority (95%) agreed or strongly agreed that, “My church is hospitable to visitors (82% BC young adults).

Our study reveals that the church-engaged share positive feelings towards their church. Additionally, it reveals that the local church is a safe place to bring their unchurched friends. When asked, “I look forward to attending worship services at my local church,” 93% agreed (80% BC young adults).

These statistics are surprisingly positive compared to another study conducted by LifeWay. In a survey of Protestants ages 18-30, only 51% of respondents saw church members as “caring.” Other positive descriptors, such as “welcoming” (48%) or “authentic” (42%), fared just as poorly.

**OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

**ARE YOUNG ADULTS ATTRACTED TO CHURCHES WITH A STRONG IMPACT IN THE COMMUNITY?**

**SURVEY QUESTIONS: 24, 25, 42, 44, 52**

Millennials have a strong commitment to social responsibility, championing social justice within the church. Rabbi Joshua Stanton...
explains the millennial outlook in a Huffington Post article. He writes, “Instilled with a dedication to social justice, perhaps in good measure by our parents, we seek to collaborate when possible to resolve social problems.” The church-engaged at Oakridge Adventist Church resonate with this strong attraction to community engagement. They believe the church should reach outward by serving the needs of the community.

Oakridge Adventist Church has a strong reputation for connecting with the surrounding neighbourhood and partnering with community organizations. Over the years, the congregation has led numerous events such as block parties, blood drives, food drives, community garden projects, and many other such initiatives. When given the statement, “My church serves the community,” 95% agreed or strongly agreed, (85% BC young adults.)

When asked if, “my church is making an impact in the neighborhood/community,” 91% agreed or strongly agreed (74% BC young adults).

Although young adults are attracted to the idea of community outreach, this does not necessarily correlate to their engagement in service projects. Only 55% said yes to the statement “I’ve served the poor through my church” (93% BC young adults). When survey participants were asked if they have “found a cause or issue at church that motivates [them],” 64% of the respondents said yes (80% BC young adults).

A report by The Journal of Higher Education compared millennials to Gen Xers and Boomers, finding that millennials have a lower commitment to civic interests. Even engagement in community service, where millennial involvement rose slightly, was not the result of genuine altruism. Rather, the study found millennials were required to earn community service hours to fulfill academic requirements. A surprising response was discovered in our study when respondents were asked to choose their favourite part of church. Out of the six options listed, zero respondents chose “outreach” (6% BC Young Adults).

**TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE**

**DO THE CHURCH-ENGAGED FEEL THE CHURCH INFLUENCES THEIR WORLDVIEW?**

**SURVEY QUESTION 29, 36, 37, 39, 41**

Is the church making a real, transformative change in the lives of its members? Recent studies have revealed few differences between the values and lifestyles of Christians and non-Christians. American theologian and activist Ronald Sider reports that in all instances — from divorce, sexual promiscuity, materialism, and physical abuse — Christians are either no different from non-Christians or, in some cases, even worse off. Does church life, worship, and spiritual discipline shape the worldview of its young
people, thereby making a positive impact in society?

We asked a series of questions in the survey relating to transformative change. The results were telling. The statement, “At church, I learn about how Christians can positively contribute to society,” evoked agreement or strong agreement from 95% of respondents (85% BC young adults).26 When asked, “I better understand my purpose in life because of church,” 83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (82% BC young adults).27 The survey revealed 74% (72% BC young adults) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “Through church, I’ve learned how the Bible applies to my field or career interests.”28

According to the 2011 Barna survey on American Christianity, one of the reasons young adults leave the church is their perception of Christianity as shallow, lacking a deeper connection to their everyday life. They struggle with a lack of relevance and conviction as they seek to combine their spiritual quest with the reality of day-to-day living. A third of the respondents said, “Church is boring” (31%). A quarter said, “Faith is not relevant to my career or interests” (24%) and “The Bible is not taught clearly or often enough” (23%).29

**SPIRITUAL AUTHENTICITY**

**DO CHURCH-ENGAGED YOUNG ADULTS SHARE A STRONGER COMMITMENT TOWARDS SPIRITUAL PRACTICES SUCH AS PRAYER, DAILY BIBLE READING, AND PERSONAL DEVOTIONS?**

_**SURVEY QUESTIONS: 6, 22, 23, 27, 28, 30, 32, 38,**_

It can be easy to assume that church-engaged young people have a stronger spiritual commitment. Unlike their formerly churched friends who may have dropped out of the religious community, these church-engaged have remained within the walls of a spiritual congregation. While it might be presumed they would have a more intense spirituality, our findings call this assumption into question. We asked numerous questions to determine the spiritual commitment and maturity of the church-engaged. When asked, “What is the main reason you continue to attend church?” 64% responded with the answer “spiritual growth” (69% BC young adults).30 The second highest response, “social interaction,” was given by 31% (15% BC young adults). A surprising insight was that 8% of British Columbia young adults indicated “habit” as the main reason for regular church attendance (compared to 0% of OAC young adults).

When asked what their favourite part of church is, the church-engaged gave some revealing explanations: 54% of respondents said “worship,” (32% BC young adults), whereas “fellowship” and “sermon” were the next highest responses each with 12% of respondents (17 % and 24% BC young adults, respectively).31

The practices of the Christian tradition communicate important theology to believers and embed vital attributes of discipleship. The statement, “The Lord’s Supper (communion) is an important part of my spiritual life,” incited agreement or strong agreement among 64% of respondents (77% BC young adults).32 In addition, when faced with the assertion, “Connecting with historical Christian traditions through my
In order for young people to stay engaged, they must first have a genuine conversion experience with God.

When asked, “What keeps you engaged in church?” social interaction out-ranked spiritual experiences: 32% of the respondents chose “social gatherings” (30% BC young adults) compared to 28% who chose “spiritual experience” (27% BC young adults). Only 8% of OAC church-engaged asserted theological instruction to be an indicator (10% BC young adults).

One of the most important factors of transformational growth is a healthy understanding of God’s transformative grace. Seventh-day Adventist youth have historically had a poor grace orientation. The ValueGenesis and ValueGenesis II studies have consistently addressed this challenge. In the ValueGenesis II study, when faced with the assertion, “There is nothing I can do to earn salvation,” 58% of high school, and 32% of grade 6-8 “strongly agreed” with the statement. When we asked similar questions related to a person’s understanding of God’s grace, the results were surprising. The statement, “I have assurance of my salvation,” was only affirmed by 32% of church-engaged respondents (36% BC young adults). The assertion, “I am going to heaven,” was only affirmed by 24% (29% BC Young Adults).

We examined the basic elements of personal worship that constitute Christian discipleship such as prayer and bible study. When respondents read the statement, “My church has taught me how to pray well,” 62% agreed or strongly agreed (67% BC young adults). When asked how often they read the Bible, the most common answer was “occasionally” with 40% of respondents (whereas the most common answer among BC young adults was “weekly” with 30% of respondents). When asked how often they pray, 81% said “daily” (76% BC young adults).

When we examined the basic elements of personal worship that constitute Christian discipleship such as prayer and bible study, we found that 62% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “My church has taught me how to pray well” (67% BC young adults). We also found that the most common answer to the question of how often they read the Bible was “occasionally” with 40% of respondents (whereas the most common answer among BC young adults was “weekly” with 30% of respondents). We asked how often they pray, and 81% said “daily” (76% BC young adults).
In order for young people to stay engaged, they must first have a genuine conversion experience with God. Their faith experience cannot hang on the coattails of their parents or the strong programming of their local church. Author Andrea Dilley aptly says, “No program, camp, mission trip, youth group, worship style, musical trend, Sunday school, church reform, updated pastoral style, modernization, or even catechetical class will make a statistically significant difference.”

Jason K. Allen, President of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, suggests that one of the reasons young adults leave the church is because of their lack of spiritual commitment. He comments, “Many young adults leave the church because they were never truly converted to Christ in the first place.” In a popular CNN opinion blog, Rachel Held Evans summarizes her generation’s desire for the Gospel: “We’re not leaving the church because we don’t find the cool factor there, we’re leaving the church because we don’t find Jesus there.”

Young people must experience God’s abundant grace for themselves; the church must position itself as a catalyst for such experience and not as a hindrance.

**ECCLESIAL LEADERSHIP**

**WHAT ROLE DOES THE LEADERSHIP, ESPECIALLY THE PASTOR, PLAY IN CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE OF ENGAGEMENT?**

**SURVEY QUESTIONS 12, 18, 19, 23**

There are numerous factors at play in whether or not millennials stay engaged in the church. How much influence does the local church leadership have in attracting and retaining young people to local congregations?

The participation of lay leadership alongside the pastor is an important aspect to church growth and health. The Church of England was interested in learning why 18% of their churches grew in the decade up to 2010. A study conducted between 2011 and 2013 sought to discern any features that gave an advantage in church growth. One of these factors was the strength of the lay leadership. According to the study, “Active involvement of lay members throughout the congregation’s ministry was a hallmark of growing churches.”

The sustainability of church health is dependent on the lay leadership of the church, who remain long after the church pastor moves on.

**ONE WOULD ASSUME THAT ALL CHURCH-ENGAGED YOUNG ADULTS WHO ARE ATTENDING A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CONGREGATION WOULD SELF-IDENTIFY WITH TRADITIONAL ADVENTIST BELIEFS AND TEACHINGS.**

One would assume that all church-engaged young adults who are attending a Seventh-day Adventist congregation would self-identify with traditional Adventist beliefs and teachings.

When prompted with the statement, “I believe in the direction my local church is headed,” an overwhelming 90% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement (80% BC young adults). The vast majority, 96% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they trust the leadership of their pastor (80% BC young adults). When asked if they believe the leadership of their church is authentic, 93% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed (90% BC young adults).

**ADVENTIST DISTINCTIVES**

**DO THE CHURCH-ENGAGED HAVE A STRONG COMMITMENT TO THE ADVENTIST DENOMINATION AND ITS DISTINCTIVE MESSAGE?**

**SURVEY QUESTIONS: 01, 27, 31, 47**
EVANGELISM

ARE THE CHURCH-ENGAGED CONCERNED ABOUT THE FAITH OF THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS?

SURVEY QUESTIONS: 07, 14, 15, 17, 21, 48

According to our study, the church-engaged are not ashamed or embarrassed by their faith. Of respondents, 95% said their friends and coworkers know they are churchgoers (87% BC young adults). Also, a minority (17%) said they do not feel comfortable inviting friends to church (25% BC young adults). A primary reason for this can be found in how respondents answered question 48: "I feel like my church is a safe place for people of every..." The respondents did not feel like the church would be a safe environment for people of other religions and/or sexual orientations.

Millennials face a unique problem when it comes to sharing their faith. Three-in-one say they are not affiliated with any religion. Because these "nones," as they have been termed, have no previous religious or church experience, proselytizing requires a different set of sensibilities than the ones used to reach past generations.

This generation is quite different when it comes to their religious views. According to Pew Research, they are less likely to be affiliated with religion. Furthermore, they are less likely to say they believe in God. "A solid majority still do — 86% — but only 58% say they are 'absolutely certain' that God exists, a lower share than among older adults." It is interesting to note the changing patterns in religious affiliation and commitment among millennials. A small minority (13%) of millennials say, "having more people who are not religious is a safe place for people of every..."

One would assume that all church-engaged young adults who are attending a Seventh-day Adventist congregation would self-identify with traditional Adventist beliefs and teachings. Yet, our survey results revealed the contrary. While 84% of the respondents indicated their religious background was Seventh-day Adventist (100% BC young adults), only 66% said they self-identify as a Seventh-day Adventists (84% BC young adults). These statistics are hardly surprising in an age of pluralism. Millennials are less likely to commit to an organized religion and denomination compared with previous generations. This lack of denominational identity can partially explain why only 7% of respondents said they read the writings of Ellen G. White on a weekly basis (5% BC young adults).

Andrea Palpant Dilley, “Trying to attract the young; church should change carefully and wisely.” FaithandLeadership.com July 16, 2013.


is a good thing for society, but a majority (54%) say this trend doesn’t make much difference.”56 Over half of millennials with a Christian background (59%) have, at some point in their lives, dropped out of church after attending regularly. In his book You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church...and Rethinking Faith, David Kinnaman — President of the Barna Group — describes three spiritual experiences of millennials. Here, he coins the terms: Nomads, Prodigals, and Exiles.

Nomads are individuals with a Christian background who walked away from church engagement but still consider themselves Christian. Kinnaman surmises that this trend may exist because this group believes going to church and having Christian friends is optional (43%). They see themselves as personally interested in God but not necessarily in the institution of religion.

Prodigals are those young people who have lost their faith. They grew up in the church but no longer claim to adhere to Christian beliefs. They are typically explicit about their intentions of never returning to the church. Exiles are young people who are still in the church but don’t fit in. These are young people with a Christian background who struggle with finding a connection between their church and their everyday lives. More than one-fifth of millennials (21%) with a Christian background say they remain Christian and continue to attend a church, but they find church to be a difficult place to live out their faith.57

The church is not keeping up with the changing cultural landscape in attitudes towards race, religion, and sexuality. Millennials take more liberal and pluralistic positions compared to previous generations. Currently, 68% of millennials favour allowing gays and lesbians to legally marry, up 44% from 2004.58 In fact, 35% of millennials say the trend of gay and lesbian couples raising children is good for society.59

One of the popular reasons given for the exodus of young adults in the church is because of the prudish stance the church has taken toward sexuality. “For a fifth or more, a ‘just say no’ philosophy is insufficient in a techno-porno world. Young Christian singles are as sexually active as their non-Christian friends, and many say they feel judged.”60

Author and historian John Dickson urges Christians to move from a posture of “admonition to mission.”61 In other words, the church must refocus its work on making a meaningful difference in the world (justice) over simply trying to make the world feel guilty (judgment).

A recent study of Adventist millennials compared to young adults, conducted by the Barna Group, found the importance of creating a space for questions. Adventist doctrine and culture has been influenced largely by a modern, 19th century worldview. Adventist doctrine has historically been considered absolute, with no place for questions or disagreement. A. Allan Martin says the Adventist study found “the biggest differences were in the area of feeling like ‘I can be myself’ and of feeling like ‘doubts are tolerated.’”62 The postmodern corrective of pluralistic reasoning

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55 ibid., p. 43.
57 See “Millennials: A Portrait of Next Generation.” Pew Research. p. 31
58 Question #51
62 “Three Spiritual Journeys of Millennials.” Barna.com
63 Question #30
64 Question #32
65 Question #51
66 http://youthandreligion.nd.edu/
heavily influences this generation. Today, church leaders are being encouraged to provide a safe place for questions, placing an emphasis on the Christian life as a walk or journey rather than a destination or means to an end. Mary Schaller, president of Q Place, calls this aspect of postmodernity “holy curiosity.” She writes, “Many people are looking for someone to listen to them, not to hear an uninvited apologetic argument.”

SURPRISING INSIGHTS

Our survey results provided a cursory understanding of the thoughts and opinions of young people at Oakridge Adventist Church and the British Columbia Conference. After sorting and analyzing the data, we identified several surprising findings.

A lack of transformative faith: The church-engaged fail to practice the hallmark disciplines of the Christian faith: prayer and bible engagement. Only 19% say they read the Bible daily (30% BC young adults), and 81% say they pray daily (76% BC young adults).

A lack of grace orientation: The church-engaged seem to fail to grasp God’s unfailing love. When faced with the statement, “I have assurance of my salvation,” only 36% of respondents agreed (32% BC young adults). However, when asked the same question in a more direct manner, “I am going to heaven,” only 29% agreed (24% BC young adults).

The value of a mentor: The National Study of Youth and Religion, a major research project, revealed factors contributing to a young person retaining
their religious tradition into adulthood. The study revealed the importance of young people having a meaningful relationship with a Christian mentor outside of their family. In our study, we found that a rather small majority confirmed this finding. When asked if they have “a close personal friend at church who is over the age of 40,” 55% said yes (87% BC young adults). When asked if they have a “mentor who is over the age of 40 at church who is not a member of the church staff,” a minority (31%) responded yes (45% BC young adults).

The value of mentors is crucial for the future growth of the church. Drew Dyck says, “The number one predictive factor as to whether or not a young Christian will retain his or her faith is whether that person has a meaningful relationship with an older Christian.” Churches interested in attracting and engaging young adults would do well to spend time and resources to foster and encourage such relationships.

**Those who serve will lead:**
We were surprised by the high correlation between those who had been asked to serve and those who were active ministry leaders: 60% of the church-engaged said they were involved in a ministry (80% BC Young Adults). However, 50% said they had never been asked to serve as a ministry leader (32% BC young adults). The more active young adults are in the leadership of the church, the greater likelihood they will engage with the whole of church life, as confirmed by the “Learning from Growing Churches” report by the Church of England. However, this activity can only be possible if long time members intentionally invest in young adults by passing the baton to younger leaders.

**Social Interaction is Key:** Our research revealed that social interaction is valued over spiritual discipline. Millennials engage in and excel in relationships. While spiritual matters are important to them, they often experience spirituality in community rather than in isolation: 32% of the respondents said they attend church for “social gathering” (30% BC Young Adults). Young adults are detached from institutions and networked through friendship. They are not as interested in creating structures and are wary of institutional religion. They have also avoided another institution of society — marriage. Only 26% of this generation has walked down the aisle, compared to 36% of Gen Xers, 48% of Baby Boomers, and 65% of the Silent Generation at comparative ages. In spite of their timidity toward commitment, millennials are committed to relationships in all aspects of their life. According to a study by the US. Chamber Foundation, 70% of millennials are more excited about their decisions when their friends agree, compared to 48% percent of non-millennials. Their need for peer socialization and affirmation seems to drive all aspects of their life.

While the need for community and networking is real for young adults, there are some deeper issues that the church must keep in mind when serving millennials. In an essay called *Loneliness in the Age of Facebook*, Andy Gill carefully outlines the shifting landscape that is occurring in the technological age.

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67 Andrea Palpant Dilley, Trying to attract the young. Church should change carefully and wisely. FaithandLeadership.com July 16, 2013.
68 Question #34
69 Question #35
71 Question #8
72 Question #9
73 Question #52
75 Ibid. Also see www.uschamberfoundation.net/MillennialsReport. See also, Martin Davis. Millennials, Social Media, and the Church. Churchleadership.com. April 9, 2014.
76 Millennials are often called, “digital natives” – the only generation for which new technologies are not something they’ve had to adapt to. They were born in this age of technology.
77 Andy Gill. Loneliness in the Age of Facebook. relevantmagazine.com. April 23, 2014
The proliferation of social media and handheld devices has quickly rewritten the social rules at work and play. “We’ve become a generation that prefers Netflix to dating, texting to talking, pornography to sex, and being liked by many instead of being loved by few. As a result, so many of us are finding ourselves to be and feel as if we’re surrounded by people yet still alone.” Given this context, the church must provide a space where open dialogue and relationship building (horizontal and vertical) can be central to Christian discipleship.

It is the Seventh-day Adventist Church was founded by a group of young adults. Today, the church-engaged young person retains the same zeal for the gospel and the imminent return of Jesus Christ, as did the early church founders. However, millennials have questions about their place in the Adventist church. They long to be seen, not as the future of the church, but as competent and reliable leaders in the present. Some worry that their doubts and fears will not be welcomed in the church. The vast majority have a different approach to current social issues, and they fear that their ideas (and their unchurched peers) might be rejected. The scare tactics of previous generations are no longer successful methods of evangelism in a postmodern, post-Christian era.

In an effort to retain and attract young adults, the local church must adapt to the present situation by embracing open dialogue with all generations. Young people are ready and willing to serve; however, they are not going to accept token titles of leadership. They want to be respected and entrusted with responsibility. Through authentic Christian discipleship with others in their church community, young people will continue to believe in the promise and the future of the Seventh-Adventist movement. In order to build trust with millennials, other generations will need to make allowances for young people to contextualize their religious experience based on their worldview and personal experiences. Is the Seventh-day Adventist church ready to hear their voice?

CONCLUSION

They long to be seen, not as the future of the church, but as competent and reliable leaders now.
I was greeted in a friendly manner
1 2 3 4 5

The overall appearance of the church was clean and neat
1 2 3 4 5

The bulletin (program guide) provided helpful information about the church
1 2 3 4 5

The music was uplifting
1 2 3 4 5

The sermon (talk) was relevant and helpful to my life
1 2 3 4 5

The people were friendly
1 2 3 4 5

I found this to be a safe and fun environment for my family.
1 2 3 4 5

I’ll come back again
1 2 3 4 5

I’d recommend this church to others
1 2 3 4 5

Is there anything you want us to know or bring to our attention? ____________________________

Our goal is to be a community that loves and accepts people where they are at, and help them to take the next step in their journey with God.

Please let us know if you’d like to:

○ Join a small group study
○ Explore and know more about God
○ Take the next step and commit my life to Jesus
○ Take the next step and prepare for baptism.

Seven Minutes or LESS

Date ____/____/____

Name (please print) ___________________________________________

Address _____________________________________________________

City __________________ State/Prov. __________ zip/po. ___________

Phone (cell/home) _______________________________________________

Email _________________________________________________________

Please indicate your age range
○ 13-18 ○ 19-35 ○ 36-55 ○ 56-70 ○ 71+
○ Single ○ Married ○ New to the area
○ Children (how many/how old) ____/____

Do you have a church/denominational affiliation? ________________________

How did you hear about Oakridge?

_______________________________________________________________

Would you like to receive the email newsletter?
○ Yes ○ No

Tell us about your experience Please rate the questions below. 1 is for poor. 5 is for exceptional.

The church was easy to find
1 2 3 4 5

Parking was available
1 2 3 4 5

oac
ChurchinVancouver.ca

5350 Baillie Street
Vancouver BC V5Z 3M5
APPENDIX B
7 MINUTES OR LESS DATA

SEVEN MINUTES OR LESS – AGE CATEGORY

18-35: 63
36-55: 24
13-18: 6
56-70: 6
70+: 1

SEVEN MINUTES OR LESS – STATUS CATEGORY

SINGLE: 56
MARRIED: 36
NEW TO AREA: 7
CHILDREN: 1

SEVEN MINTUES OR LESS – HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT OAKRIDGE?

FRIEND OR FAMILY: 42
INTERNET: 42
SOCIAL MEDIA: 14
YELLOW PAGES: 2
POSTCARD MAILER: 2

SEVEN MINTUES OR LESS – MY RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND IS...

NONE: 13
OTHER: 15
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST: 72
APPENDIX C
SURVEY RESULTS

01 - MY RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND IS

02 - ONE OR BOTH OF MY PARENTS ATTEND A CHURCH

03 - WHO DO YOU ATTEND CHURCH WITH?

04 - HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN ATTENDING YOUR LOCAL CHURCH?
05 - Are you an official member of the Adventist Church?

07 - My friends and co-workers know I’m a church goer.

06 - What is the main reason you attend church?

08 - I am involved in a ministry.
9 – I’ve been asked to be a leader in my local church.

10 – I’ve been asked to serve in a ministry in the last year.

11 – I understand the process of becoming a volunteer at church.

12 – I believe in the direction my church is headed.

13 – There are other people like me at church.

14 – I feel comfortable inviting my friends to church.
15 – I am proud of my church

17 – My church is hospitable to visitors

16 – My church cares about its members

18 – I trust the leadership of my pastor(s)

19 – I believe the leadership of my church is authentic

20 – My church encourages me to act authentically
27 - The Lord’s Supper (Communion) is an important part of my spiritual life

28 - Connecting with historical Christian traditions through my local church is important to me

29 - My church has taught me how to pray well

30 - I read my Bible...

31 - I read the writings of Ellen G. White...

32 - I pray...
39 - I BELIEVE THE BIBLE CONTAINS EVERYTHING A PERSON NEEDS TO LIVE A MEANINGFUL LIFE

40 - THROUGH CHURCH, I’VE LEARNED TO VIEW MY GIFTS AND PASSIONS AS PART OF GOD’S CALLING

41 - THROUGH CHURCH, I’VE LEARNED HOW THE BIBLE APPLIES TO MY FIELD OR CAREER INTERESTS

42 - I’VE SERVED THE POOR THROUGH MY CHURCH.

43 - I’VE GONE ON A TRIP THROUGH MY CHURCH THAT HELPED ME EXPAND MY THINKING

44 - I HAVE FOUND A CAUSE OR ISSUE AT CHURCH THAT MOTIVATES ME
51 - I BELIEVE...

- My Behavior Determines My Salvation: OAC 12, BC 18
- I Am Going to Heaven: OAC 42, BC 29
- Adventist Doctrines Lead to a Better Life: OAC 25, BC 29
- I Have Assurance of Salvation: OAC 36, BC 32

52 - What Keeps You Engaged in Church?

- Theological Instruction: OAC 10, BC 8
- Family Pressure: OAC 3, BC 3
- Other Option: OAC 5, BC 3
- Serving in Ministry: OAC 25, BC 26
- Spiritual Experiences: OAC 27, BC 28
- Social Gatherings: OAC 30, BC 32

53 - Gender

- Female: OAC 60, BC 40
- Male: OAC 40, BC 25
- Prefer Not to Answer: OAC 75

54 - Age

- 18-21: OAC 71, BC 72
- 22-25: OAC 17, BC 20
- 26-29: OAC 5, BC 2
- 30-35: OAC 10, BC 3
- 36+: OAC 0

55 - Marital Status

- Single: OAC 93, BC 92
- Married: OAC 9, BC 7
- Engaged: OAC 8, BC 2
- Common Law/Long Term Relationship: OAC 10, BC 3
- Divorced: OAC 0
- Remarried: OAC 0

56 - Children

- Yes: OAC 93, BC 92
- No: OAC 7, BC 8
- Prefer Not to Answer: OAC 0
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6 Things to Do When You Feel Overwhelmed

By Frank Powell

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The alarm sounds. You slowly roll over to hit the snooze, and out of instinct, you grab your phone. Just going to scroll through my Twitter or Facebook feeds to make sure I didn't miss anything, you tell yourself.

Before you know it, you're rushing to the shower, grabbing a cereal bar, throwing on some clothes, yelling at the kids to put on their clothes and sprinting to school or work.

Arriving at your desk, you re-read the same emails that have been in your inbox for days but you don't want to address. You pull up Facebook and Twitter on your browser. Maybe you SnapChat a few friends and upload a picture to Instagram. You scroll through the latest news. Before you know it, two hours are gone, and you have consumed enough information to fill any normal computer's hard drive.

Just another typical day? It is for me.

Combine the 24/7 connection with the demands on our time from friends, church, activities, family, job and so on. The result? Severely burned out, extremely overwhelmed, habitually anxious people.

No wonder a recent Barna study found over half of men and women felt physically or mentally overwhelmed in the last 30 days.

Surely this isn’t the life God intended. I sense it during a rare alone time. I feel it in the car when my phone dies and I am forced to deal with my thoughts. I see it when I look at my family and friends. I know my time is better spent with them, but the connection is calling.

The peace of God is a byproduct of prayer.

Maybe you feel the same.

Recently, I decided to make a change. I decided to implement a few principles that would restore my life that I've read about and learned.

I am not a productivity guru. Far from it. But I know these principles work for me, and hopefully they'll work for you too. It's time to experience something better.

1. Spend Time in Prayer and Reflection

I love the words of Paul in Philippians 4:6-7. “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand.”

Did you catch that? The peace of God is a byproduct of prayer. Let that truth sink in.

While many search for peace, and others try to manufacture it, the Bible says peace is ours if we simply spend time in prayer. So, this is where we start in our quest to restore our lives, because this is most important. In a world of constant connection, we must disconnect to restore the most important connection: Our relationship with God.

2. Get Organized
You won’t find a productive person who doesn’t maintain a schedule or system to track tasks. The problem with schedules is they often shackle us instead of releasing us.

So, start with this. Throw out every idea you have about schedules and to-do lists. Claire Diaz-Ortiz introduces a scheduling technique called “Scan To Plan.” I recommend it. It goes like this: Start by writing down the thoughts and tasks that pop into your head throughout the day. Big. Small. Insignificant. Very important. No matter the task or thought, write it down. Get everything out of your head.

After you write everything down, find those tasks you need to complete today. Make a to-do list with them. Then find the most important tasks (three at most) and complete them first. Make a separate list for weekly items and monthly items.

Schedules are about vision. And vision is from God. Jesus was intentional. He had a purpose. You do too. Stepping into your purpose starts with taking control of your day.

Get rid of unnecessary distractions and do your best to complete a few important tasks every day. Celebrate your successes, but stay flexible. Never allow a schedule to enslave you.

3. Invest in Yourself

If you want to pour into other people and be the best spouse, parent and co-worker you can be, investing in yourself is a must. Even Jesus spent time away from people and teaching (Luke 5:16; Luke 4:42; Matthew 14:23). Most of Jesus’s retreating involved prayer, but I am sure Jesus took time to sit and rest. He was human.

You must find some activities that nourish you. It could be anything: Painting, reading, spending time with family. For me, golf, working in the yard, playing organized sports and running are nourishing activities. Don’t feel guilty about nourishing yourself. Most of your life should focus on the needs of others. But don’t neglect yourself in the process.

4. Throw Out Insignificant Activities

One reason we are overwhelmed is we are doing too much. Maybe you feel the pressure of culture telling you to get involved in everything and say yes to everyone. But this isn’t God’s plan. Jesus didn’t say yes to everyone. He didn’t cave in to the pressure of healing or discipling the entire world.

But here’s the catch: Jesus knew His purpose. And until you have some sort of vision for your life, anything goes. Every task and request seems important. However, once you take a step back and look at the big picture, with God as your tour guide, you can filter out tasks that may not be bad in and of themselves, but are ultimately insignificant to the areas that you feel called to.

5. Find Space to Unplug

It’s interesting to consider God taking a Sabbath. I mean, what’s He resting for? He’s God. In 24/6, Matthew Sleeth says, “On the seventh day, God makes nothing out of something. Rest is brought into being.”

God creates from nothing for six days, then He flips the script on day seven. Why? That’s debatable. But this isn’t: God introduces rest as part of the Creation narrative.

Rest is essential for the natural order of God’s creation. When you neglect rest, life gets chaotic.

Rest isn’t optional or recommended. Rest is essential for the natural order of God’s creation. When you neglect rest, life gets chaotic. This is why a regular Sabbath is important. This is why sleep is important. Rest is part of God’s design for order and peace. It’s no coincidence that this culture is the most connected in the history of the world but is also the most overwhelmed and stressed.
6. Be Present in Every Situation

Set your schedule. Get rid of unnecessary activities. Then, give your attention to the tasks at hand and the people in front of you.

The constant connection to newsfeeds and emails means we are never truly present anywhere. And being present is a key to restoring your life. It is a key to relational intimacy. It is a key to productivity. It is a key to experiencing peace and joy.

When you are with other people, put the phone away. Engage in conversation. When you start a task, give all your attention to it. This might be awkward and difficult at first. Be persistent. Being present will become easier over time.

Adapt these principles to your life. Change them if something else works better. Satan wins when we are overwhelmed and over-stressed. I want to see lives restored so God can be glorified.

Disconnect from the noise. Restore your life. You can do it!

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