



## **Adventist Possibility Ministries**

### **The 3-A Strategy of Adventist Possibility Ministries and KPIs of the *I Will Go* Strategic Plan Based on the Advisory July 14 & 16, 2020**

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## **Introduction**

### *You Can Be a Difference*

As Christians, strategic planning forces us to seek the mind and will of God. His mission becomes ours. Adventist Possibility Ministries (APM) is about building relationships through an inclusive compassion for those who are often ignored and sometimes abused. Central to this ministry is the conviction that “All are gifted, needed, and treasured.” This timeless truth was best demonstrated in the life of Jesus. When He said, “the poor you will always have with you” (Matt. 26:11, NIV), He was not excusing poverty. On the contrary, He was counseling His disciples to reconsider the conditions that created poverty in the first place (Deuteronomy 15). For Him, the person always mattered first regardless of prevailing societal stigmas. Christ cared for the whole person, which included the person’s physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.

Adventist Possibility Ministries includes seven distinct ministries. It brings focus to those experiencing spousal loss, the blind and those with low vision, the Deaf and the hard of hearing, those with mental and emotional challenges, orphans and vulnerable children, those with physical and mobility challenges, and finally to those who serve as caregivers of those who need physical and emotional support. Strategic planning for this ministry revolves around a “3-A Strategy.” The three “A’s” are “Awareness, Acceptance, and Action.” They are interrelated. While in once sense they may represent a progressive development of love and concern, they are often an interwoven and simultaneous ministry response to those who may have been alienated, ignored, or hurt by others. When linked together, this comprehensive approach can make a lasting difference. Behind the “3-A’s” is not only the desire to understand, to instill hope, and to inspire the marginalized, but to also encourage them to be the same with others who may have experienced unfortunate circumstances. By providing a ministry for them, we in turn call them to become a ministry for and with others. Together, we can each be the difference in someone’s life.

This document is the culmination of the work of the seven different taskforce groups led by dedicated co-leaders. Every effort has been made to make Adventist Possibility Ministries a grassroots movement. Therefore, recommendations are primarily given for advancing the mission of God through compassionate actions of the local church. In the following strategic ministry plans, a common outline was followed by all breakout groups. The plans move from an awareness of needs to the development of specific “Key Performance Indicators” (KPIs) as outlined in the *I Will Go* recommendations.

## **Bereavement for Spousal Loss Ministry**

As individuals, we are created to live in relationship with God and each other. Marriage is one of the closest and most beautiful expressions of a relationship. When that bond is broken by death, life changes irrevocably for the surviving spouse. Death may occur after a long and happy life, following an illness or suddenly, without any warning. People are rarely prepared for it. Knowing how to support the bereaved spouse as they accommodate their loss and move forward is difficult. Often others feel uncomfortable, as they do not know what to say, or how to interact. Creating awareness of the challenges facing those experiencing spousal loss will produce an environment where they feel nurtured, accepted, and appreciated. Acceptance will lead to affirming actions and a safe environment for the bereaved spouse. This will assist in reestablishing them as gifted, needed, and treasured members of the church family. In this way, they will be able to minister to others as part of their mission. Awareness, acceptance, and action interact and overlap. Each one reinforces and expands the other two.

### **AWARENESS**

- Provide general statistics regarding spousal loss that can be shared in the church bulletin, in articles, or on social media as appropriate. According to the UN there are an estimated 258 million widows around the world, and nearly one in ten live in extreme poverty<sup>1</sup>. In addition, the Inter Press News service reports there are about 92 million widowers worldwide<sup>2</sup>.
- Keep records of those who have experienced spousal loss at local and conference levels.
- Elect an APM leader who can coordinate with other church departments and ministries. For example, Family Ministries can work to raise awareness that families come in different shapes and sizes. “One” is a whole number and there is a need to provide resources to support the bereaved and the various situations they may find themselves in, (i.e. a single parent).
- Women’s Ministries have a unique opportunity to both minister to widows and include training in their leadership program.
- Nominate the third Sabbath of June as a special focus day for spousal loss, providing the opportunity to minister to and highlight the needs of those who have experienced spousal loss (June 23 is the International Day for the Widowed).
- Provide awareness training for pastors, elders, and members.
- Identify the cultural needs and risks for people who have been bereaved. This will vary from place to place and be significantly different for men and women.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.un.org/en/observances/widows-day>

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.ipsnews.net/2020/02/widowhood-stressful-unprepared/>

## ACCEPTANCE

- Provide training for people to assist them to learn the skills of active listening and talking with people experiencing spousal loss, without pushing them in a specific direction.
- Create a safe environment for bereaved spouses:
  - Affirming a single person as a complete person.
  - Accepting singleness as a gift.
  - Recognizing that a recently bereaved spouse (male or female) is vulnerable to being “stalked” and providing a safe environment and, where necessary, protection.
  - Avoiding attempts to match-make people who have been bereaved.
- Provide opportunities to share their grief, through programs such as *Grief Share* and *HeartLifters*.
- Invite the bereaved person to participate in social activities with people who have experienced similar loss, but also other events. Recognize that initially someone may not wish to attend but keep on inviting the person.
- Be aware of how significant loss changes the lives of those it touches. Provide small but significant gestures of support, such as ensuring the bereaved spouse/family does not have to sit alone in church. This may be done by asking someone in advance to sit with them, alerting the deacons, or asking the bereaved person to wear a pin or something that indicates to the deacons on duty that they may need some extra help.
- Create opportunities for the bereaved person to mentor someone else who has experienced spousal loss.

## **ACTION - The Bereaved Have Abilities and Talents That Are Essential to the Church’s Mission.**

### **Mission Outreach**

- Promote a “Presence Ministry” immediately following the death of a spouse to provide gender-appropriate support by “being there.” Provide long-term practical help by doing things that the person may not be able to do for themselves.
- Run life enrichment seminars for people who have experienced spousal loss, including workshops on finances, technology, and security
- Create opportunities for people to share their stories. This can be done in a variety of ways, for example using the *StoryCorps* app, articles, or podcasts.

- Remember special holidays and anniversaries (i.e. Valentines' Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, or other special days) particularly during the first year of loss.

### *Mission Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)*

- **Objective 1:** To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors, but every church member, young and old, in reaching out to the bereaved, particularly those who have lost a spouse, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples.
  - **KPI 1.1** Increased number of church members participating in both personal and public evangelistic outreach initiatives with a goal of Total Member Involvement through:
    - **Action** - Run life enrichment seminars for members and people in the community who have experienced spousal loss, including workshops on finances, technology, and security.

### **Spiritual Development**

- Create resources for people who have been bereaved to help them see the goodness and grace of God at difficult times For example, a Bible reading plan, Bible study materials, encouraging, uplifting music, books, TED talks, and resources which the bereaved have found helpful
- Create opportunities for people to share their stories. This can be done in a variety of ways, for example using the StoryCorps app, articles, or podcasts.

### *Spiritual Growth Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)*

- **Objective 5:** To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives.
  - **KPI 5.1** Significant increase in numbers of church members regularly praying, studying the Bible, using the Sabbath School Bible Study Guides, reading the writings of Ellen White and engaging in other personal devotions.
    - **Action** - To do this by creating resources for people who have been bereaved to help them see the goodness and grace of God at difficult times. For example, a Bible reading plan and/or Bible study materials. In addition, sharing other encouraging, uplifting music, books, and resources which the bereaved have found helpful and will enhance their spiritual experience.
- **Objective 6:** To increase accession, retention, reclamation and participation of children, youth and young adults.
  - **KPI 6.1** Increased church member involvement in fellowship and service, both in the church and in the local community.

- **Action** - Recognize that people are often more receptive to the Gospel message at times of loss and transition.
  - **Action** - Promote a “Presence Ministry” immediately following the death of a spouse to provide gender-appropriate support by “being there” during these times.
  - **Action** - Provide long-term practical help by doing things that the person may not be able to do for themselves.
  - **Action** - Create contact points by remembering special holidays and anniversaries (i.e. Valentines’ Day, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, or other special days) particularly during the first year of loss.
- **KPI 6.6** Church members exhibit cross-cultural understanding and respect for all people.
  - **Action** - Create opportunities for people to share their stories. This will create an increasing awareness of the challenges faced when people suffer the loss of a spouse and may be done in a variety of ways, for example using the StoryCorps app, articles, or podcasts.

## **Leadership**

- Recognizing that Church employees who experience spousal loss may experience hardship. Create policies that will ensure that the bereaved spouse is cared for. In addition, where the bereaved spouse works for the Church put in place policies and practices to support them and allow them to continue in ministry.

### ***Leadership Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)***

- **Objective 10:** To enhance the transparency, accountability and credibility of denominational organization, operations, and mission initiatives.
  - **KPI 10.3** Evidence that pastors and church leaders demonstrate the highest standards of integrity and ethical behavior in interpersonal relations and finances.
    - **Action** - Recognize that Church employees who experience spousal loss may experience financial, social, and emotional hardships.
    - **Action** - Create policies that will ensure that the bereaved spouse is cared for. In addition, where the bereaved spouse works for the Church put in place policies and practices to support them and allow them to continue in ministry.

## The Blind and Low Vision Ministry

Jesus clearly articulated the value of people who are blind in John 9:1-3 (NIV), when He succinctly stated that a man's blindness "happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him." The Body of Christ has the privilege and opportunity to demonstrate God's love for all. This includes those who are blind or have low vision. It means raising awareness, teaching, modeling acceptance, and involving every person in the mission of the church through coordinated, deliberate actions that lead to an inclusive, all-encompassing experience for every member. Learning to understand and appreciate that all who are blind or have low vision are gifted, needed, and treasured results in exciting synergy in the Church. It propels mission and leads to oneness in Christ.

### AWARENESS

- Provide general statistics regarding blindness and low vision that can be shared in the church bulletin, in articles, or on social media as appropriate. Globally the number of people of all ages who are visually impaired is estimated to be 285 million, of whom 39 million are blind<sup>3</sup>.
- Survey the congregation. Seek to: learn what is known about blindness; who knows who is blind or has low vision in the church and community; who knows what their needs are; and to ascertain the level of passion for a ministry *with* and *for* people who are blind or have low vision.
- Conduct an accessibility audit (structural, attitudinal, spiritual). Collaborate with area organizations that serve people who are blind or who have low vision. Determine gaps in preparedness that would hinder welcoming those who are blind to worship. Involve the church in this process to have a fully accessible church experience.
- Share the outcomes of the survey, audit, and a vision for an inclusive, all-encompassing mission in the church and community with the church family. Invite participation to connect with and reach people who are blind with the gospel.
- Invite a blind or low vision pastor, gospel worker, or church member to official meetings promoted by church divisions, unions, and conferences, and have them talk about the APM blind and low vision work.
- Have a blind or low vision pastor, gospel worker or church member to speak about Blind and Low Vision Ministry, work at blind and low vision camp meetings, and APM camp meetings.
- Understand the importance of a ministry *for* and *with* blind and low vision people in the light of the Bible. Complement the study with texts from Ellen G. White's books. Seek with sincerity of heart the guidance of the Holy Spirit to work with this ministry.

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<sup>3</sup> See World Health Organization - <https://www.who.int/blindness/publications/globaldata/en/>

- Elect an APM leader at the local church and assemble an APM committee. Form a taskforce for the blind sub-committee to work with church leadership to develop strategic ministry goals for a designated period of time. This taskforce should be composed of people who are blind/low vision or their family members, and individuals who may have experience working with or educating people who are blind/low vision.
- Educate leadership and members about the prevalence of blindness in the world and community. Share the challenges people who are blind/low vision face. Expose the myths and misunderstandings about blindness and encourage a focus on the abilities and opportunities rather than the perceived disabilities. Education should include sensitivity training and active listening. Inform the church that blindness can occur for a variety of reasons and at any stage in life.
- Communicate awareness of the new ministry through a variety of means. This can include a special designated Sabbath, social media platforms, church website, video messages, magazine and newspaper articles, radio spots, church newsletters, conference and union periodicals, brochures, posters, etc.
- Visit community rehabilitation, ophthalmology and medical practices, schools, and support centers for people who are blind or have low vision that offer seminars, resources, fellowship, or a career fair. Training courses could include teaching orientation and mobility with use of a cane, Braille education, technology instruction, health, resume writing, etc.
- Local and denominational church leaders should take blind and low vision ministries video courses via the *Adventist Learning Community* (for CEUs) to be able to understand and be supportive of the workers for the blind and people with low vision.
- Union/Conference APM coordinators should provide workshops on blind and low vision ministry for the pastors in their meetings.

## ACCEPTANCE

- Recognize that people who are blind or have low vision have talents, skills, and passion for ministry.
  - Invite them to participate in the mission of the church.
  - Assist them in their understanding of their own calling and how God is equipping them to serve. Do not just insert them without thoughtful consideration. If they are unsure, provide for them tools to help them discover their spiritual gifts and then assist them in finding opportunities where they can participate.
- Meet with community organizations who also serve people who are blind or have low vision. If the church is not equipped in all areas of need, determine what resources and professionals are available for referral, look to form partnerships to broaden the church's service.

- Consider ways to be inclusive if a person who is blind or has low vision is not able to participate in church functions and fellowship through regular avenues, such as phone calls, visitation, streaming services, etc.
- Ask a GC/division/union/conference APM director or coordinator for Blind and Low Vision Ministry to attend events sponsored by division/union/conference and to provide a report regarding the progress of the local and global ministry.
- Ask an APM GC/division/union/conference leader to teach a seminar on acceptance regarding Blind and Low Vision Ministry.
- Include a variety of reading resources in the church library in accessible formats. This can include large print, Braille, and audiobooks.
- Consider developing a book club for those who are blind and have low vision.
- Prepare for worship services by ensuring accessible documents are available in desired formats. This would include church bulletins, lesson quarterlies, adding audio descriptions, as needed, Bibles, and church hymnals or song sheets in Braille or large print.
- Inform people who are ministering *to*, and those who are blind and have low vision about accessible church materials such as: Spirit of Prophecy, Bible studies, Sabbath School Bible Study Guides, *Church Manual*, the 28 Fundamental Beliefs, among others, in audio, Braille or large print.
- Keep the church access points free of obstacles, use podotactile flooring (tactile paving), use audio description features in all church meetings when available, teach church members about techniques to guide blind and people with low vision, identify rooms and bathrooms with Braille signage and large print etc. Churches need to be friendly and accessible to people who are blind and have low vision so that they have a desire to come and worship.
- Assign a greeter or taskforce member to be responsible for identifying people who are blind or have low vision at each church function to befriend and assist, if requested.
- Each church member should be aware of *Adventist Learning Community* video presentations on Blind and Low Vision Ministry.
- When possible, church members should participate in workshops on Blind and Low Vision Ministry provided by denominational APM leadership.

## **ACTION**

### **Mission Outreach**

- Establish a fellowship group for people who are blind or have low vision. This can include such resources as a *Real Vision Group*, which can provide opportunities to build

community, participate in relevant discussions, provide enrichment, prayer, and praise groups.

- Encourage people who are blind or have low vision to invite their friends, families, and colleagues to the church's outreach activities and events. Explore what their transportation needs might be and provide, if needed.
- Establish a pet-friendly attitude in the church for people with guide dogs and educate about appropriate contact and support.
- Visit community rehabilitation centers, schools and support centers for people who are blind or have low vision to offer seminars with church professionals in different areas: health, psychology, theology, nutrition, sports, finance, and other subjects. Gain people's trust and gradually invite them into church activities.
- Invite a blind or low vision church member to talk about themselves as a blind or low vision person and how he/she came to know Christ and became a member of the church. This can be done during church services to inspire and encourage other blind and low vision members.
- Invite blind and low vision church members to participate in orientation courses on how to teach a Bible study, or how to preach a sermon.
- Get statistics on the number of blind and low vision people in the country/state/city and then compare it with the number of blind and low vision people in the local church. See how much the church still needs to work to reach more blind and low vision people for Jesus!

***Mission Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)***

- **Objective 1:** To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors, but every church member, young and old, (blind and low vision), in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples.
  - **KPI 1.1** Increased number of church members (including people who are blind and have low vision) participating in both personal and public evangelistic outreach initiatives with a goal of Total Member Involvement (TMI).
  - **KPI 1.2** Frontline missionaries (including people who are blind and have low vision) speak at major camp meetings and at other large church gatherings.
  - **KPI 1.3** Each division holds annual mission rallies for church members, involving local administrators; GC officers, departmental directors, and associate directors; officers and departmental directors from other Divisions; and frontline workers from both their own and other Divisions
  - **KPI 1.5** Produce readings on mission for Adventist children and teenagers, made available in print, braille, audiobooks, and digital media.

## Spiritual Development

- Offer online connections to the church through forums such as Zoom or social media to encourage small group engagement to grow friendships, such as group Bible studies, book clubs, prayer, and a care line, etc.

### *Spiritual Growth Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)*

- **Objective 5:** To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives.
  - **KPI 5.1** Significant increase in numbers of church members (including people who are blind and have low vision) regularly praying, studying the Bible, using the Sabbath School Bible Study Guides, reading the writings of Ellen White, and engaging in other personal devotions.
  - **KPI 5.2** Significant increase in numbers of church members and unbaptized children and youth (including people who are blind and have low vision) regularly attending divine service and Sabbath School.
  - **KPI 5.3** Significant increase in acceptance and practice of the Church's distinctive beliefs.
  - **KPI 5.4** Increase in the number of people using Adventist social media when studying the Bible, to learn about Ellen White and read her writings, in personal devotions, and to promote mission.

## Leadership

- APM leaders should coordinate with other local church ministries to ensure that there is a united effort to be inclusive and comprehensive for all areas of church life.

### *Leadership Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)*

- **Objective 8:** To strengthen the discipleship role of (people who are blind and have low vision) pastors, teachers, and other frontline workers and provide them with regular growth opportunities.
  - **KPI 8.1** Evidence that most pastors and teachers who are blind or have low vision feel supported by church members and by conference administrators, continue to feel called to ministry, and are engaging in continuing education and development.
  - **KPI 8.2** Pastors with limited Seventh-day Adventist education are working to complete coursework necessary to meet their BMTE requirements.
  - **KPI 8.3** Opportunities are given to frontline workers (who are blind and have low vision), to deepen their passion for and broaden their experience of mission.

## Caregiver Ministry

God is the ultimate Caregiver and Jesus came to demonstrate caring for people one on one as well as in groups. Jesus is not here in person now and God uses individuals and teams to be caregivers in the ways most needed. The *3-A Strategy* of *Adventist Possibility Ministries* provides a framework for this ministry that touches all of the various ministries. The 3-A Strategy suggests that *Awareness* of the needs and challenges of caregivers be cultivated among the church members and the local community. *Acceptance* grows out of this awareness and provides the sense of belongingness for the caregivers and those receiving the care, as well as the involved family members and friends. The church and community united can then take *Action* by developing and implementing processes that support this ministry.

### AWARENESS

- Provide general statistics regarding caregivers' need for support. These may be shared in the church bulletin, in articles, or in social media as appropriate.
  - Worldwide, 349 million people are estimated to be care-dependent, of whom 18 million (5%) are children aged under the age of 15 years, and 101 million (29%) are older people 60 years of age and over<sup>4</sup>.
  - Care-dependence is defined as the need for frequent human help or care beyond that required by a healthy adult. Health and social care are often needed by children and adults with mental and physical illnesses (*Ibid*).
- Educate pastors and churches regarding caregiver needs through seminars, workshops, continuing education, and use of existing materials.
- Provide churches with awareness training so that they can better meet the needs of caregivers.
- Help churches recognize the isolation that is prevalent among caregivers through sermons, seminars, and workshops.
- Provide awareness of the strengths and insights that caregivers bring to the church.

### ACCEPTANCE

- To decrease the stigma and ignorance that may be associated with caregiving, invite testimonials and stories from caregivers in the community and the church.

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<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.who.int/ageing/health-systems/icope/evidence-centre/ICOPE-evidence-profile-caregiver.pdf?ua=1>

- Show caregivers that they are accepted and appreciated by providing an environment that is supportive and welcoming.

## **ACTION**

### **Mission Outreach**

- Survey the local church and community to identify the caregivers and their focus for caregiving.
- Establish links and partnerships with local organizations that provide resources for caregivers.
- Create programs to promote an environment of support for caregivers, young caregivers and the caregivers' family members.
- Make online resources available to the church and make sure the local congregation is aware of them.
- Provide opportunities for respite care for caregivers where possible.

### ***Mission Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)***

- **Objective 1:** To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors, but every church member, young and old, in reaching out to the caregivers, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples.
  - **KPI 1.1** Increased number of church members participating in both personal and public evangelistic outreach initiatives with a goal of Total Member Involvement through:
    - **Action** - Provide opportunities for caregivers to share their stories and testimonies as part of evangelistic outreach in their communities.
    - **Action** - Engage in Evangelism, particularly those that are caregivers using their abilities and gifts.

## **Spiritual Development**

### ***Spiritual Growth Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)***

- **Objective 5:** To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives.
  - **KPI 5.1** Significant increase in numbers of church members regularly praying, studying the Bible, using the Sabbath School Bible Study Guides, reading the writings of Ellen White and engaging in personal devotions.
    - **Action** - Provide training to Sabbath School teachers on how to support caregivers.

- **Action** - Provide support to caregivers in ways that allow them to fully participate in church services, Sabbath School, and other activities.
- **Action** - Develop sermons, seminars, and/or workshops identifying the principles of Jesus' own caregiving, for guiding caregivers in your church.
- **Action** - Provide gathering opportunities including online meetings for spiritual, emotional and social support and development.

## Leadership

### *Leadership Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)*

- **Objective 8:** To strengthen the discipleship role of pastors, teachers, and other frontline workers (caregivers) and provide them with regular growth opportunities.
  - **KPI 8.1** Evidence that most pastors and teachers feel supported by church members and by conference administrators, continue to feel called to ministry, and are engaging in continuing education and development.
    - **Action** - Provide training to pastors and church members about the correct theological understanding of illness, and unlink it from sin and demon possession.
    - **Action** - Prepare others for caregiving roles so they can bring relief to existing caregivers.
    - **Action** - Encourage pastors, teachers, and other frontline workers to engage in continuing education about caregivers, including content on the *Adventist Learning Community (ALC)*.
    - **Action** - Invite caregivers to train local church leaders regarding the skills and experiences that they have developed.
  - **KPI 8.3** Opportunities are given to frontline workers to deepen their passion for and broaden their experience of mission.
    - **Action** - Watch *Adventist Learning Community* video presentations regarding Caregiver Ministry.
    - **Action** - Participate in workshops regarding the needs of caregivers.

## The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministry

How do we create a sense of belonging for all those that encounter apparent opposition to being accepted as they are? Jesus gave a model to help find a solution to this important question: to see beyond the evidence. This is the model that would inspire the “3 A” framework for the Deaf and the hard of hearing. He never saw the person for what they appeared to be, but for what they could become. He was aware of the obstacle of ignorance, and worked for the acceptance of all those who risked being marginalized. Every action he took was aimed at arousing a possibility approach. He showed compassion, empathy, caring attitude, and in so doing, he was able to build strong relationships among his contemporaries.

### AWARENESS – Building Relationships

- The church will be aware that the Three Angels’ Messages<sup>5</sup> are to go to all nations, tribes, languages, and people; and this proclamation of the eternal gospel is not only to the hearing, but also to the people who are Deaf and those with hard of hearing.
- The local church will be informed of (1) global statistics and (2) national or local statistics.
  - There are approximately 70 million people who are Deaf<sup>6</sup> and use sign language as their preferred mode of communication around the world.
  - Approximately 466 million people have hearing loss<sup>7</sup> of various degrees but do not necessarily know sign language.

The local church, then, will compare these statistics with current Adventist Church membership of both groups in order to create an informed awareness of the need for development of local access and integration strategies for both groups.

- The church will seek an informed general awareness of the unique, specific needs of both groups.
  - People who are Deaf: (1) The existence of Deaf Culture. (2) The use of sign language as a first language and preferred mode of communication. (3) The need and place of sign language interpretation in joint activities with hearing church members. (4) The recognition that the Deaf as a cultural and language group often have the need to worship and fellowship within their own people group, just as any other ethnic group with different language and culture.
  - People who are hard of hearing: (1) The limitations of hearing aid performance in large public spaces. (2) The benefits of assistive listening devices (ALD) to enhance

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<sup>5</sup> Revelation 14:6-12

<sup>6</sup> See <https://wfdeaf.org>

<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/deafness-and-hearing-loss>

hearing reception in difficult listening situations. (3) The individual preferences of people with partial hearing to identify with either Deaf culture or hearing culture.

### **ACCEPTANCE – Global Structure**

- By creation, all are created with an inherent dignity, which calls for the church to accept the uniqueness of each individual. The church can approach these ministries with this understanding of the Gospel.
- The church will accept the need for an educational program, either on-site or online, at General Conference, division, union, conference, and local church levels.
- The church will accept the responsibility for providing church administrators, institution leaders, educators, pastors, and lay leaders at all levels an informed understanding of how to meet the accessibility and inclusion needs of people who are (1) Deaf and (2) hard of hearing.

### **ACTION – Utilizing Abilities and Talents of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing.**

#### **Mission Outreach**

The church will be more effective in its outreach by:

- Proactively seeking the involvement of (1) the Deaf and (2) hard of hearing, who have the personal experience and knowledge to create and/or deliver on-site or online educational programs for use at all church levels.
- Proactively planning to facilitate the inclusion of (1) Deaf and (2) hard of hearing, in all routine activities and outreach programs, especially those designed to reach Deaf and hard of hearing children.
- Providing a budget to implement the desired outcomes for ministry to (1) the Deaf and (2) hard of hearing, as outlined in this document and/or resulting from further recommendations from the Deaf and hard of hearing advisory group associated with Adventist Possibility Ministries (APM).
- Proactively encouraging church leaders and members to take *Adventist Learning Community* courses on Deaf Ministry and educate themselves in reaching the Deaf and hard of hearing populations.
- Proactively researching the availability of current technology, Assistive Listening Devices<sup>8</sup> (ALD), and in consultation with hard of hearing and/or Audiology professionals, develop

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<sup>8</sup> Reference: Weir, G. "How to equip your church or venue for people with hearing problems" – *Christian Services for the Blind and Hearing-impaired*", Wahroonga 2019.

[https://csfbhi.adventistchurch.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2019/03/Equip\\_for\\_hearing\\_impaired\\_booklet.pdf](https://csfbhi.adventistchurch.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2019/03/Equip_for_hearing_impaired_booklet.pdf)

a plan of action to acquire and install in all church and institution venues, appropriate Assistive Listening Systems (ALS) that cater to the latest technological developments in hearing aids, and where possible, are portable for use in public programs in non-church venues.

- Proactively publicizing the existence of (1) provision of sign language interpreted services and/or programs run by the Deaf, and (2) provision of technological assistance for people with partial hearing whenever and wherever these provisions are available at all levels of church and institution functioning, and that such provisions will always be visibly displayed on clear signage and/or instruction cards that are compliant with all relevant legal state and national accessibility requirements.

### ***Mission Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)***

- **Objective 1:** To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors, but every church member, young and old (hearing and deaf/hard of hearing), in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples.
  - **KPI 1.1** Increased number of church (hearing and deaf/hard of hearing) members participating in both personal and public evangelistic outreach initiatives with a goal of Total Member Involvement (TMI).
    - **Action** - To have a nationwide evangelistic series via the Internet and/or Hope Channel Deaf with a Deaf speaker. Invite all Deaf and hard of hearing church members to be actively involved by (1) hosting their local meeting sites and invite the Deaf community, and (2) follow up with Deaf/hard of hearing viewers (similar to the recent Hope Awakens online series with *It Is Written*).
    - **Action** - Have Deaf members watch an *Adventist Learning Community* videos on how to reach the Deaf for Jesus.
  - **KPI 1.2** Frontline missionaries (hearing and deaf workers) speak at major camp meetings and at other large church gatherings.
    - **Action** - Invite a Deaf pastor or a Deaf gospel worker to conference sponsored (hearing) camp meetings and have them talk about the deaf work.
    - **Action** - Have a Deaf pastor or a Deaf gospel worker to speak about Deaf ministry at Deaf camp meetings and APM camp meetings.
  - **KPI 1.3** Each division holds annual mission rallies for church members, involving local administrators; GC officers, departmental directors, and associate directors; officers and departmental directors from other divisions; and frontline workers from both their own and other divisions.
    - **Action** - Have a GC APM director and/or a GC associate coordinator for Deaf Ministry come to the division-wide sponsored event and give a visual report of the Deaf ministries around the world.

- **Action** - Have a division or union APM leader to provide a seminar on Deaf ministry and educate those attending.
  - **KPI 1.5** Produce readings on mission for Adventist children and teenagers, made available in print, braille, audiobooks, and digital media.
    - **Action** - *Hope Channel Deaf* to produce videos for Deaf children/youth in sign language.
    - **Action** - Ask a GC associate coordinator for Deaf Ministry to coordinate or develop mission videos in sign language for kids and post them on *Adventist Deaf Ministries International (ADMI)* & APM websites as well as *Hope Channel Deaf*.

## Spiritual Development

Spiritual development can be enhanced by:

- Proactively recognizing the impact of deafness and hearing difficulty on ability to understand media, by requiring all broadcast and online media produced by the church to contain captioning and/or signed interpretation, to be accessible by Deaf and hard of hearing viewers as needed.
- Expanding the availability of administrative leadership and teaching materials in easy-reading edition and/or signed media for those who are Deaf and use sign language as their preferred communication form.
- The Deaf and hard of hearing actively promoting church sponsored media such as *Hope Channel Deaf* among the Deaf and hard of hearing.
- The Deaf and hard of hearing actively promoting among themselves daily Bible study, prayer, and witnessing to neighbors and friends.

## *Spiritual Growth Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)*

- **Objective 5:** To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives.
  - **KPI 5.1** Significant increase in numbers of (Deaf/hard of hearing) church members regularly praying, studying the Bible, using the Sabbath School Bible Study Guides, reading the writings of Ellen White and engaging in other personal devotions.
    - **Action** - Deaf members to be taught to use easy reading materials that are found on the ADMI website. Have a Deaf leader lead out the prayer meeting and teach them on how to have a practice of prayer.
    - **Action** - Encourage the Deaf and hard of hearing to use spiritual resources such as *Hope Channel Deaf* and others. Spirit of Prophecy, nature, Bible

study, Sabbath School, among other resources are available in American Sign Language and closed captioned for the hard of hearing.

- **KPI 5.2** Significant increase in numbers of (Deaf and hard of hearing) church members and unbaptized children and youth regularly attending divine service and Sabbath School.
  - **Action** - Have the local church provide amplifiers and captioning on the screen during the divine worship hour to attract people who are hard of hearing.
  - **Action** - Onsite—Churches to have a room available for the Deaf so that they can meet to study together in sign language if sign language interpreter is not present. Worship service to be led by a leader in sign language.
  - **Action** - Onsite—Churches to have open captioning on the screen for hard of hearing members and/or Assisted Listening Devices.
  - **Action** - Online—Churches to use Zoom or the like for Sabbath School class to draw isolated Deaf members to study God’s word. Churches are to take advantage of technology provided such as online worship services to draw isolated Deaf members to worship God on a regular basis.
- **KPI 5.3** Significant increase in acceptance and practice of the church’s distinctive beliefs.
  - **Action** - GC APM to develop videos that explain the 28 Fundamental Beliefs in sign language and insert closed captioning for hard of hearing members.
  - **Action** - Have a Deaf pastor conduct seminars with Deaf members to answer questions or objections to Bible teachings and encourage the memorization of key Bible verses.
- **KPI 5.4** Increased number of people using Adventist social media when studying the Bible, to learn about Ellen White and read her writings, in personal devotions, and to promote mission.
  - **Action** - Direct the Deaf and hard of hearing members to use *Hope Channel Deaf*.
  - **Action** - GC APM to post a quote from EGW daily on APM/ADMI, and Facebook (social media).
  - **Action** - Promote the use and subscription to daily devotional videos such as *It Is Written’s Every Word* with ASL interpreter or the like.

## Leadership

The development of leadership will be enhanced by:

- Proactively encouraging the (1) Deaf and (2) hard of hearing to discover their spiritual gifts and empowering them to serve within the church and community.
- Proactively recruiting and training suitable individuals who are (1) Deaf and/or (2) hard of hearing, to be employed in various roles within the church institutions.
- Proactively entrusting the (1) Deaf and (2) hard of hearing with every responsibility according to their God-given talents and skills, and empowering them so that they may accomplish the ministry of the church successfully. Hearing leaders in the Deaf ministry are still greatly needed but they are to promote potential Deaf leaders to lead out.
- Proactively encouraging and financially incentivizing interested hearing and Deaf church members to become professionally qualified sign language interpreters, teachers, pastors, or missionaries for the Deaf.

***Leadership Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)***

- **Objective 8:** To strengthen the discipleship role of (Deaf/hard of hearing) pastors, teachers, and other frontline workers and provide them with regular growth opportunities.
  - **KPI 8.1** Evidence that most (Deaf/hard of hearing) pastors and teachers feel supported by church members and by conference administrators, continue to feel called to ministry, and are engaging in continuing education and development.
    - **Action** - Conference leaders to take Deaf/hard of hearing ministry video courses via *Adventist Learning Community* to be able to understand and be supportive of the workers for the Deaf/hard of hearing.
    - **Action** - Church leaders to take *Adventist Learning Community* courses in Deaf/hard of hearing ministry and be able to earn CEUs.
  - **KPI 8.2** Pastors with limited Seventh-day Adventist education are working to complete coursework necessary to meet their BMTE requirements.
    - **Action** - Take *Adventist Learning Community* video courses under the Deaf Ministry/hard of hearing category.
    - **Action** - Union APM coordinators to provide workshops on Deaf Ministry/hard of hearing.
  - **KPI 8.3** Opportunities are given to frontline (Deaf) workers to deepen their passion for and broaden their experience of mission.
    - **Action** - Watch *Adventist Learning Community* video presentations regarding Deaf/hard of hearing ministry.
    - **Action** - Participate in workshops regarding Deaf Ministry/hard of hearing by union APM coordinators.

## Mental Health and Wellness Ministry

The ministry of Jesus was reflected by Isaiah as proclaiming good news to the poor, binding up the brokenhearted, and releasing captives from darkness (Isaiah 61:1). When it comes to mental health and the various challenges related to them, the “3-A Strategy” of Adventist Possibility Ministries gives special recognition to those who are often neglected, ridiculed and misunderstood. It is important for our churches to be Aware of the needs, and gifts of people with mental health challenges. Aceptance grows out of that awareness and helps the church understand the individual. The desire is to help them feel that they truly belong. With acceptance, the church body moves forward unitedly to Action by working to develop attitudes and implementing programs that not only supports the person, but also includes opportunities for them to contribute to the mission of the church within the realm of their abilities.

### AWARENESS

- Provide general statistics regarding the prevalence of mental health needs. These may be shared in the church bulletin, in articles, or on social media as appropriate.
  - Around the world, nearly 1 billion people are living with mental illnesses. That is nearly 1 out of every 7 or 8 people or 20% of the world population. The most commonly experienced mental health challenges are anxiety disorders followed by mood disorders <sup>9</sup>.
  - Unfortunately, many people with mental health needs never receive help partially due to familial, personal, and cultural stigma<sup>10</sup>.
- Promote and provide opportunities for storytelling and the sharing of testimony by members with mental health needs.
- Educate pastors and churches on the needs and prevalence of mental health challenges through seminars, workshops, continuing education, and use of existing materials.
- Provide churches with training about basic mental health first aid.
- Provide churches with trauma awareness training so that they can better meet the needs of members and guests with mental health needs.
- Provide training to Sabbath School teachers on how to support children and families with mental health needs, including developmental and attentional challenges.

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<sup>9</sup> See <https://ourworldindata.org/global-mental-health>

<sup>10</sup> See <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2816%2900687-5>

## ACCEPTANCE

- Use testimonials to decrease the stigma associated with mental health challenges.
- Recognize the unique gifts and talents of people with mental health needs and encourage the development of those gifts as part of church ministry.
- Provide a welcoming environment for children and adults with mental health needs, destigmatizing behaviors and vocalizations that are simple expressions of their mental health needs (done through education and personal connections).
- Communicate to people with mental health needs that they are welcome and needed in your congregation.

## ACTION

### Mission Outreach

- Provide opportunities for members with mental health needs to share their story and testimony as part of personal ministries.
- Work to fit your church to the people's needs, not fit them to your church. People first ministry.
- Create a church that is actively involved in ministry *to, for, and with* people with mental health needs, 7 days a week (at school, in the community, after school, etc.).
- Address the educational gap that exists in Adventist schools in the provision of special education services.
- Create support programs to assist caregivers of people with mental health needs.

### *Mission Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)*

- **Objective 1:** To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors, but every church member, young and old, in reaching out to people with mental health needs, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples.
  - **KPI 1.1** Increased number of church members participating in both personal and public evangelistic outreach initiatives with a goal of Total Member Involvement through:
    - **Action** - Provide opportunities for members with mental health needs and their caregivers to share their story and testimony as part of evangelistic outreach in their communities.

- **Action** - Engage in Evangelism, particularly those with mental health needs, together with their caregivers using their abilities and gifts.

## **Spiritual Development**

- Change the church paradigm where all are engaged in ministry, particularly those with mental health needs, using their abilities and gifts that are unique to their needs.

### ***Spiritual Growth Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)***

- **Objective 5:** To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives.
  - **KPI 5.1** Significant increase in numbers of church members regularly praying, studying the Bible, using the Sabbath School Bible Study Guides, reading the writings of Ellen White and engaging in other personal devotions.
    - **Action** - Provide training to Sabbath School teachers on how to support children and families with mental health needs, including developmental and attentional challenges with strategies to help them in the study of the Sabbath School guides and the study of the Spirit of Prophecy.
- **Objective 6:** To increase accession, retention, reclamation and participation of children, youth and young adults.
  - **KPI 6.1** Increased church member involvement in fellowship and service, both in the church and in the local community.
    - **Action** - Create a church that is actively involved in ministry *to, for,* and *with* people with mental health needs and their caregivers in service to their church and community.
  - **KPI 6.6** Church members exhibit cross-cultural understanding and respect for all people.
    - **Action** - Communicate to people with mental health needs and their caregivers that they are welcome, accepted just the way they are and included in the congregation.

## **Leadership**

- Provide training to pastors and church members about the correct theological understanding of mental illness and unlink it from demon possession and sin.

### ***Leadership Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)***

- **Objective 8:** To strengthen the discipleship role of pastors, teachers, and other frontline workers (with mental health needs) and provide them with regular growth opportunities.

- **KPI 8.1** Evidence that most pastors and teachers feel supported by church members and by conference administrators, continue to feel called to ministry, and are engaging in continuing education and development.
  - **Action** - Pastors and teachers need to feel supported by church members and by conference administrators to feel called to ministry. Provide and support them in participating in events and workshops that provide continuing education and development for pastors and teachers.
  - **Action** - Educate pastors and churches on the needs and prevalence of mental health challenges through seminars, workshops, continuing education, and use materials.
- **KPI 8.3** Opportunities are given to frontline workers to deepen their passion for and broaden their experience of mission.
  - **Action** - Watch *Adventist Learning Community* video presentations regarding Mental Health Ministry.
  - **Action** - Participate in workshops regarding Mental Health Ministries by APM and Health Ministries coordinators.

## **Orphans and Vulnerable Children Ministry**

Jesus elevated the value of children in the minds of his listeners when he said to His disciples, "... Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these," Matthew 19:14 (NKJV). Adventist Possibility Ministries embraces this divine mandate by focusing attention and resources to help meet the unique needs of orphan and vulnerable children. James 1:27 makes it clear that caring for orphans is at the heart of "true religion." God is "A father to the fatherless" and "makes a home for the lonely" (Psalm 68:5, 6). APM seeks to return orphans to their Heavenly Father's family. God's family on earth, including those within each of the other focus groups within APM, find a tangible way to demonstrate their love for God through loving service and support of these children. This includes accepting them into the church family, which may be the only loving family they will ever know.

### **AWARENESS – Preparing to Love**

- Provide general statistics regarding orphans and vulnerable children in the church bulletin, in articles, or on social media as appropriate.
  - There are nearly 153 million orphans around the world and that number grows every day by close to 6,000. Some of the reasons include poverty, war, natural disasters, and lack of parental support.<sup>11</sup>
- Develop interaction between churches and professional organizations, and coordinate activities with these organizations in the areas of ministry to orphans and vulnerable children.
- Increase awareness, interest, and advocacy in orphan ministry among church members and leadership.
- Show more interest to vulnerable children. In order to do so, it is necessary to define this group, identify problems they face, and research solutions that local churches can implement.
- Accountability is a critical issue and specific qualification requirements should be developed for organizations and churches that would regulate their relationships and collaborated ministries.
- Local churches should pay attention to families and encourage them to become "disciplers" of orphan and vulnerable children.

### **ACCEPTANCE– Learning to Love**

- Organize empathy training for church leaders.

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<sup>11</sup> See <https://adoption.org/many-orphans-worldwide>

- If there are no orphanages in the vicinity, churches will still have vulnerable children that they can minister, too. Social orphans can be considered vulnerable children.
- Accept orphans and vulnerable children as they are – the church should be trained to avoid misinterpretation of disruptive or troublesome behavior and understand the impact of trauma.
- Be open to all children. Seek and encourage leadership from Children’s Ministry Departments at local churches.

### **ACTION – Loving the Unloved**

- Engage head elders and lay ministers in this ministry.
- Develop a step-by-step guide for beginning a ministry to orphans and/or vulnerable children.
- Sponsor and encourage presentations of this ministry by professionals or experienced people such as social workers and adoptive or foster parents.
- Advocacy by the church leadership is critical at the level of church organization.
- Develop strategies for reaching young people (millennials and others) who may have an interest and may be gifted in reaching out to orphans and vulnerable children.
- Ensure that members working with vulnerable children in any capacity meet local community standards for safety through use of services like background checks for abuse history as is appropriate and necessary in the local legal and cultural context.

### **Mission Outreach**

#### ***Mission Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)***

Suggestions for a local church’s action plans for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC).

- **Objective 1:** To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors, but every church member, young and old, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples.
  - **KPI 1.1** – Increased number of church members involved in the OVC ministry (elders, lay professionals, adoptive/foster parents, social workers) participating in both personal and public evangelistic outreach initiatives with a goal of Total Member Involvement (TMI).
    - **Action** - Start and nurture grassroots initiatives to help implement and sustain an OVC ministry.

- **Action** - Encourage local churches to open their doors for presentations of the OVC ministry by professionals or experienced people like social workers or adoptive/foster parents.
    - **Action** - Establish larger projects to benefit orphans and vulnerable children. Ensure interaction between the project, APM, and other church departments of particular interest.
  - **KPI 1.2** Frontline missionaries speak at major camp meetings and at other large church gatherings.
    - **Action** - Invite church members who run orphanages or take leading roles in OVC ministries to speak at major camp meetings and/or large church gatherings.
  - **KPI 1.5** GC Education, Children’s Ministries, Health Ministries, Youth Ministries, and Office of Adventist Mission collaborate in producing readings on mission for Adventist children and teenagers, made available in print, braille, audiobooks, and digital media, as appropriate and as budgets allow.
    - **Action** - Production of literature and training materials in the common languages of all Divisions about OVC Ministry.
    - **Action** - Develop an OVC Ministry reference manual for church leadership that helps identify a specific ministry leader and the investment the ministry is making on a local church level.
    - **Action** - Maintain regular meetings including all relevant church departments for the purpose of collaboration and program development.

## **Spiritual Development**

### ***Spiritual Growth Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)***

- **Objective 6:** To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults.
  - **KPI 6.2** Evidence of greater unity and community among church members, of reduced conflict in local churches, and of an active commitment to zero tolerance of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse.
    - **Action** - This ministry should strictly comply with the local community standards for safety through use of services like background checks for abuse history as is appropriate and necessary in the local legal and cultural context.
    - **Action** - Practices, finances, and attitudes should be transparent for donors and church administration.

- **Action** - Determine ways for the church to offer support to orphans and vulnerable children, whether it be physical, financial, or emotional.
  - **KPI 6.6** Church members exhibit cross-cultural understanding and respect for all people.
    - **Action** - Identify local agencies and NGOs that are serving OVC.
    - **Action** - Involve various age groups in ministry for OVC.
  - **KPI 6.8** Improved retention rates of young adults, youth, and unbaptized children, based on the collection of specific statistics on those groups
    - **Action** - Involve young people of new generations (millennials, etc.) in serving OVC.
    - **Action** - Involve community members as volunteers to serve OVC.
    - **Action** - Involve people who have experience as orphans or vulnerable children in sharing their experience with their counterparts in orphanages and other locations where these children may be found.
    - **Action** - Identify young adults, youth, and unbaptized children capable of accepting additional responsibility. Equip them to grow in ministerial and management skills as well as understanding of the OVC needs.
- **Objective 7:** To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview.
  - **KPI 7.2** Youth and young adults embrace the belief (FB 22) that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, abstaining from alcohol, tobacco, recreational use of drugs and other high-risk behaviors, and embrace church teachings (FB 23) on marriage, and demonstrate sexual purity.
    - **Action** - Explore and employ healthy lifestyle programs to reach orphans and vulnerable children.
    - **Action** - Endeavor to embed lifestyle lessons in the curricula of all Adventist and SDA-affiliated orphanages and other organizations and ministries for OVC.

## Leadership

### *Leadership Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)*

- **Objective 8:** To strengthen the discipleship role of pastors, teachers, and other frontline workers and provide them with regular growth opportunities.

- **KPI 8.1** Evidence that most pastors and teachers feel supported by church members and by conference administrators, continue to feel called to ministry, and are engaging in continuing education and development.
  - **Action** - Identify pastors and other leaders for main directions of orphan care, their training and involvement in the ministry at conference/union/division/GC levels.
  - **Action** - Provide educational opportunities through the *Adventist Learning Community* and other educational centers on topics related to the care of orphans and vulnerable children. These may include: lifespan and child development, children's mental health, policy, and legal issues, etc.
- **Objective 9:** To align world church resources with strategic objectives.
  - **KPI 9.1** Every organization systematically reviews and aligns resources in light of the worldwide mission priorities.
    - **Action** - Create an Interactive Ministry Map (IMM) to show the spread of the ministry among the Divisions and provide detailed information on specific ministries. IMM must be interactive and supplemented regularly.
    - **Action** - Make a manual for local churches, conferences/unions as to how to start and run an OVC ministry (a step-by-step guide).
    - **Action** - Form an APM committee and taskforce groups at every local church including OVC Ministry.
  - **KPI 9.5** The General Conference has, and its entities are working toward, an integrated media plan that maximizes the potential of technology
    - **Action** - Create an anchor website (a landing page) for a local church involved in the OVC Ministry. Content should include, but not be limited to social network accounts, YouTube channels, search engines, etc. and provide coverage of the ministry activity.

## Physical and Mobility Ministry

In order for churches to help members grow spiritually, it is essential to create an environment that fully nurtures all members, providing opportunities for everyone to express their spiritual gifts, and to engage in service *with* each other. Paul's message in 1 Corinthians 12 can function as the basis for a theology of inclusion. "All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it" (1 Cor 12:27) (NLT). The church will only find its true identity as the body of Christ when it fully integrates itself with those who are marginalized. This includes people with physical and mobility challenges.

The synergistic effect of the "3-A Strategy" is important in this theology of inclusion. Using this Strategy, local churches work to increase their awareness of the experiences, needs, and gifts of this group. In return, acceptance grows. With greater acceptance, people can experience greater belonging, including a sense of being gifted, needed, and treasured. The entire church family is blessed when the gifts of members with physical and mobility needs are recognized. Because this process is also cyclical, the opportunity for growth in awareness, acceptance, and action are always present.

### AWARENESS

- Provide church members with general statistics regarding the prevalence of physical and mobility challenges to highlight the importance of the ministry. These may be shared in the church bulletin, in articles, or on social media as appropriate.
  - Nearly 15% of the world's population has some form of disability<sup>12</sup> with 110 to 190 million experiencing severe functional impairment<sup>13</sup>. These challenges often include physical and mobility difficulties like walking, driving, reaching, bathing, and other activities of daily living.
  - People with physical and mobility disabilities often experience stigma<sup>14</sup> that can result in additional mental, social, and physical consequences. For example, they are at an increased risk for lack of transportation, lack of access to buildings, decreased access to medical care, difficulty finding gainful employment, and acquiring additional chronic health conditions<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> See <https://www.who.int/news-room/facts-in-pictures/detail/disabilities>

<sup>13</sup> See <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/disability#:~:text=Results-,One%20billion%20people%2C%20or%2015%25%20of%20the%20world's%20population%2C,million%20people%2C%20experience%20significant%20disabilities.>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.apa.org/pi/disability/resources/publications/newsletter/2014/07/fresh-perspectives>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/07/disability-report-chapter2.pdf>

- Create media and even print materials to educate church members and others about the needs of people with physical and mobility disabilities (i.e. commercials, YouTube clips, print material with images of people using mobility devices).
- Conduct an accessibility audit using existing materials found online (including physical, attitudinal, and spiritual accessibility), and use the results to identify areas for growth.
- Talk with local church members who have physical and mobility challenges to understand the accessibility features of your church and problem solve together. Always include people with mobility and physical needs in building and renovation projects, as they are the experts in describing their access and inclusion needs.
- Most importantly, provide opportunities for people with physical and mobility needs to share their story, through testimony and preaching.

## **ACCEPTANCE**

- Modify the church facility to the extent possible (push for more as necessary). Being inside the church building is essential to belonging.
- Take the community experience provided inside the church building to people who cannot get into the building if necessary (Zoom, Facebook, celebrations, community events, outdoor church, letter writing).
- Re-engage in targeted friendship evangelism focusing on people with physical and mobility needs. Know names, make phone calls, and make personal invitations to special events.
- Provide basic hospitality training to church leaders and ministry teams (i.e. offering assistance in ways that are not patronizing or condescending, asking permission to help).
- Provide meaningful and adaptable (shortened timeframes) opportunities for contribution to the life of the church (i.e. nominating committee, church board, prayer line ministry, greeter, project opportunities, and other ministries).
- Eliminate language and doctrine that links disability to sin.

## **ACTION**

### **Mission Outreach**

- Every church should appoint an APM coordinator. This person is critical, and will serve as a champion for this ministry.
- Provide basic accessibility recommendations that are adaptable to local contexts with specific consideration for locations with limited financial resources.

### ***Mission Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)***

- **Objective 1:** To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors, but every church member, young and old (physical and mobility disabilities), in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples.
  - **KPI 1.1** Increased number of church (physical and mobility needs) members participating in both personal and public evangelistic outreach initiatives with a goal of Total Member Involvement (TMI).
    - **Action** - Provide church members with general statistics regarding the prevalence of physical and mobility challenges to highlight the importance of the ministry. These may be shared in the church bulletin, in articles, or on social media as appropriate.
    - **Action** - Develop sermons, workshops, and written materials that show that inherent in each person, is a sense of dignity, regardless of their abilities or inabilities. This calls for genuine respect of the individual.
    - **Action** - Provide meaningful and adaptable (shortened timeframes) opportunities for contribution to the life of the church (i.e. nominating committee, church board, prayer line ministry, greeter, project opportunities, and other ministries).
    - **Action** - Provide opportunities for people with physical and mobility needs to share their story, through testimony and preaching.
    - **Action** - Conduct an accessibility audit using existing materials found online (including physical, attitudinal, and spiritual accessibility), and use the results to identify areas for growth.

## Spiritual Development

### *Spiritual Growth Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)*

- **Objective 5:** To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives.
  - **KPI 5.1** Significant increase in numbers of church members regularly praying, studying the Bible, using the Sabbath School Bible Study Guides, reading the writings of Ellen White and engaging in other personal devotions.
    - **Action** - Intentionally engage people with physical and mobility challenges in trainings and workshops that promote spiritual development, and provide transportation to these events.
    - **Action** - If physical access is not possible at a church location, consider moving the program, or provide alternative means of attendance (consider the use of technology).
  - **KPI 5.2** Significant increase in numbers of church members and unbaptized children and youth regularly attending divine service and Sabbath School

- **Action** - Modify the church facility to the extent possible. Being inside the church building is essential to belonging.
    - **Action** - Take the community experience provided inside the church building to people who cannot get into the building if necessary (Zoom, Facebook, celebrations, community events, outdoor church, letter writing).
- **Objective 6:** To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults.
  - **KPI 6.1** Increased church member involvement in fellowship and service, both in the church and in the local community.
    - **Action** - Talk with local church members who have physical and mobility challenges to understand the accessibility features of your church and problem solve together. Always include people with mobility and physical needs in building and renovation projects. They are the experts in describing their access and inclusion needs.

## Leadership

- An APM leader must be identified at all levels of church organization (specifically for churches, unions, conferences, and missions).
- Continue to promote the addition of APM content in colleges, universities and seminaries.

### *Leadership Objectives as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (I Will Go)*

- **Objective 8:** To strengthen the discipleship role of pastors, teachers, and other frontline workers and provide them with regular growth opportunities.
  - **KPI 8.3** Opportunities are given to frontline workers to deepen their passion for and broaden their experience of mission.
    - **Action** - Be intentional about identifying the spiritual and service gifts of church members with physical and mobility needs. Help them develop their gifts through service and leadership opportunities (i.e. witnessing, testimony, Bible study and preaching).

## Call for Total Member Involvement

Adventist Possibility Ministries (APM) is not a department. The name doesn't sound like one because it is not one. It is an initiative that is designed to be adopted by existing departments at every level of the global Church. It is not a program. It is becoming a rapidly growing "movement." Seth Godin describes a movement this way,

*A movement is thrilling. It's the work of many people, all connected, all seeking something better. The new highly leveraged tools of the Net make it easier than ever to create a movement, to make things happen, to get things done. (Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us, p.5)*

Godin challenged the typical approach to leadership when he added,

*For the first time ever, everyone in an organization—not just the boss—is expected to lead. The very structure of today's workplace means that it's easier than ever to change things and that individuals have more leverage than ever before. ... It's engaging, thrilling, profitable, and fun. Most of all, there is a tribe of fellow employees or customers or investors or believers or hobbyists or readers just waiting for you to connect them to one another and lead them where they want to go. Leadership isn't difficult, but you've been trained for years to avoid it." (Ibid, p.12-13)*

While there has been some general leadership given to APM at the outset, the real reason it has become a movement in many parts of the world is because a few leaders, lay and denominationally employed, caught the vision. They've seen the power of affirmation, the power of believing not in what a person *cannot* do but rather in the *possibilities* that God has given to each person. The motto of APM expresses it well, "All are gifted, needed, and treasured."

Such a response should not be surprising. Consider the following insightful comments by Ellen White,

*If we wish to do good to souls, our success with these souls will be in proportion to their belief in our belief in, and appreciation of, them. Respect shown to the struggling human soul is the sure means through Christ Jesus of the restoration of the self-respect the man has lost. Our advancing ideas of what he may become are a help we cannot ourselves fully appreciate. —Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 280, 281*

The danger, of course, is when we try to institutionalize a vision, a dream. While institutions are vital, we must be careful that reliance on organizations does not become a substitute for personal involvement. Carefully consider the following counsel.

*In our work for God there is danger of relying too largely upon what man with his talents and ability can do. Thus we lose sight of the one Master Worker. Too often the worker for Christ fails to realize his personal responsibility. He is in danger of shifting his burden upon organizations, instead of relying upon Him who is the source of all strength. It is a great mistake to trust in human wisdom or numbers in the work of God. Successful work*

*for Christ depends not so much on numbers or talent as upon pureness of purpose, the true simplicity of earnest, dependent faith. Personal responsibilities must be borne, personal duties must be taken up, personal efforts must be made for those who do not know Christ. In the place of shifting your responsibility upon someone whom you think more richly endowed than you are, work according to your ability. —The Desire of Ages, p. 370.*

APM is rooted in following in attitude and action, the compassion that was reflected in the ministry of Jesus. The work of John the Baptist was to remove whatever stood as a hindrance to that ministry flourishing whether it be mountains, valleys, or crooked roads (Luke 3:4,5). Ellen White spoke of the hindrances when she wrote,

*God will hold the church at ----- responsible, as a body, for the wrong course of its members. If a selfish and unsympathizing spirit is allowed to exist in any of its members toward the unfortunate, the widow, the orphan, the blind, the lame, or those who are sick in body or mind, He will hide His face from His people until they do their duty and remove the wrong from among them. If any professing the name of Christ so far misrepresent their Saviour as to be unmindful of their duty to the afflicted, or if they in any way seek to advantage themselves to the injury of the unfortunate and thus rob them of means, the Lord holds the church accountable for the sin of its members until they have done all they can to remedy the existing evil. He will not hearken to the prayer of His people while the orphan, the fatherless, the lame, the blind, and the sick are neglected among them. — 3 Testimonies, p. 517*

Such compassion really tests the authenticity and integrity of our calling. It is the very essence of a God-led movement.

*I saw that it is in the providence of God that widows and orphans, the blind, the deaf, the lame, and persons afflicted in a variety of ways, have been placed in close Christian relationship to His church; it is to prove His people and develop their true character. Angels of God are watching to see how we treat these persons who need our sympathy, love, and disinterested benevolence. This is God's test of our character. — 3 Testimonies, p.511*

The promise is clear.

*Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:  
to loose the chains of injustice  
and untie the cords of the yoke,  
to set the oppressed free  
and break every yoke?  
Is it not to share your food with the hungry  
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter —  
when you see the naked, to clothe them,  
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?  
Then your light will break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing will quickly appear;*

*then your righteousness will go before you,  
and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.  
Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;  
you will cry for help, and he will say: **Here am I.** —Isaiah 58:6-9, NIV*

## **How These Plans Were Developed**

The plan was simple. The Zoom strategic planning advisory provided an opportunity for anyone to attend who wanted to. The division APM directors invited union and conference colleagues along with others who showed special interest and involvement. To our surprise 198 attended the first day. After a devotional by Elder Ted Wilson, General Conference President, and brief introductory comments regarding the “3-A Strategy” by Larry Evans, the attendees joined one of six breakout groups. These groups were led by the vice chairs of the different taskforce groups within APM. They did an exceptional job and the enthusiasm for the various ministries grew.

The assignment given to each group was to develop the “3-A Strategy” which consists of awareness of the need, acceptance of the targeted people group, and then the development of specific action plans. No attempt at that time was given to assigning any KPIs. The vision had to be developed first. The KPIs were added later by the taskforce and/or the taskforce leaders. The day concluded with a challenge from the South Africa-Indian Ocean Division President, Solomon Maphosa and a season of prayer coordinated by Patrick Johnson, APM leader from the Trans-European Division.

The secretary of each group then forwarded her or his report to the small “Writing Committee” that prepared the six reports to be presented to a rather large “Review Committee.” With its review, edits, and approval it was referred back to the “Writing Committee” in preparation for the second day of the Advisory at which time it was discussed and then voted.

The APM Director and the secretary of the "Writing Committee" then worked to fine tune the document by making the seven parts into one uniformed, formatted document. It was then distributed to all those who attended and those who could not attend but were part of the taskforce.

The attachment was the announcement and invitation to attend the Advisory.

Larry R. Evans, DMin  
Assistant to the President  
Adventist Possibility Ministries  
General Conference of SDA

# **The Leadership Team for Adventist Possibility Ministries**

## **Advisory**

**July 14 & 16, 2020**

### **General Advisory Coordination/Design**

Coordinator	Larry R Evans
Administrative Assistant	Nilde Itin
Associate	Audrey Andersson
Associate	Corrado Cozzi

### **Breakout Group Leaders**

Bereavement for Spousal Loss	Audrey Andersson
Blind and Low Vision	Juliana Santos
Caregivers & Mental Health	Mario Ceballos
Deaf & Hard of Hearing	Jeffrey Jordan
Orphans & Vulnerable Children	Steve Avakov
Physical-Mobility	Shannon Trecartin

### **Division Leaders**

East Central Africa	Paul Muasya
Euro-Africa	Pavel Liberansky
Inter-American	Corrado Cozzi
North American	Bonita Shields
Northern Asia-Pacific	Min Ho Joo
South American	Edison Choque
Southern Africa-Indian Ocean	Passmore Mulambo
South Pacific	Lee Dunstan
Southern Asia	Johnny Lubis

Southern Asia  
Trans-European  
West Central Africa

S. Ambrose  
Patrick Johnson  
Stephen Bindas

**Writing Committee**

Larry R Evans, Chair  
Jeff Jordan

Shannon Trecartin, Secretary  
Diane Thurber

Audrey Andersson

**Review Committee Participants**

Larry R Evans, Chair  
Kingston Benjamin  
Mario Ceballos  
Rick Fleck  
Paul Muasya  
Juliana Santos

Shannon Trecartin, Sec.  
Corrado Cozzi  
Lee Dunstan  
Paul Kelly  
Colin Preston  
Samuel Telemaque

Audrey Anderesson  
Stephen Bindas  
Amanda Colgan  
Johnny Lubis  
Taida Rivera



## Adventist Possibility Ministries Advisory Program July 14, 2020

### Invitations Will Be Sent to:

*All Division APM Directors - All Task Force Co-Leaders - All Task Force Members - Guests with Special Interests*

Date/Time EDT	Meeting	Presenter
<b>Tuesday, July 14</b> 7:00 a.m. 7:05 a.m.  7:20 a.m. 7:45 a.m.	Welcome & Opening Prayer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Devotional) “I Will Go” – Our Mission</li> <li>• Orientation of Adventist Possibility Ministries</li> <li>• <i>The “3-A Strategy”</i></li> </ul>	Jeff Jordan Ted Wilson  Larry Evans
8:00 a.m.	Breakout Transition to Zoom Rooms by Task Force Groups	Directions Given by Audrey Andersson
8:15 a.m.	During this two-hour period each co-leader of the six different APM categories will lead her or his group in a discovery planning process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we help the local church become <b>AWARE of the special needs</b> of the people represented by the people group of the task force?</li> <li>• How do we help the local church learn to <b>ACCEPT the people</b> comprising the focus of this ministry task force so they will develop a sense of belonging?</li> <li>• What <b>ACTION plans can be developed</b> for the targeted special needs people that involve their abilities and opportunities for ministry, witness, and sharing.</li> </ul>	The Co-Leaders of Each Task Force Will Lead Discussion for the Development of a Proposed 3-Phase Strategy for the Local Church: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Audrey Andersson (<i>Bereaved</i>)</li> <li>- Steve Avakov (<i>Orphans</i>)</li> <li>- Mario Ceballos (<i>Mental &amp; Caregivers</i>)</li> <li>- Jeff Jordan (<i>Deaf</i>)</li> <li>- Juliana Santos (<i>Blind</i>)</li> <li>- Shannon Trecartin (<i>Physical</i>)</li> </ul>
10:15 a.m.	Reports from Each Co-Leader – Summarized/Comments	Corrado Cozzi (Larry Evans)
11:30 a.m.	Closing Reflections	Solomon Maphosa
11:45 p.m.	Prayer	Charlotte Thoms
<b>Writing Committee</b>		
<b>Tuesday, July 14</b> 1:30 p.m.  3:30 p.m.	(This committee meets to receive the work done by the larger meeting and prepares a written draft for the Editing Review Committee)  End of Meeting	Larry Evans, Chair Shannon Trecartin, Secretary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Audrey Andersson</li> <li>- Corrado Cozzi</li> <li>- Diane Thurber</li> <li>- Jeff Jordan</li> </ul>



## Adventist Possibility Ministries

### Zoom Advisory

July 15, 2020

**\*\*Invitees (All May Attend Who Wish)**

Date/Time EDT	**Review Committee	Participants
<b>Wednesday, July 15</b> 7:00 a.m.          11:00 a.m.	The Review Committee reviews the draft of the Writing Committee before it goes to the large group the next day for its approval.   *Writing Committee Members  Approximate Time for Meeting's End	*Larry Evans, Chair *Shannon Trecartin, Secy. *Audrey Andersson *Corrado Cozzi *Jeff Jordan *Diane Thurber - Stephen Avakov - S. Ambrose - Rosa Banks - Kingston Benjamin - Stephen Bindas - Amanda Colgan - Mario Ceballos - Lee Dunstan - Rick Fleck - Kent Greve - Nilde Itin - Paul Kelly - Johnny Lubis - Paul Muasya - Colin Preston - Taida Rivera - Juliana Santos - Samuel Telemaque
After Above Meetings	Prepare Document for Sharing with Advisory Committee	Shannon Trecartin/Larry Evans



## Adventist Possibility Ministries

### Zoom Advisory

July 16, 2020

**\*\*\*All Are Encouraged but Not Required to Attend**

Date/Time EDT	***Presentation Meeting	Presenter
<b>Thursday, July 16</b> 7:00 a.m.	Welcome Back/Prayer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of Summary Document</li> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Vote taken</li> </ul>	Jeff Jordan Shannon Trecartin (Secretary) Larry Evans
8:30 a.m.	"We Will Go!"	Larry Evans
8:45 a.m.	Season of Prayer	Patrick Johnson