

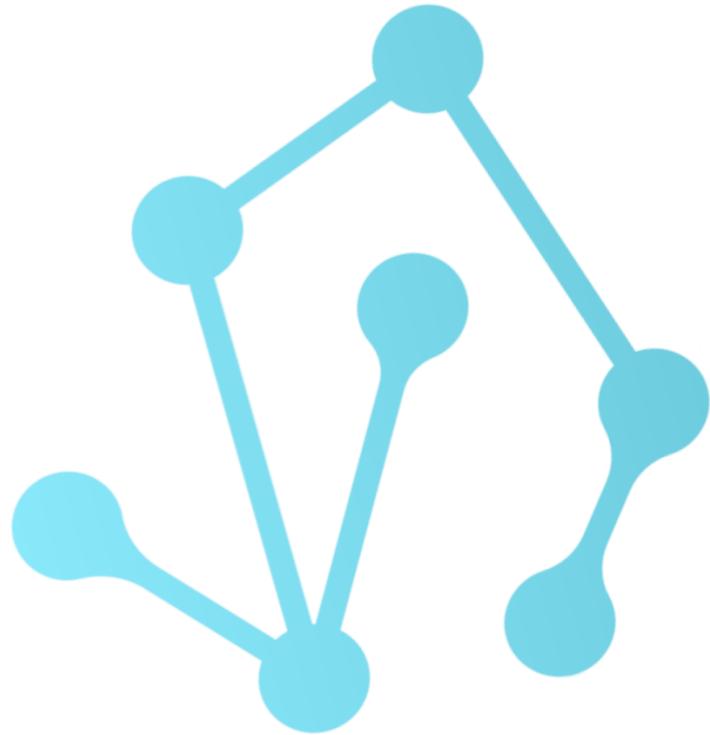
**Division-Wide Priority Post WAD Impact 2025**

# **Nurture and Retention**

**Emmanuel Kra**



# INTRODUCTION & OBJECTIVES



- Nurturing and retaining new baptized members is essential for church growth and spiritual development.
- Success is measured not only by baptisms but by the ability to nurture and retain new members.

## Objectives:

- Nurture: Help each new member grow in faith.
- Retain: Ensure their social and spiritual integration.
- Mobilize: Actively engage them in the church's mission.

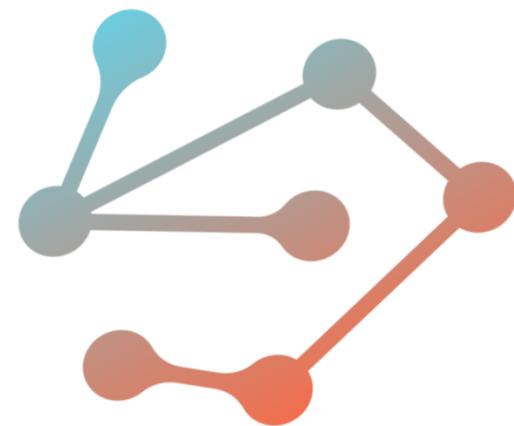
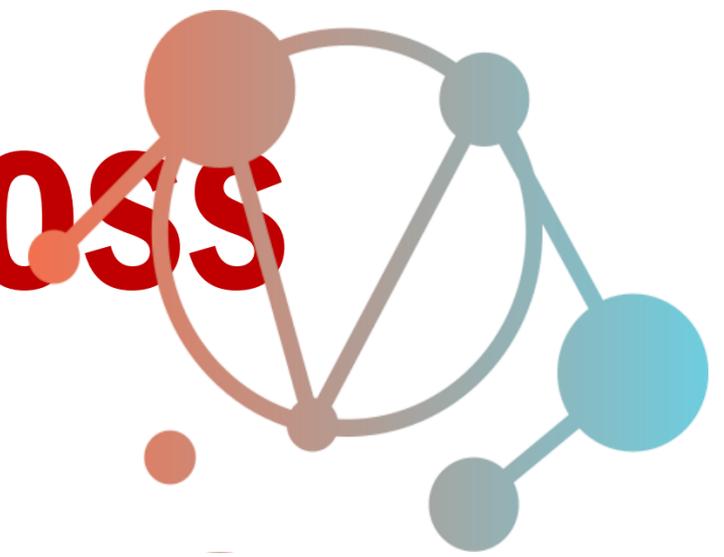
# THE RETENTION CRISIS

- **40% of baptized members left within the 10 years.**
- **Some unions lost nearly 50% of their membership after audits**

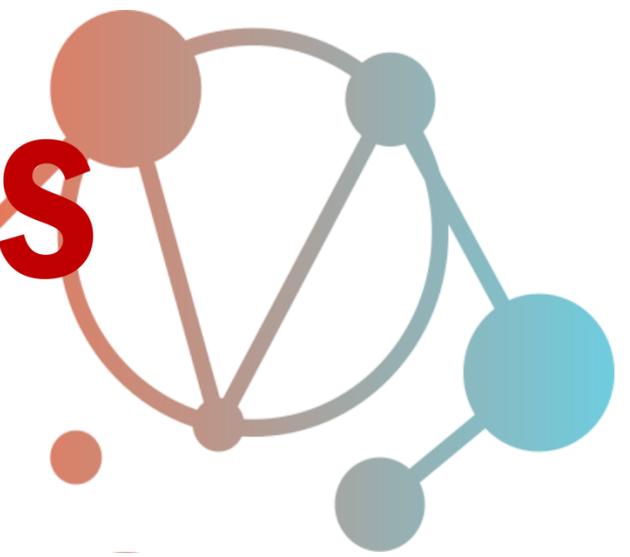


**Retention is not optional – it is essential for church health and growth**

# MAIN SOURCES OF MEMBER LOSS



# MAIN SOURCES OF MEMBER LOSS



## Internal Factors

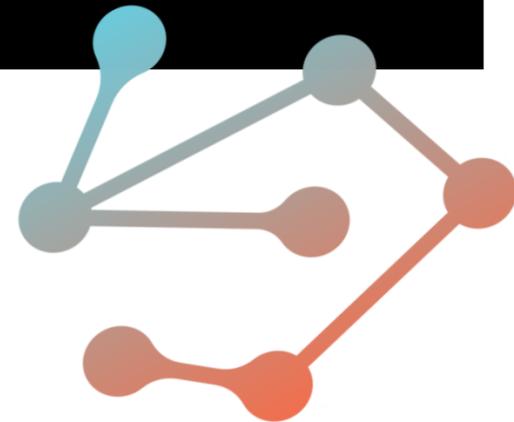
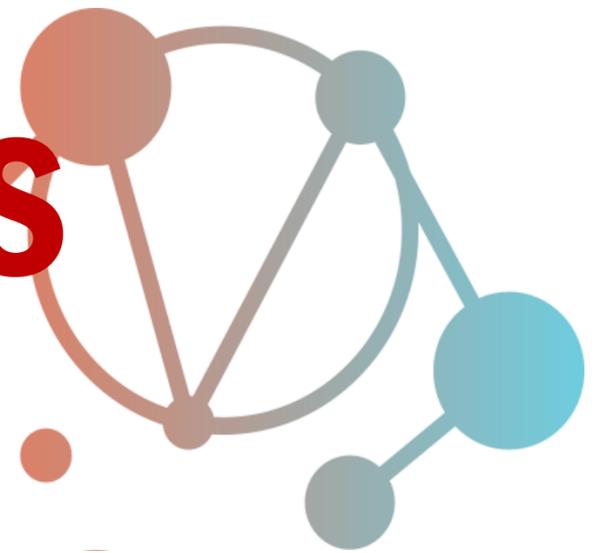
- 1. Pre-Evangelistic Preparation Inadequacy:**  
Failure to properly prepare members and sites hinders follow-up and accountability
- 2. Administrative Documentation Deficiency:**  
Failure to maintain comprehensive membership records results in institutional memory loss.
- 3. Social Integration Deficit:** New members often feel excluded, leading to disengagement from the community.



# MAIN SOURCES OF MEMBER LOSS

## Internal Factors:

4. **Spiritual Mentorship Deficiency:** members are left alone after joining; they experience lack of ongoing spiritual guidance.
5. **Doctrinal Inadequacy:** Insufficient or unclear instruction results in shallow understanding of core beliefs.



# MAIN SOURCES OF MEMBER LOSS

## External Factors:

1. **Social and Family Pressure:** The influence of family relationships and social connections that create tension against religious commitment.
2. **Secularization Influence:** The spread of materialistic values competes with and often replaces spiritual priorities in people's lives.
3. **Religious Persecution:** Formal or informal opposition to religious practice



# MAIN SOURCES OF MEMBER LOSS

## External Factors

- 4. External Distractions:** Competing influences that draw attention away from spiritual commitments.
- 5. Religious Alternatives Appeal:** Attraction of other faith communities that actively meet the needs of recent converts



# Reactions When Facing Member Loss



## Blaming field leadership inaction

- Members criticize denominational or regional leaders for not providing adequate support or resources to prevent member exodus.

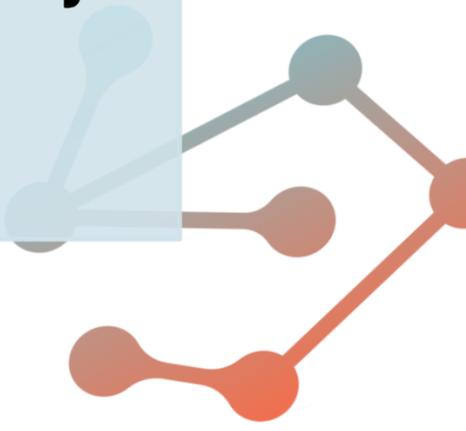
## Criticizing church leadership

- Focus shifts to pastoral failings, poor conflict management, or leadership dysfunction as the primary cause of departures.

## Blaming poor social integration

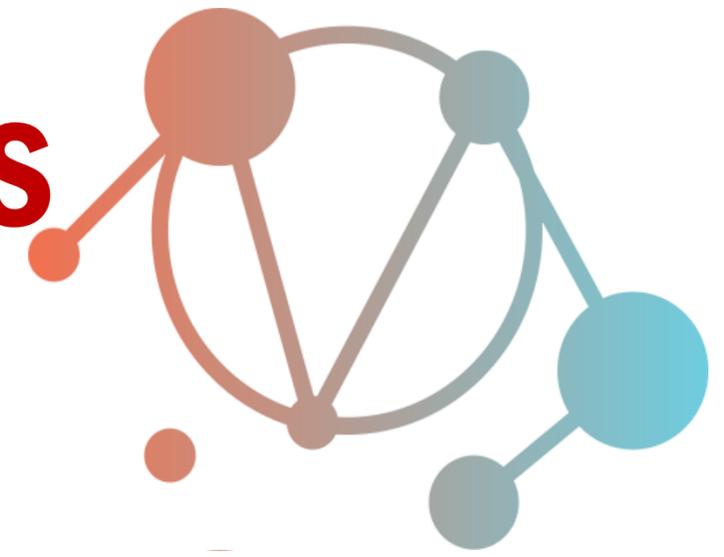
- Attributing losses to failure in helping members connect meaningfully within the congregation and form relationships.

## Complaints about doctrinal rigidity

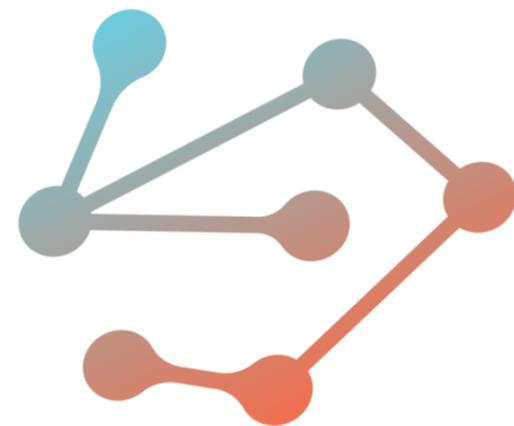
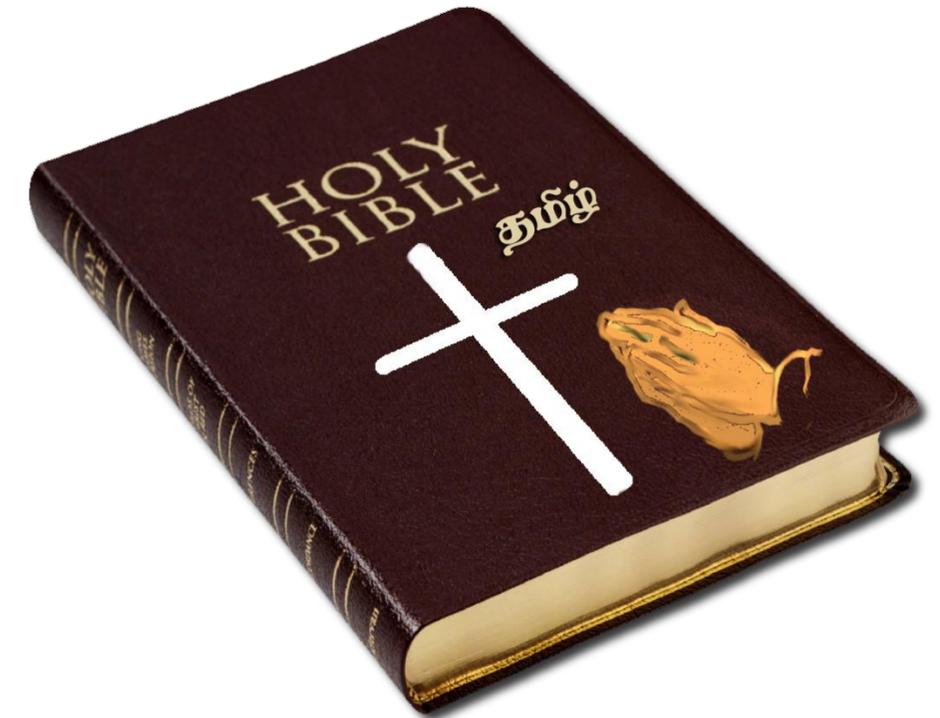
- Members cite inflexible theological positions or excessive traditionalism as driving people away, especially younger generations
- 

**Key issue: These reactions share a common characteristic -**  
**MINIMAL PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

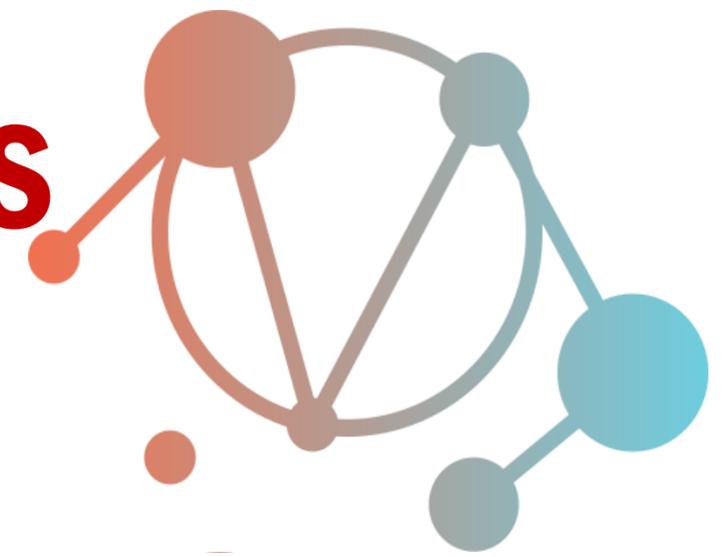
# BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS



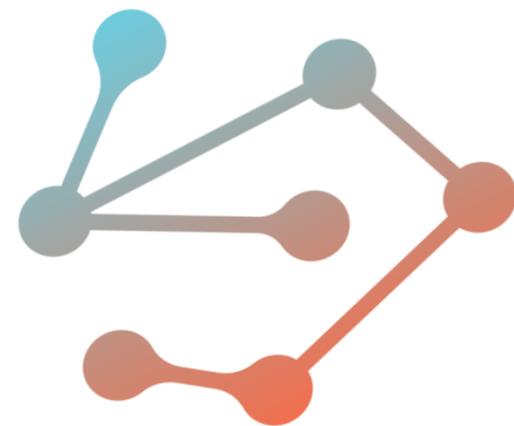
- **Matthew 28:19-20:** The Great Commission includes baptism and ongoing teaching.
- **Acts 2:42-47:** Early church grew through fellowship, breaking bread, prayer, and doctrinal instruction.
- **Hebrews 10:24-25:** Encouragement and gathering are essential for spiritual growth.



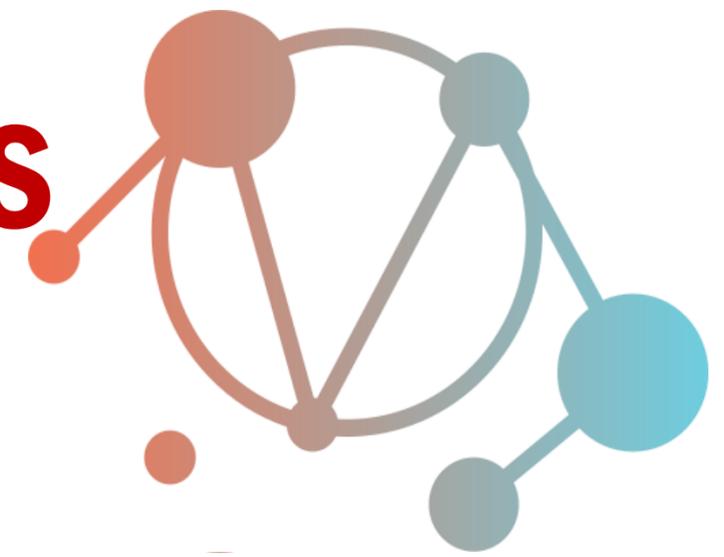
# BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS



- **“After individuals have been converted to the truth, they need to be looked after. These newly converted ones need nursing—watchful attention, help, and encouragement. These should not be left alone, a prey to Satan’s most powerful temptations; ...” (Evangelism, p. 351**

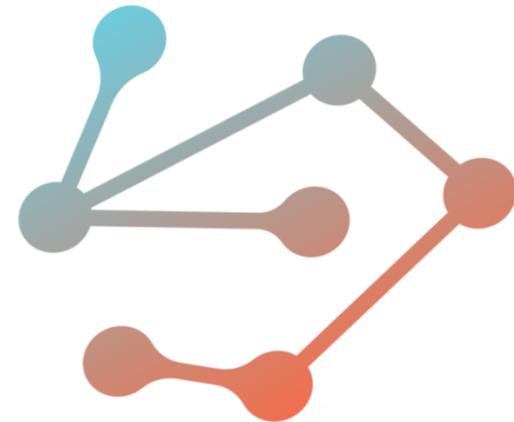


# BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

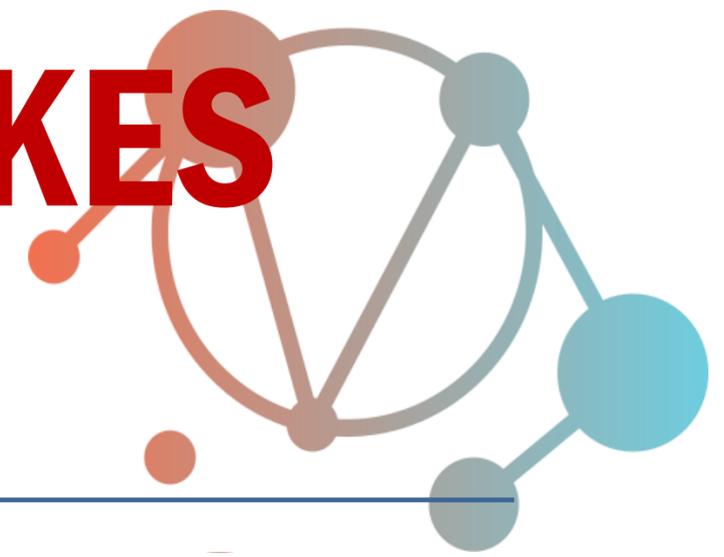


➤ **“... they need to be educated in regard to their duties; to be kindly dealt with, to be led along, to be visited and prayed with.**

**(Evangelism, p. 351)**



# THE IMPACT OF CHURCH MISTAKES



Lack of welcome

Increases anxiety, isolation, and risk of dropout

Cliques/favoritism

Destroys trust, creates exclusion

Judgment and  
hypocrisy

Causes shame, discouragement, and departure

Neglected follow-up

Leaves new members feeling abandoned

No voice or role

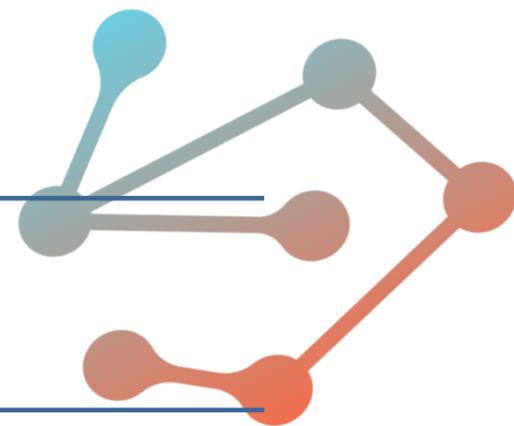
People leave when they feel invisible or unneeded

Lack of mentorship

Stunts spiritual growth, no guidance, weak faith formation

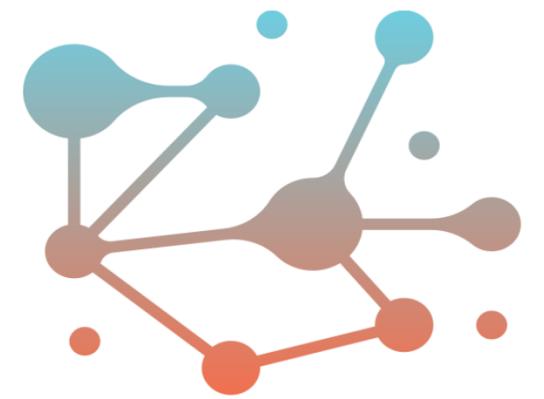
No Bible/doctrinal  
teaching

Creates confusion, unstable faith, vulnerability to error



# THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF RETENTION

## Let's Keep Them



### In Our Records

- Accurate, immediate registration (ACMS, church records).
- Regular audits and updates.
- Public recognition: baptismal certificates, welcome ceremony.

### In our Communities

- Warm welcome and hospitality teams.
- Assign mentors.
- Small groups, social activities, regular home visits.
- Active involvement in ministries.

### In our Faith

- Structured orientation and doctrinal classes.
- Ongoing Bible study and devotional habits.
- Prayer groups, spiritual mentoring, and mission involvement.
- Addressing doubts and spiritual struggles.



## RECORD, ROOT, RETAIN

**Let's Keep  
Them**



### In our records

Immediate report, ACMS record, Church registry,  
Accurate documentation, Regular updates



### In our communities

Spiritual Fellowship, Loving embrace, Heartfelt  
welcome, Genuine inclusion



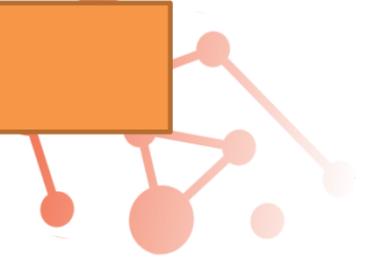
### In our faith

Intentional discipleship, Biblical foundations,  
Spiritual guidance, Evangelism involvement.

**Our New Believers Care Plan**



# FAITH JOURNEY STAGES AND RETENTION RISKS



## Rooting

3 - 5 years

- Low, except in the event of a major personal crisis.

## Firming

2 - 3 years

- Low risk of departure except in the event of a major personal crisis.

## External pressure

6 months - 2 years

- High risk of social/family criticism.

## Questioning

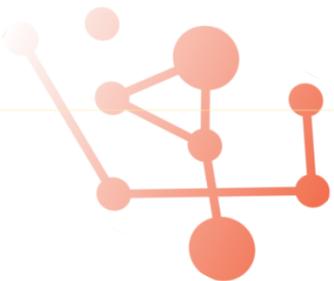
3 months - 1 year

- Frequent doubts if answers are unclear.

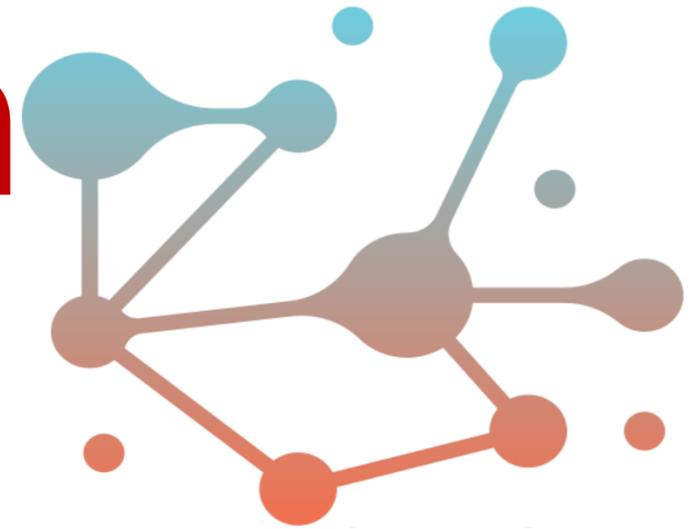
## Initial excitement

0 - 3 months

- High risk of backslide if no structured follow-up offered.

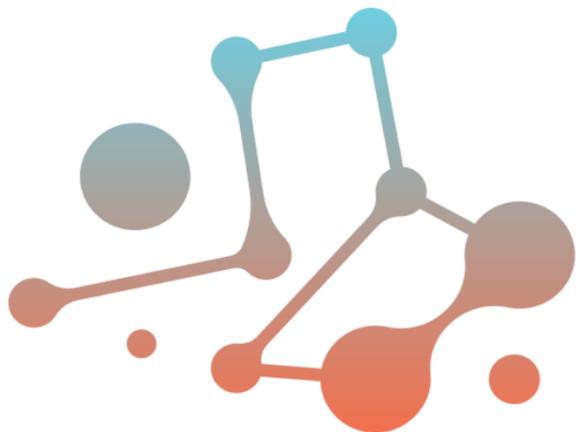


# The Process of Spiritual Growth

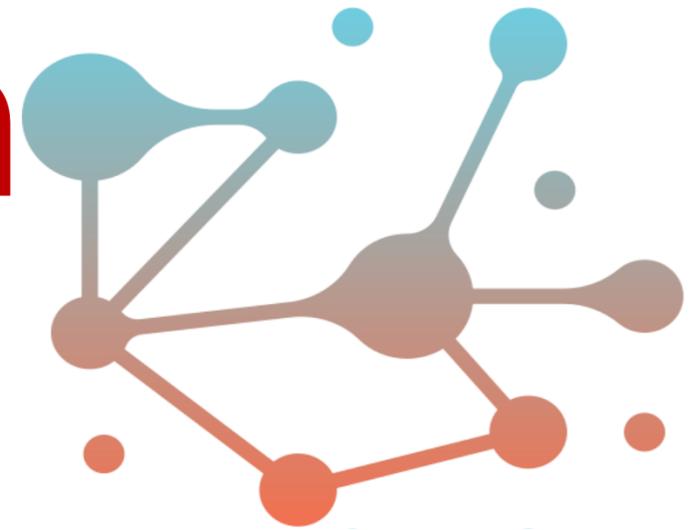


## Phase 1: Foundation (0 to 3 months)

- Welcome ceremony, certificate, and manual.
- Orientation class: Adventist beliefs, lifestyle, and mission.
- Assignment of a mentor and small group.

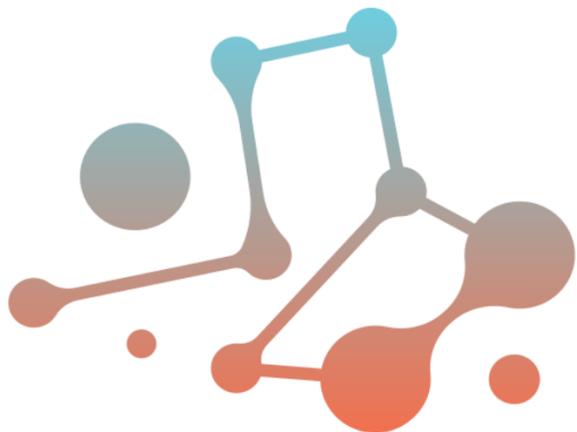


# The Process of Spiritual Growth

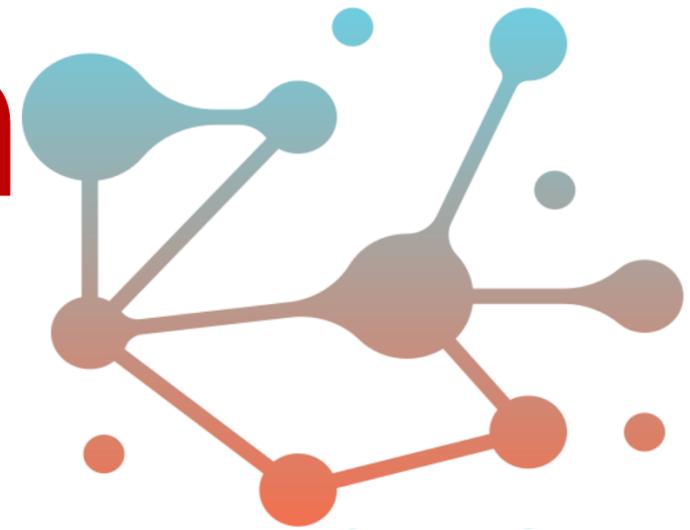


## Phase 2: Maturity (3 to 6 months)

- Advanced doctrinal studies and leadership training.
- Mentoring, leading small groups, active ministry roles

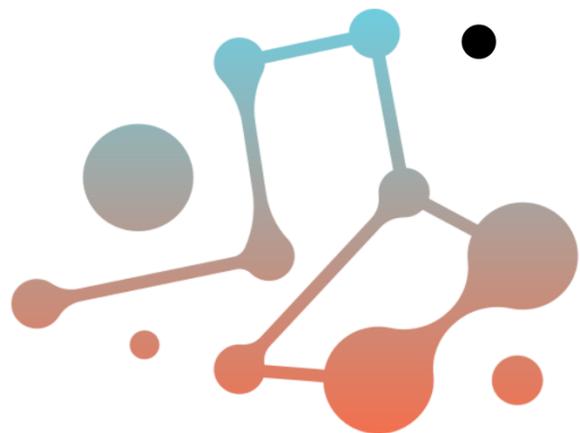


# The Process of Spiritual Growth

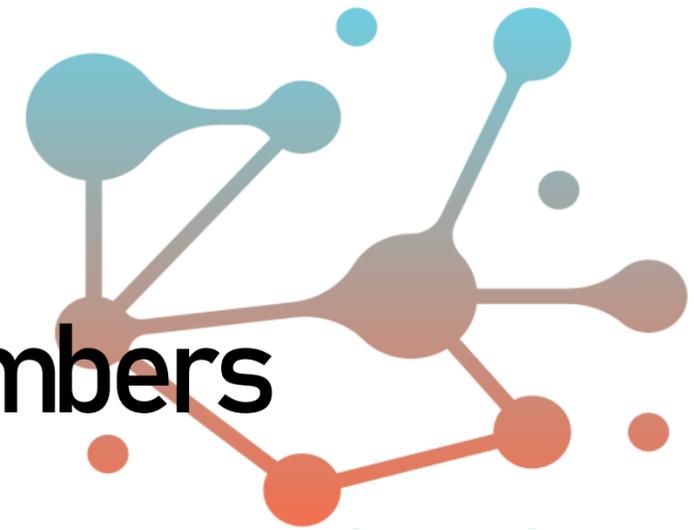


## Phase 3: Rooting (6–12 months)

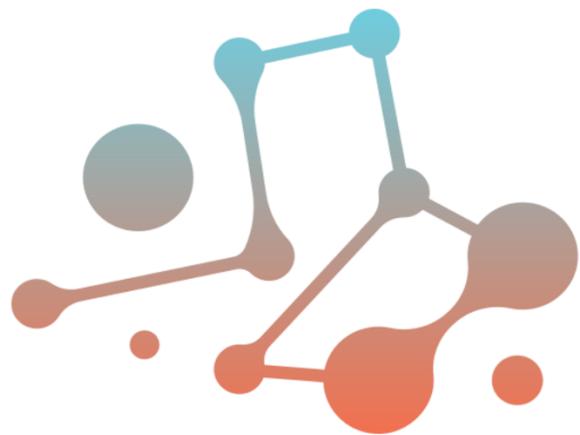
- Weekly Bible studies and prayer meetings.
- Involvement in church service and outreach.
- Personal devotional life: prayer, journaling, Bible reading.



# Benefits of True Integration



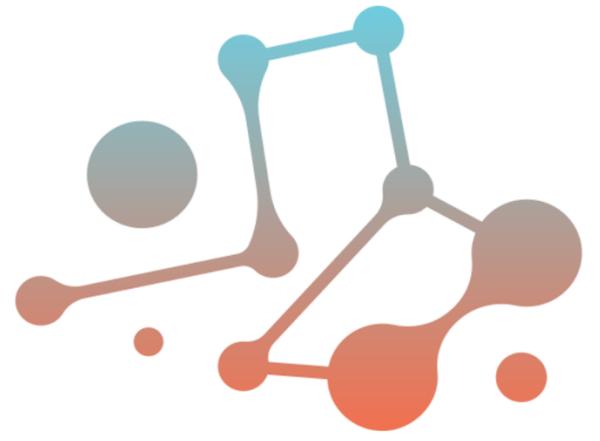
- Reduces anxiety and isolation - members feel safe and valued.
- Builds belonging and trust - community becomes family.
- Increases motivation and engagement - members serve joyfully.
- Strengthens resilience - faith and relationships help face life's storms.
- Promotes spiritual and emotional health - less depression, more hope.



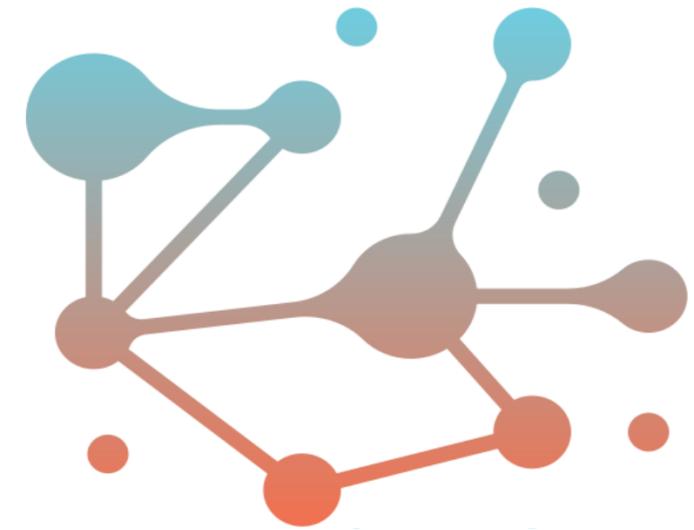
# Practical Steps for Retention



**Welcoming  
actions**

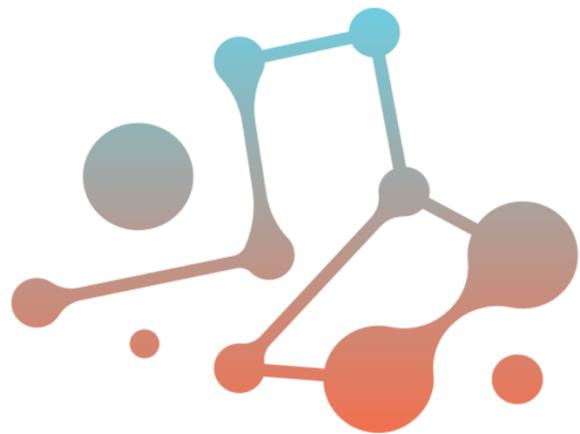


# Practical Steps for Retention



## 1. Welcome

- Register in ACMS and local books.
- Public welcome and certificate.
- Assign a mentor and small group.
- Distribute orientation material.



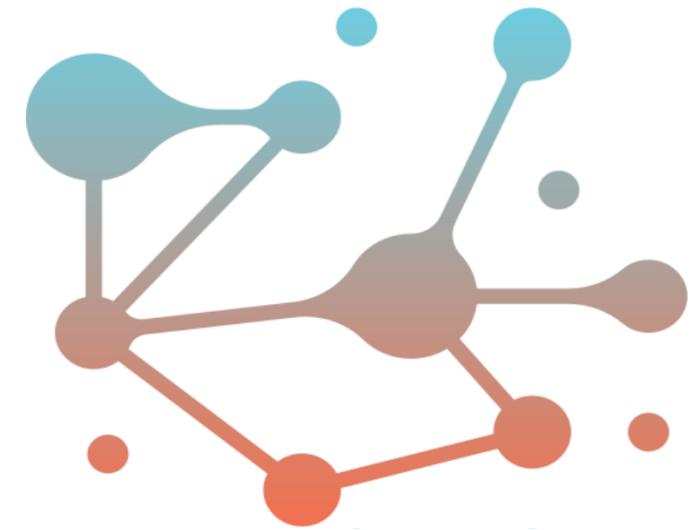
# Practical Steps for Retention



Welcoming  
actions

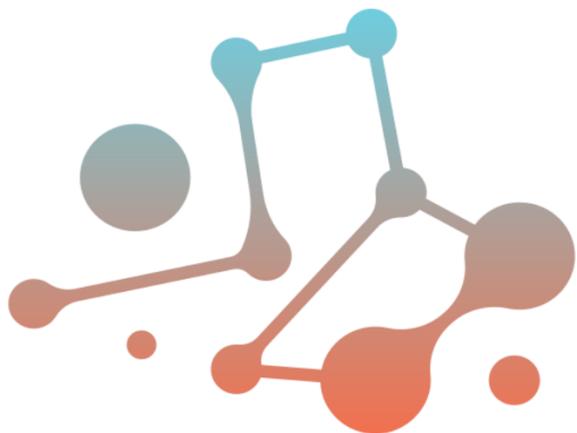
Integration  
Activities

# Practical Steps for Retention



## 2. Integration Activities

- Home visits, mission meals, and social events.
- “Adopt-a-member” by established families.
- Small group Bible studies and prayer circles.

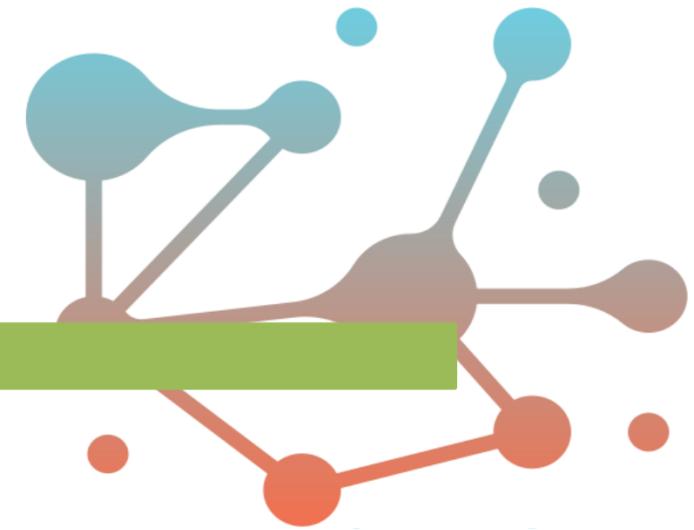
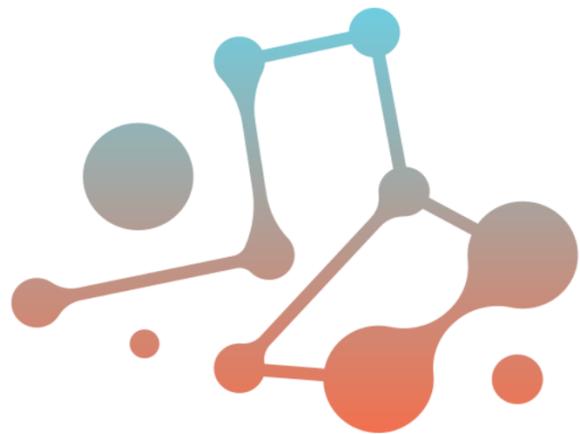


# Practical Steps for Retention

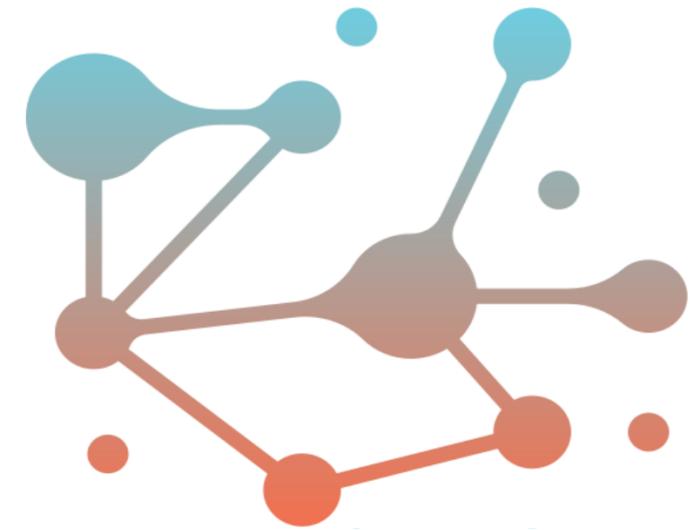
Welcoming  
actions

Integration  
Activities

Spiritual  
Rooting

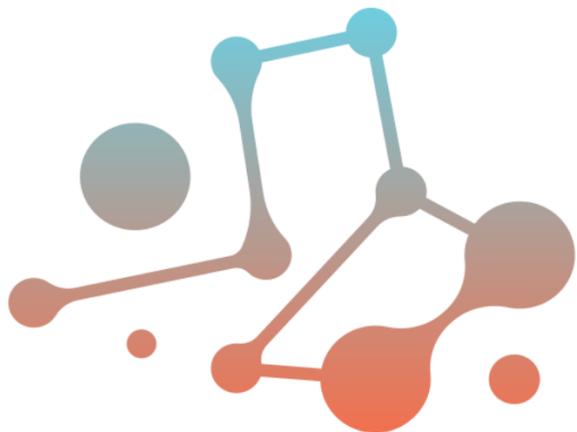


# Practical Steps for Retention



## 3. Spiritual Rooting

- 4-week orientation class.
- Regular doctrinal teaching and Q&A.
- Encourage daily devotion and prayer partners



# Practical Steps for Retention

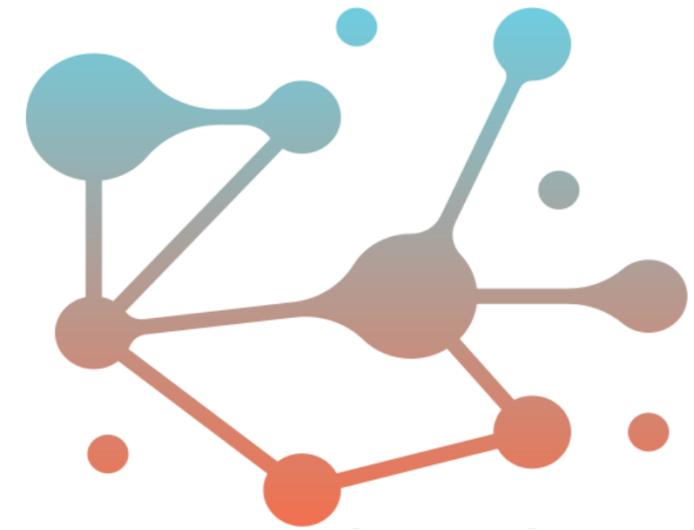
**Welcoming  
actions**

**Integration  
Activities**

**Spiritual  
Rooting**

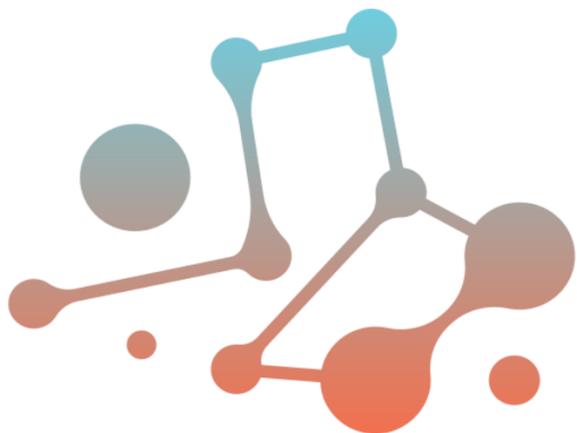
**Ongoing  
Support**

# Practical Steps for Retention



## 4. Ongoing Support

- Monthly check-ins and spiritual health surveys.
- Annual recognition of new members and their mentors.
- Leadership and ministry involvement for maturing members.



# Spiritual Challenges

## DOCTRINAL DOUBTS

### Problem

New members may have limited or confused understanding of fundamental Adventist beliefs

### Solution:

- Interactive Bible studies to clarify doctrines
- Orientation classes to deepen understanding of fundamental beliefs
- Use of the Sabbath School guide to strengthen doctrinal understanding.

# Spiritual Challenges

## SPIRITUAL DISCOURAGEMENT

### Problem

Personal struggles, family or social opposition, and unmet expectations can lead to feelings of discouragement.

### Solution:

- Weekly prayer groups to encourage and support members
- Spiritual mentoring to provide personalized guidance and active listening

# Spiritual Challenges

## SOCIAL ISOLATION

### Problem

New members may feel alone or not integrated into the church community.

### Solution:

- Integration into small groups
- Active participation in Sabbath School classes
- "Adopt a New Member" program where each newcomer is supported by a church family or mentor

# Spiritual Challenges

LACK OF  
SPIRITUAL  
DISCIPLINE

## Problem

Some new members may not have established habits of regular prayer or personal Bible study.

## Solution:

- Provide customized Bible reading plans
- Teach the importance of daily prayer and demonstrate how to structure effective personal devotions

# Spiritual Challenges

CONFUSION  
ABOUT THEIR  
ROLE IN THE  
CHURCH

## Problem

New members may not know how to contribute actively to the church's mission or where they fit within ministry.

## Solution:

- Identify their spiritual gifts through seminars or specific questionnaires
- Integrate them into suitable ministries (welcoming team, choir, evangelism, etc.)

# Spiritual Challenges

## LACK OF FAITHFULNESS IN TITHES AND OFFERINGS

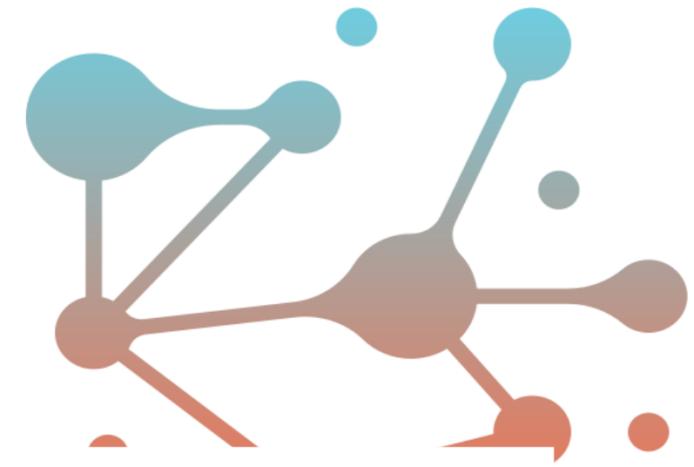
### Problem

New members may not fully understand the spiritual and practical importance of Christian financial stewardship, which can lead to a lack of faithfulness in tithes and offerings.

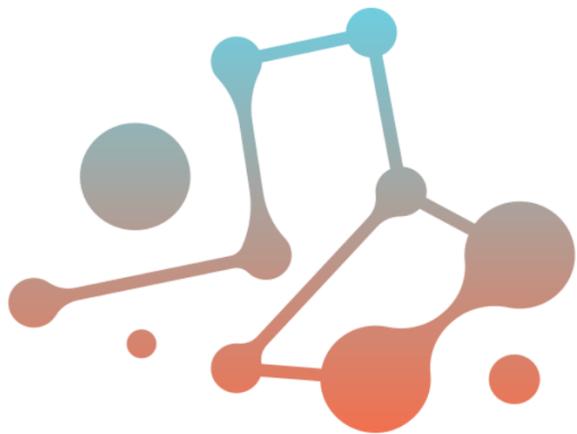
### Solution:

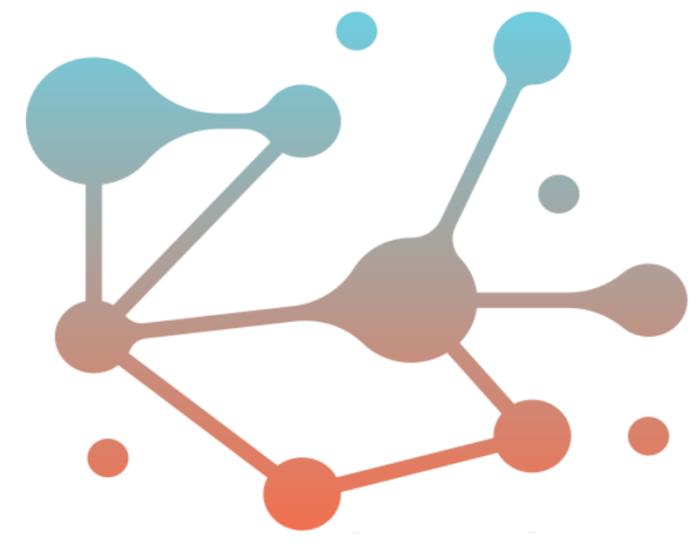
- Teach Christian stewardship principles
- Organize workshops on financial literacy to help members better manage their resources (Manual, p. 20)

# Global™

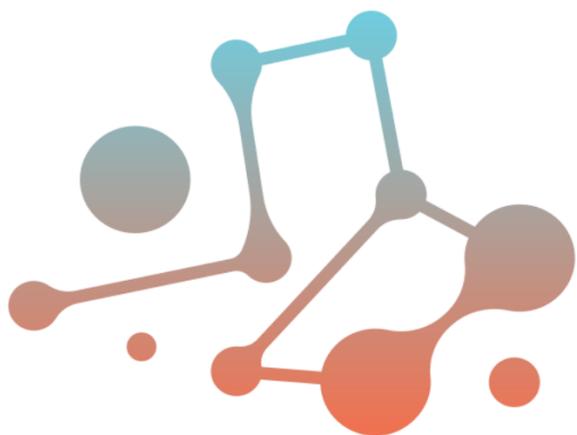


**Global  
Disciple-Making  
Evangelism**

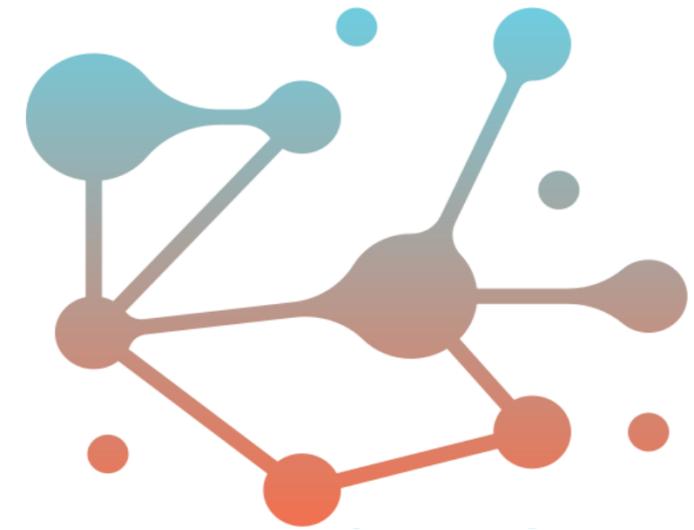




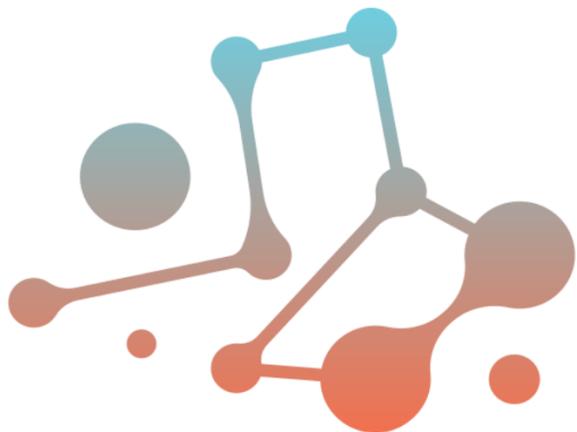
**The Beginning of a Holistic Retention Journey**



# Conclusion & Call to Action



- **Let's keep them**
  - **In our records,**
  - **In our communities,**
  - **In our faith.**
- **Every member is responsible.**
- **“Let's Keep Them – One Soul at a Time.”**



THANK YOU

