• **3ABN.org television airs Simple Church Interview.** At four different times throughout the day this interview was aired on the 3ABN Today show. There has been a 400% increase in web page traffic with a number of people emailing or phoning for more information from around the world. You will be notified when the interview is uploaded to the internet for on-demand viewing.

• **nadMinisterial publishes Simple Church article.** Notice the "Share" button. If appropriate you can share this on your Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, etc networks which will help it go viral. Read new article.

• **$3 Simple Church DVD by AdventSource.** This DVD, sponsored by the North American Division, is a good way to share Simple Church with people who have a missionary heart. Order DVD.

• **Missed the last Occasional newsletter?** Visit the archives.

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Simple Church At Home

By Milton Adams

SimpleChurchAtHome.com

For the Mission Field that Lives Where You Live

People often ask me, “How is Simple Church going?” to which I respond, “Better than I ever dreamed.” But what does that really mean?

In the next few paragraphs I will share the good and bad, what we have learned and mistakes I have made, a few statistics and--most importantly--the driving conviction that unites Simple Church CORE4 missionaries around the world. Additionally, for those interested, I will share some of the challenges we face, give some links to the differences between Church Planting Movements (CPM) and institutional church structures, and highlight some steps for conferences who wish to partner with the Simple Church Global Network, as well as next steps for lay people who are willing to leave their comfort zone to reach people who will most likely not walk into conventional churches.

Simple Church is now a global network of house churches that are planted by committed missionaries who are willing to leave their comfort zone to reach people who, most likely, will not walk into conventional church buildings.

After four years of missionary work, we highlight some of God’s blessings:

- 33% of adult attendance is secular and/or unchurched. When children are added, about 51% of total attendance is secular and/or unchurched.
- 49 Simple Church plants, including those who are in training.
- 6 of the 49 have multiplied as 2nd generation Simple Churches
- 11 Countries, 6 languages, 31 baptisms
- Typical attendance is about ten. (Gatherings have ranged between a new CORE4 to 52 people).
- Simple Church has grown from two families to 490 people (49 simple churches times a typical attendance of 10) with 51% being secular and/or unchurched.
- About a 1:$6,000 member/tithe ratio (the NAD is about a 1:$950 ratio)
- 25,160 people visit the web page in the last twelve months. 55.64% are new visit.
- 4,725 have downloaded the NAD Simple Church webinar introduction in the last twelve months.
- Simple Church is working with about two-dozen conferences.
- Every Simple church has a coach[1]

6 Lessons Simple Church has learned:

1. God sent the first missionary, Jesus.
2. God invites us. We only accept His invitation to join Him in His missionary work. Ellen White captures the urgency of joining God when she says, “God selects his messengers, and gives them his message; and he says, ‘Forbid them not.’ New methods must be introduced. God's people must awake to the necessities of the time in which they are living.” Review & Herald, September 30, 1902 par. 13
3. God’s invitations are not limited to geographic boundaries. The gospel commission says, “Go, therefore, and...
make disciples of all nations . . .” Matthew 28:19. White echoes this when she says, “Thus Christ sought to teach the disciples the truth that in God's kingdom there are no territorial lines, no caste, no aristocracy; that they must go to all nations, bearing to them the message of a Savior's love.” *Acts of the Apostles*, page 20.

4. Opposition is a given.

5. God uses all kinds of methods to reach people. “He will bless all who work out the spirit which He works in. To such workers He will give favor and success. As field after field is entered, new methods and new plans will spring from new circumstances. New thoughts will come with the new workers who give themselves to the work. As they seek the Lord for help, He will communicate with them. They will receive plans devised by the Lord Himself.” *Testimonies*, page 476. Simple Church is just one of the many methods God is using to reach people.

6. Lay-people are not asking the church for permission to accept God’s invitations. The role of church leadership is changing.[2] This can be disturbing for some church leaders. Culture has shifted and church leaders must support, encourage, resource, and affirm what God is already doing among the lay people. Mahatma Gandhi understood this leadership principle when he said, "There goes my people. I must follow them, for I am their leader.”

**Mistakes I have made:**

1. I underestimated what God has invited His people to do - specifically lay people. It has been one of the most fulfilling honors to work with front-line simple church missionaries who are giving up their comfort zones for one purpose - reaching people with the Everlasting Gospel. This is the heartbeat that unites Simple Church missionaries around the world.

2. I tried to herd cats. In most Western cultures people are losing confidence in many institutions, no matter what form they come in – government, profit or non-profit. Home schooling, home birthing, and home churching are here to stay. Even in house church networks, if the network tries to micro-manage lay people, they will quietly go somewhere else. There is no substitute for authentic sola Scriptoria empowerment. Today’s culture seems to be hyper sensitive to pat answers that begin with “The policy manual says…”.

3. *Signs of the Times*, Jun 2013 cover article is called “spiritual but not religious?” This demographic is the fastest growing religious group in America. I believe this shift will significantly impact our churches ability to reach people much more then I had originally anticipated.

**Institutional values and church planting movement values:** Much has already been said regarding these differences and the tension that comes from them. These three videos summarize the main issues:

- **Institutions verse Cooperative Collaboration** by Clay Shirky (20 minutes)
- **Upside Down Leadership** (20 minutes)
- **10 Characteristics of Church Planting Movements** (10 minutes)

**Next steps for conferences who want to partner with this network.** The first step is to call Milton Adams, (407-745-1805), email, or skype (miltonbrendaadams).

The General Conference Adventist Missions Department and the North American Division sponsor Simple Church.
Gary Krause, Adventist Mission’s Director, and Dan Jackson, NAD president, have written letters of support and recommendation. Download Gary’s letter and Dan’s letter.

How to start a new Simple Church gathering: How many people do you know who will most likely not walk into a church building? You are not alone. Western cultures are facing a major crisis. With some 87% of North America (and 95% of other western cultures like Australia, Europe, and New Zealand) not attending a conventional church on a given weekend, we are praying that God will raise up an epidemic of simple church missionaries.

Visit SimpleChurchAtHome.com to get started.

[1] A Simple Church coach is a person who is part of another CORE planting team actually doing what they are coaching others to do. Coaches have weekly contact by reading weekly reports and replying to reports.

[2] Mark Finley first brought my attention to this 5 years ago when he helped with the development of the Simple Church Global Network.

[3] I want to thank several people who were instrumental in the birth of this Simple Church Global network. God, who invited me to join Him in this work. Russell Burrill, who first planted seeds in my heart and who has spent years writing books and teaching classes. Burrill’s dissertation, Recovering an Adventist Approach to the Life & Mission of the Local Church is worth reading. Mike Cauley, president of the Florida Conference, has mentored this network from its infancy and provided wisdom and encouragement along the way. Tom Evans (NADEI/Texas Conference) and Gary Brady (Texas Conference) gave me a workbook (Experiencing God, by Henry Blackaby) that pushed me to risk accepting God's invitations to join Him in His missionary work of developing a house church network that would empower lay-people to reach the mission field that lives where they live. These people, along with many others (Gary Krause, Mark Finley, Don & Marti Schneider, Dan Jackson, Ken Denslow, Bill Knott, Peter Roennfeldt, Monte Sahlin, Don James, and Kurt Johnson), have been very supportive and encouraging.