

Prayer-Walking People to Jesus

By: Elder Ron Clouzet

Challenge and Rationale

1. Most people in the world's cities and towns do not know Christ. Their worldview is entirely foreign to the Bible. Our resources to reach them are insufficient for the need. People need the direct intervention of God, and God needs allies—the church—to intercede for them.
2. The Adventist Church does not have the membership or resources to make a significant difference in many large cities. But it has the Word of God and people willing to trust Him.
3. However, Jesus knows He has “many people in this city” (Acts 18:10). Jesus taught His disciples that there are many more people ready to respond to His last-day message—to be reaped—than we can imagine (John 4:35).
4. Ellen White has said something similar: “All over the world, men and women are looking wistfully to heaven. Prayers and tears and inquiries go up from souls longing for light, for grace, for the Holy Spirit. *Many are on the verge of the kingdom, waiting only to be gathered in.*”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 109 (emphasis supplied).
5. God loves the city. When Jonah showed that he didn't care whether the Ninevites would live or die, God said: “Should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left?” (Jonah 4:11). When Jesus looked over Jerusalem, soon to reject Him as the Messiah, His voice “choked [with] deep anguish of heart and bitter tears” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 620), and He said: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,... How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!” (Matt 23:37, 38). Don't you think Jesus would love the people living in the many cities of our world?
6. God needs intercessors, people who can be a link between His love and power and the people He seeks to reach. He looks for people through whom He can show Himself strong (2 Chron 16:9).

Prayer Is the Strategy

1. Prayer has taken a predominant role in every significant revival and reformatory movement of God in history. The prayer of faith has always been God's primary tool to change the situation.
2. Prayer should not be thought of as mere support to ministry strategies. Prayer, rightly conceived, *is* the strategy. It is the first major step before significant change can occur.
3. This plan combines two basic things: prayer and walking. Everyone knows how to walk, and most people want to know how to pray effectively.
4. Prayer-walking means going with a team of two or more friends, and walking a pre-designated area in the community for 30-40 minutes, several times a week, praying for the people they see and for those they don't see but live in apartment buildings, travel in buses and subways, or work in businesses and shops.
5. Israel prayer-walked around the city of Jericho until the fortress walls came tumbling down on the seventh day (Josh 6:15, 16, 20).
6. Paul most likely prayer-walked Athens while waiting for Silas and Timothy because "his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols" (Acts 17:16).
7. Prayer-walking started in some Christian countries about 30 years ago. It has been used very successfully by people of faith.
8. The Adventist Church in some countries is aging, and this is a perfect plan for older people to engage in significant ministry.

Expectations and Promises

1. Prayer-walking was practiced by Hudson Taylor, the most effective Christian missionary to China (18,000 converts; brought 800 other missionaries).
2. Prayer-walking has led people to ask about Christ.
3. Paul says that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds" (2 Cor 10:4). We cannot win against evil with

methods or resources. Only with God as our Commander (Josh 5:13, 14) can we expect to prevail.

4. There are some remarkable promises made by Jesus that can be claimed while we prayer-walk:
 - a. ***“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks, it will be opened”*** (Matt 7:7, 8). God is unequivocal; He promises this will be true with *anyone* who asks, seeks, and knocks. The original Greek conveys the idea of persistence, saying, “keep asking, keep seeking.”
 - b. ***“I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven”*** (Matt 18:19). What a wonderful promise: agree with others on what to pray for and God will hear and act accordingly! The context of this verse is the work of the church to seek and redeem the lost.
 - c. ***“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them”*** (Mark 11:24). This is a most remarkable promise. The emphasis here is on believing that God is able to perform. The context shows that Jesus urged His disciples to “have faith” (v.22). The fig tree He had cursed the day before was now dry. God will do miracles for those who genuinely believe in His power.
 - d. ***“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples”*** (John 15:7, 8). This was said in the context of Jesus being the Vine and we being His branches. So, what we ask or desire will be consistent with His desires because His words are part of us. Keep repeating and memorizing these words of Jesus, and He will make your wishes for lost people become real.
 - e. ***“Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight”*** (1 John 3:21, 22). This is a critical text. It connects answers to prayer with a willingness to honor Him. If we consciously harbor sin in our lives, we will not have confidence in God when we pray. The reason is simple: known sin

separates us from God (see Ps 66:18). We cannot pray in faith when we know we live in sin. Obeying His commandments sets us free to pray with confidence in Him.

- f. ***“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him”*** (1 John 5:14, 15). We all know that we should pray according to God’s will, and it is God’s will to save the lost (1 Tim 2:4). The key here is whether or not we *know* God has heard our prayers for the lost. This is one reason we keep praying. We keep praying until we *know* God has heard, and thus, have the confidence that He will answer!
 - g. ***“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth”*** (1 Tim 2:1-4). Paul pleads for the church to pray also for people they don’t know, like those in authority. Why? Because the main objective is for “all” to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.
5. Sometimes we wonder if our prayers actually make a difference. Please read this following quote from Ellen White very carefully: “Worldly wisdom teaches that prayer is not essential. Men of science claim that there can be no real answer to prayer; that this would be a violation of law, a miracle, and that miracles have no existence.... Such teaching is opposed to the testimony of the Scriptures. Were not miracles wrought by Christ and His apostles? The same compassionate Saviour lives today, and He is as willing to listen to the prayer of faith as when He walked visibly among men. The natural cooperates with the supernatural. *It is a part of God's plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask.*”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 525 (emphasis supplied).

How to Start

1. *Form a Prayer-Walking Team:*

- a. Get together in your churches to form prayer teams. Begin to think about the people you'd like to be part of your team. Teams are usually made of friends or people who live near each other or people who work together.
- b. The pastor, or someone else in the church, should consider identifying walking routes based on the potential impact that can be made on the people who live or work there. However, do not make it too complicated, such as traveling a long distance to prayer-walk a specific area. Please keep it simple but meaningful.
- c. Prayer-walking should be done in teams of three or more for encouragement and steadiness. Teams of two are less ideal, but it's better to prayer-walk with two than not to prayer-walk.
- d. It is essential to make a commitment to prayer-walk for a year, or at least six months, before re-evaluating. One of the keys to success will be teams that make long-term commitments. A team may see no results until six, eight, or ten months into this ministry. But the results will come. Draw up a simple statement, saying how long each member is pledging to pray together, and sign it. Post a copy of it where you can see it. You can include a Bible promise in it. Do this on the second or third time you prayer-walk.
- e. Each church should strive to have as many prayer-walking teams as possible, but at least three of them.

2. *Plan the Prayer Walk:*

- a. Designate a starting week where each team will pray (some teams may not need to wait for a starting date. They may start walking right away).
- b. Each team should take a list of Bible promises along with the walk. Memorizing these promises would be ideal. Repetition of God's promises will be a source of confidence and power.
- c. Scatter the prayer-walking for the sake of balance. For instance, team 1 will pray every Sunday and Wednesday, team 2 will go every Monday and Thursday, and team 3 will prayer-walk every Tuesday and Friday. Each team

should decide the time to go, according to what is most convenient for each of the members.

- d. All the teams in a church or institution should plan to also prayer-walk on Sabbath. So, team 1 would go out to pray on Sundays, Wednesdays, *and* Sabbaths.
- e. On Sabbaths, all the teams should return to church or headquarters at a designated time and spend at least 30 minutes sharing their experiences that week. They should also take time to pray for each other. This should be a weekly practice.

3. Pray While You Walk

- a. When the team meets, they should read a Bible promise or two together, have a short prayer, and start their walk. They could pray this way: *Dear Lord, we will now set out to walk and pray for the people we see and do not see. Please inspire our prayers to pray for what the Holy Spirit would like us to pray on behalf of someone. Please give us discernment to notice people, their burdens, and their struggles. Give us great love for them and make this time we spend out here count for eternity. In Your name we pray, Amen.*
- b. Remember the objective: to lift people to Jesus. Most people you will see on the streets, in the subway station, in restaurants, shops, or businesses do not know Christ. You are their intercessor today!
- c. Plan to prayer-walk at least 30 minutes, but not too much longer. You don't want to get too tired or have the experience become too routine.
- d. Pray silently or quietly. Do NOT look down when you pray (unless you ever do this by yourself alone). Do not worry whether people can hear your prayers. Some may actually need to hear you pray. Yet, it is important not to pray loudly. Do NOT draw attention to yourself. Praying aloud but not loud looks like talking among friends. That is exactly what you are doing—talking to your friend Jesus on behalf of the people you see.
- e. Pay attention to the people you see. Are they sad? Do they seem lonely? Are they stuck to their phones? Do they have children? Are they with friends or family? Are they upset? Are they in love? Pray accordingly.

- f. Let's say two teenagers come out of an apartment building. How would you pray for them? *Dear Father, bless these two young men. Lead in their lives, their choices. They both seem lost just listening to music right now. May your Holy Spirit lead in their lives so they can one day understand the difference between music that feeds the soul and music that affects life negatively. Bless them in their school, and in their relationships. And may you work around the circumstances so that one day they may come to know You as their best Friend.*
- g. Imagine another time when your team is ready to cross a busy street. While you wait for the green light, you see a young mother with a daughter of about three. How would you pray for them? *Dear Lord, may your angels surround that mother and her daughter today. Protect them from harm. Give the woman wisdom to raise her child. Lead her to know you so she can help her daughter know you also. Connect the little girl with a family or a friend who is a Christian that loves You and Your Word. May she develop a desire to know the truth and search for answers beyond what she will hear in school or in the movies. May you lead her life so that when we get to heaven, her angel will bring her by one day and say to us: For this little girl, you prayed one day, and the Lord has answered.*
- h. Often, we may be praying close to where one team member lives. Let's assume that an older man, whom you know by name, lives on the 15th floor, and he is coming outside to smoke a cigarette. How can you pray for him? *Dear God, here is my neighbor _____ . He seems like a lonely man even though he is married. I haven't seen family come by to visit him, and clearly, he is addicted to nicotine. Dear Lord, please free this man from the smoking habit. Give him the desire and the faith that this is possible, even for him, even after all these many years. Help me know how to invite him to the next Stop-Smoking Clinic we will have at the church or the health center. Please give me courage. Please give me a deep concern for his soul. May he come to know you, love you, and serve you before it is too late for him. Bless him today. Give him some evidence that the Unseen God is watching after him.*
- i. After you pray for the time you agreed to pray, or covered the territory your team had planned, simply close with a prayer for God to be with every member of the team until they meet again.

4. *Meet on Sabbaths*

- a. Remember that each team should pray a couple of days a week and then do so again on Sabbath. For most teams, that will be on Sabbath afternoon; for some, it may be early on Sabbath mornings. Remember also that the walls of Jericho fell after Israel walked on the seventh day.
- b. The objective now is to have all the prayer-walking teams come together. They should agree on a time to meet at the church or the Adventist institution where they work and share their experiences during the week.
- c. The ideal plan would be for all the teams to go out and pray simultaneously on Sabbath and then return to meet together.
- d. What happens in that meeting? First, they should sing songs of praise for several minutes. Sing freely about the love of God and His care for those in darkness. Then, after a leader's prayer, the floor should be open for each team to share some of their experiences that week. This is not a competition. The objective is not to outdo each other's stories. The idea is to honestly share anything worthwhile.
- e. For example, did anyone stop to talk with the team? Sometimes that will happen. What did they say? How did we respond? Did any team get a chance to pray *with* someone? How was that experience? Is anyone learning anything? For example, after a few weeks, you can expect some members to realize they are becoming more sensitive to people. They pay attention to people and their needs much more than before. That is worth sharing with the group. Are there any burdens? Did the police ask a team what they were doing? How did they answer? Is it becoming difficult to meet regularly? Prayer should be offered for that team.
- f. After the time of sharing, a promise or two from the Bible can be read, followed by earnest prayer for God to use each team for God's glory.
- g. Remember, one key will be consistency. The enemy of souls is counting on us to quit and give up if we don't see evidence that our prayer-walking is making any difference. Don't let him win. Keep claiming God's promises and praying faithfully. When you least expect it, you'll see what God is doing in someone's life.

How to Take It to the Next Level

1. If teams do not grow weary in doing good, that is, if they keep praying after months and have no thought of quitting, they may consider adding to the simple ministry of prayer.
2. For example, a team may choose to carry small pieces of literature that introduce God or deal with the problem of suffering in the world. As they walk, they can pray: *Dear Lord, we have some literature that we believe may be helpful to some people. Only You know whom this literature can help. Please impress our minds whom to leave this with or where to leave it for someone to pick it up. May no piece of literature we give today, or any day, be wasted. Even if it ends up in the trash, impress someone else to pick it up to be a blessing to them.*
3. Another way to take it to the next level is to think of a “uniform.” A team could get a hat or design a vest, or an armband; each meant to identify the prayer-walkers. If you choose to put any words on the hat or the vest, be very careful what you say. Consult with others before you do so. You don’t want to attract attention in the wrong way.
4. However, you do want to attract attention in the right way. What’s the right way? Some way that may cause passers-by to have an interest in talking with you. Something intriguing might be to label the vest or the hat with: *Guess What We’re Talking About? Or Praying for the Blessing of the Community.* This will work if the team is consistently praying on the same days, at the same times, for a long time. People are creatures of habit, and many have similar schedules day after day. If a team is out every Tuesday at 6 p.m., those out at that time on the same day are bound to remember them, especially when they wear something distinctive.
5. Another way to take it to “the next level” would be to design a Prayer Card which they can give anyone who stops to engage with them. They can provide them with the card—which would say they’re praying for the community—and offer them the chance to write their own prayer request and give it back to the team on the following day they are out. Or they can agree on a time and a place to meet to receive the card. In some cases, receiving the card would be the perfect opportunity to pray *with them* right then and there. Make sure you ask their permission to pray with them first.

6. One last way to take this ministry to the next level is to pray that God may open opportunities to serve. For example, if the team goes by a place where people are trying to move furniture or equipment, why not offer their help if physically able? Another way would be to pray this way: *Lord, we know the devil seeks to maim and destroy. When he does, please put us in the right place and time to lend a hand to those hurt or scared and who have just experienced an accident on the road. Give us both compassion and wisdom from above to become angels of mercy to them.* If the team goes by a home where older people seem to struggle with their garden, since the team may be familiar to them because they pass by their home several times a week, why not offer their help? They could engage in conversation, keeping in mind the five steps outlined by Ellen White to connect with people—mingle with them seeking to bless, have compassion for them, meet their needs, win their confidence, and then invite them to know Jesus—and simply become a blessing to them. The point here is that the team would ask the Holy Spirit's guidance to connect with people *in order to meet their needs* and be tools in the hands of God to bless them.

The Lord will guide teams that take this prayer-walking ministry seriously to know how to connect with people, more and more. Eventually, you can expect a number of souls being led to Jesus as the result of faithful prayer-walking. May God bless your ministry.