



INGATHERING EMPHASIS MONTH

Defenders of Integral Evangelism

Introduction

DID YOU KNOW that Jesus began His ministry for people's integral development in the synagogues? This is significant! Why? Because it indicates that the church should advocate for the integral development of people. And that is what it is doing! The work done for the integral development of man is the reason Adventists exist. Seventh-day Adventists believe this. The church, through its different ministries, wants to minister to people's physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions. The ingathering campaign allows the church to minister in all of these directions. Let's examine how this campaign helps in the integral development both inside and outside the church.

The ingathering campaign is designed to bring love and hope to everyone possible. Many people in our communities are experiencing discouragement and loneliness. The increase in criminal activities in many countries has created fear and insecurity in the minds of both rich and poor. The possibility of a terrorist attack on public transport, airports, planes, or government institutions deepens this feeling of insecurity and hopelessness that has affected the hearts of men and women around the world.

The ingathering campaign allows the church to show the love of God for the hopeless and marginalized through acts of kindness. Through the ingathering campaign, the church can iden-

tify the diverse needs and respond appropriately to some of them. The humanitarian response can take the form of clothes, food, money, buildings, or a reading program, to name a few. The ingathering campaign places members of the church in contact with the needs of humanity. This is what God is looking for through the ingathering campaign, to motivate the spirit of compassion for the poor. The church members will feel inspired to show their willingness to provide love and hope to as many people as possible.

The ingathering campaign also allows the church to get to know those that need material and spiritual help. It is the responsibility of the church members to reach the people instead of waiting for them to come. The ingathering campaign has the objective of bringing people to the church. When the church mingles with people in their homes, the street, businesses, and many other places, the church members become aware of the social, economic, spiritual, and mental needs in their communities.

This knowledge of the diverse needs that individuals or communities face deepens the commitment to begin community projects whose objective is to alleviate the problems of the people. It also intensifies the motivation of church members to begin the ingathering.

Also, understanding the physical needs of the people creates a bridge that allows church

**OPENING
HYMN:
Adventist
Hymnal,
no. 369**

**SCRIPTURE
READING:
Luke 4:16-20**

**CLOSING
HYMN:
Adventist
Hymnal,
no. 370**

SERMON

members to discover their spiritual needs as well. In Matthew 9:1–35 Jesus demonstrated that His ministry for the sick, the blind, and the needy gave Him access to their souls. Jesus met with them in their homes and on the streets. He identified with their struggles and problems. The people responded to Jesus' personal touch, revealing their spiritual needs. The ingathering campaign is designed to place church members in contact with the material and spiritual needs of the people.

The ingathering campaign directs the attention of the public to the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, both in the Inter-American Division as well as around the world. Jesus encouraged the disciples to let the world know about their “good works” (Matthew 5:17). Why? Because the church is a light in the world, and Jesus says that this light should not be hidden. On the contrary, He says that we should let it shine in the communities. Isaiah says that the gentiles must see the light and come to it (Isaiah 60:3). Jesus is the light. The humanitarian work of the church reflects the love and compassion of Jesus for humanity. The ingathering campaign calls the public's attention to a Savior that loves and worries about humanity. When the world contemplates the “good works” of the church, people feel motivated to praise God. The objective of the “good works” of the church, and the ingathering campaign, is to direct the attention of men and women toward the Savior that loves them and is concerned about them.

The ingathering campaign provides opportunities for the public to take advantage of the many free services offered by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Among these free services that the church offers are health and family classes, correspondence courses from the *Voice of Prophecy*, bible studies, devotional books, magazines, and pamphlets. This form of religious education is intended to give men and women a cognitive and experiential understanding of God. The Holy Spirit uses the publications ministry to bring many souls to Christ.

The ingathering campaign offers non-members of the church the opportunity to collaborate with the work

done by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in alleviating the suffering of the poor. It is important to remember that Jesus announced His humanitarian ministry from the synagogues. The church should not only invite men and women to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior, but also collaborate with them in taking hope and security to the needy.

The Lord has entrusted the world and its resources to his people. But the incorrect use of these resources is what has created inequality in the distribution of wealth. The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that sin is the cause of the disparity in distribution of wealth among the rich and poor. The effect of sin is manifested in the greed shown by men for power and money. The theological reflections from the church inspire people to work so that everyone feels a moral responsibility toward the poor. Those who are blessed should share with those who have less. This is justice, and it is one of the theological pillars of the ingathering campaign.

The ingathering campaign gives all members of the church the opportunity to use their talents, abilities, and time to solicit funds from men and women in the community, and these usually respond favorably. The Lord has promised that He will give His church favor in the world. What an amazing promise! The ingathering campaign gives the church the opportunity to be a blessing to the poor, and the world the opportunity to be a blessing by giving to the poor.

The ingathering campaign allows the church members to collaborate vertically as well as horizontally. Vertically, because the church members are invited to collaborate with the Lord in alleviating pain and suffering on earth. Horizontally because the church members ask their communities to collaborate with them in order to encourage equality and justice for the poor. The ingathering campaign is an amazing ministry of collaboration between God and His church, and between the church and world.

Call

1. Jesus sees the needs of the poor in their communities today.
2. Jesus listens to the cries of the poor in their neighborhoods today.
3. Jesus feels the pain for the poor and forsaken today. He feels compassion for them.

Action

1. Jesus looks for volunteers to work with Him and bring hope to the poor.
2. The ingathering ministry is designed to bring hope to the poor and needy.
3. Jesus needs our hands today.
4. Jesus needs our voice today.
5. Jesus needs our feet today.

How many are willing to be a blessing to the forsaken? Raise your hands. How many are willing to be an instrument of God to bring hope to the hopeless? Please stand.

Call

1. Say a short prayer
2. Begin to sing hymn no. 370
3. Call the people present to come up to the front to demonstrate their commitment in participating with the ingathering campaign. Call them by groups: children, teenagers, young people, and adults.

Consecration prayer

Samuel Telemaque, Associate director Sabbath School and Personal Ministries, Inter-American Division.