

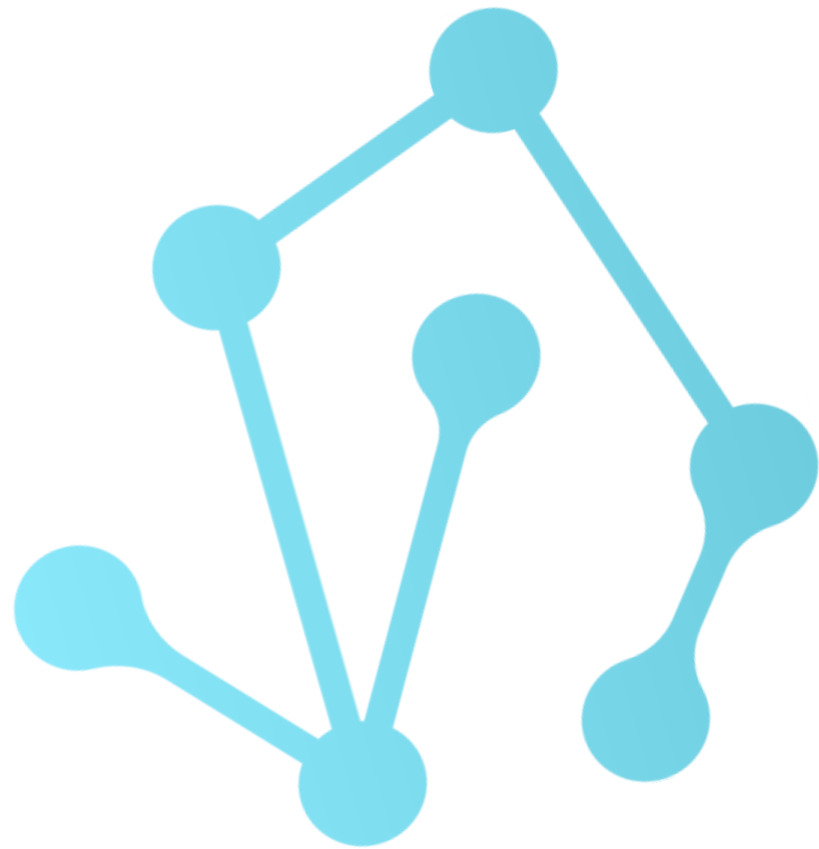
Division-Wide Priority Post WAD Impact 2025

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.

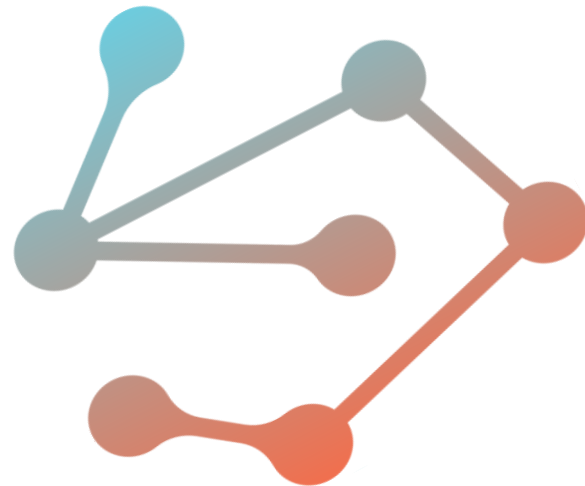
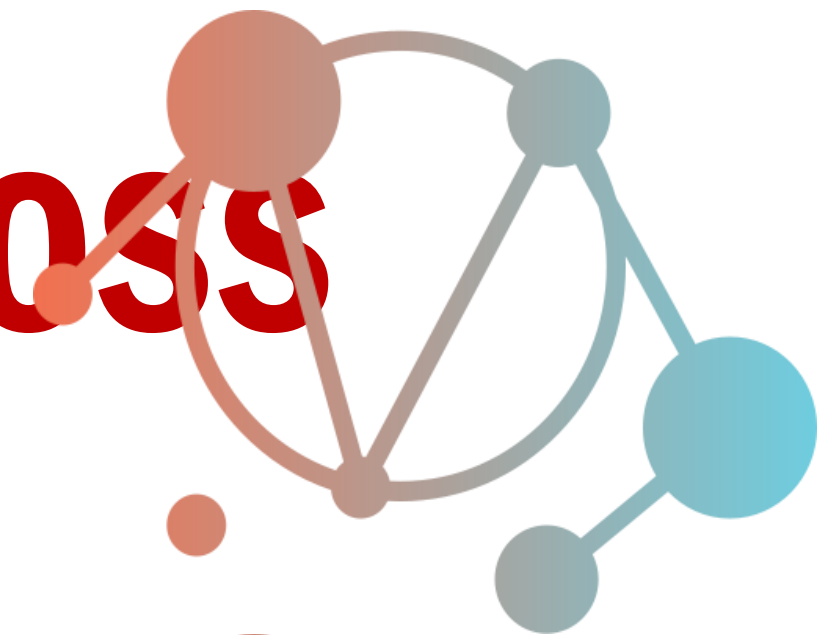
THE RETENTION CRISIS

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

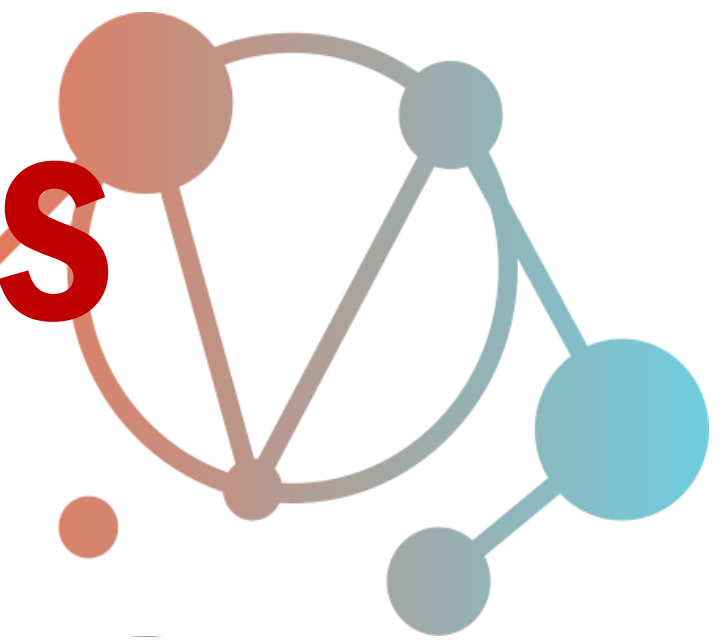


Retention is not optional – it is essential for church health and growth

MAIN SOURCES OF MEMBER LOSS

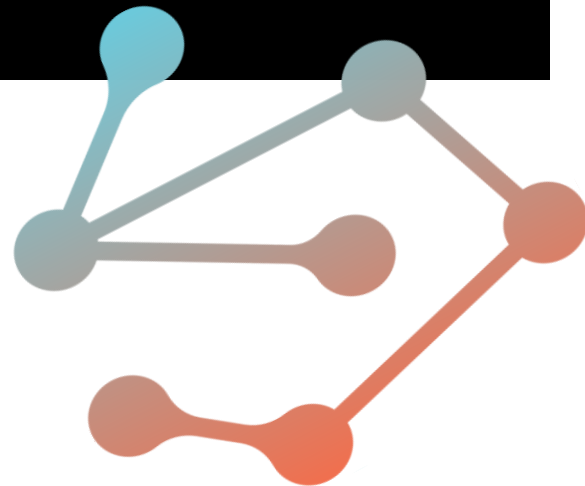


MAIN SOURCES OF MEMBER LOSS



Internal Factors

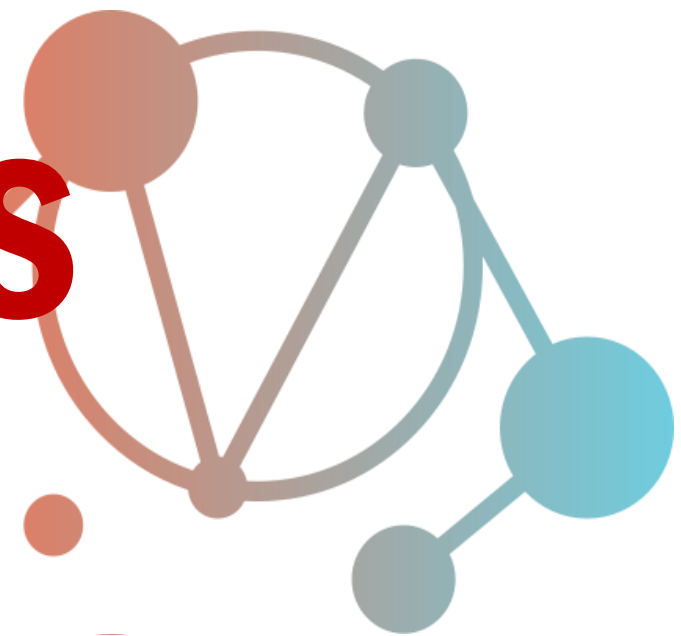
- 1. Pre-Evangelistic Preparation Inadequacy:**
Failure to properly prepare members and sites hinders follow-up and accountability
- 2. Administrative Documentation Deficiency:**
Failure to maintain comprehensive membership records results in institutional memory loss.
- 3. Social Integration Deficit :** 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.

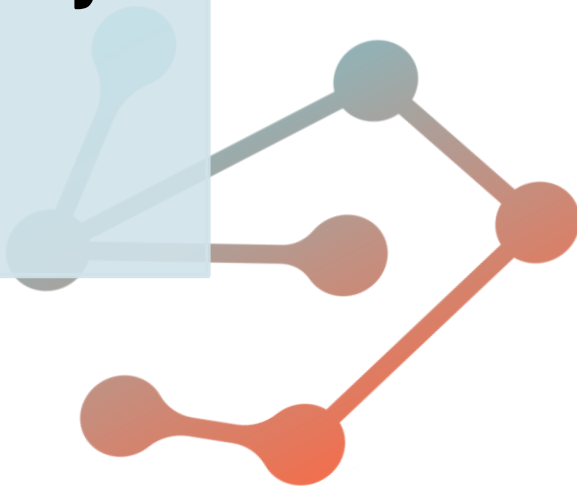
Criticizing church leadership

- 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.

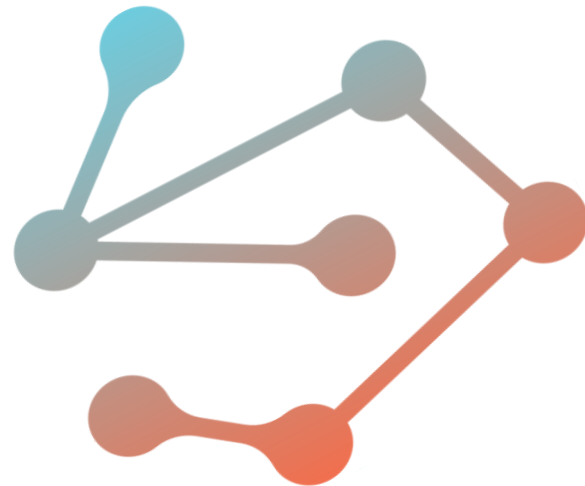
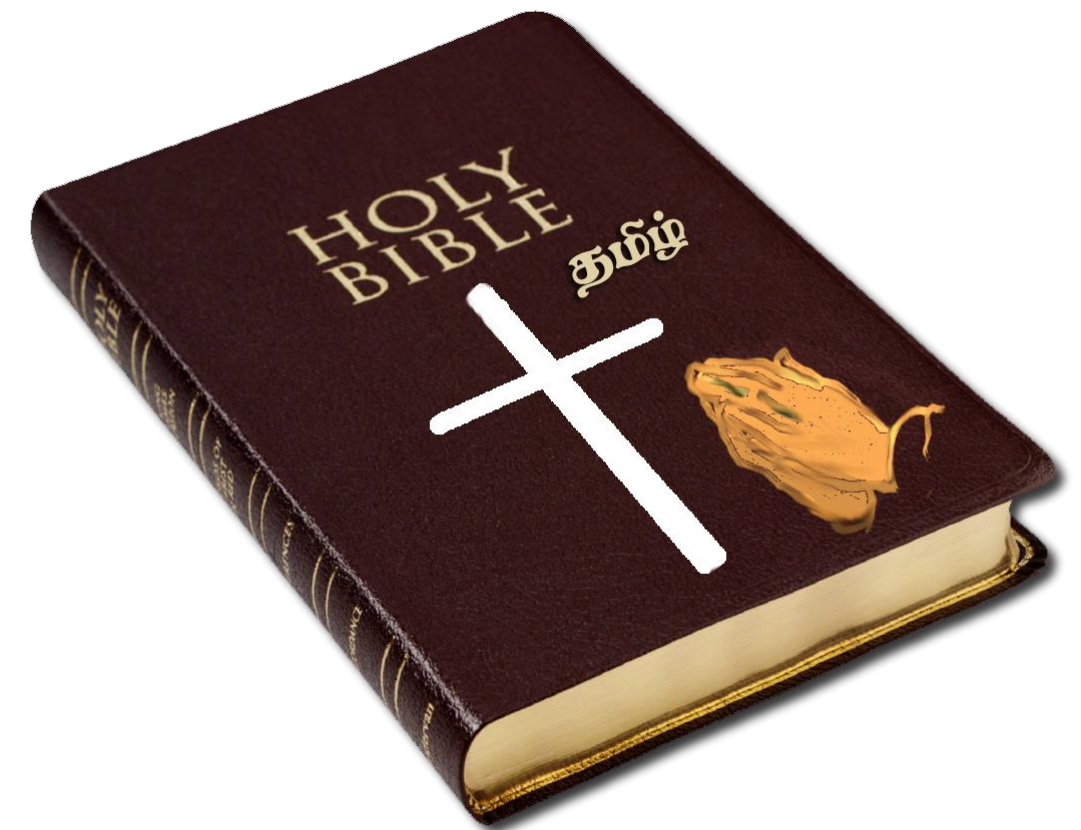
Complaints about doctrinal rigidity

- 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

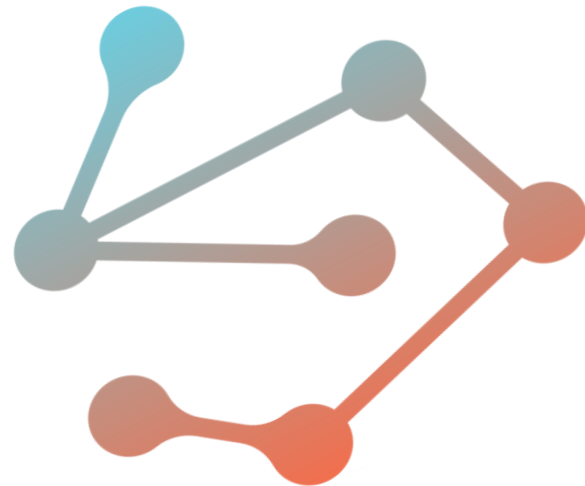
- **Matthew 28:19-20:** The Great Commission includes baptism and ongoing teaching.
- **Acts 2:42-47:** Early church grew through fellowship, breaking bread, prayer, and doctrinal instruction.
- **Hebrews 10:24-25:** Encouragement and gathering are essential for spiritual growth.



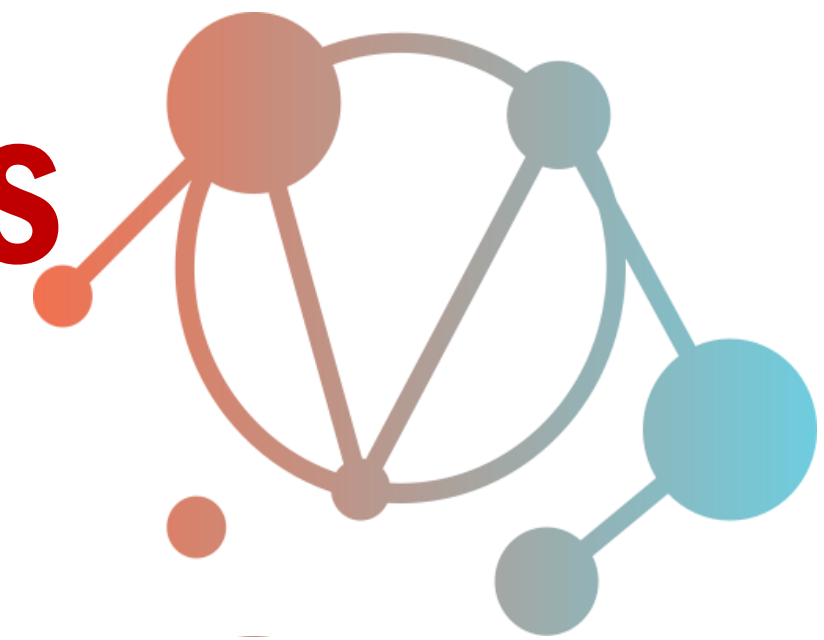
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS



- **“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**

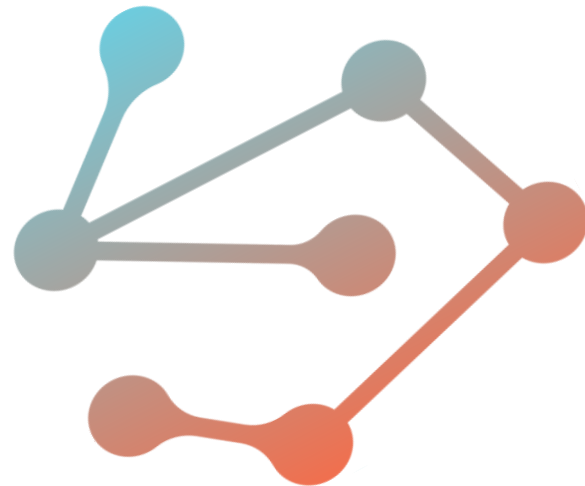


BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

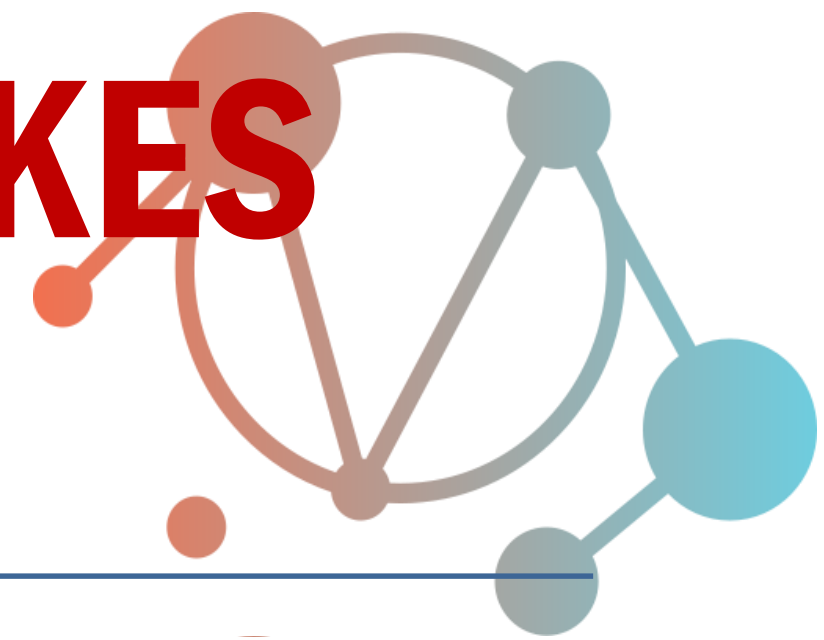


➤ “... they need to be educated in regard to their duties; to be kindly dealt with, to be led along, to be visited and prayed with.

(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

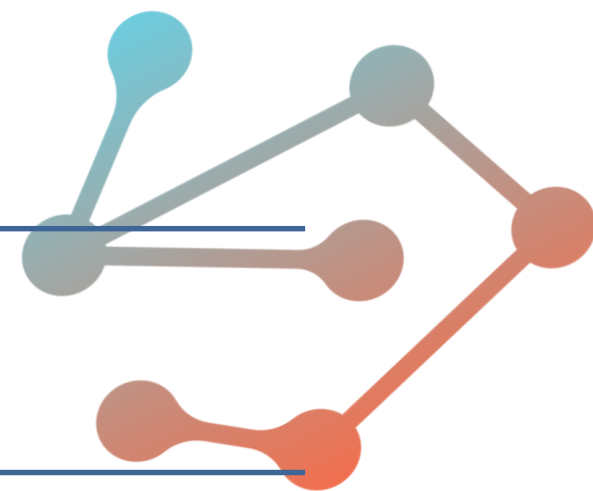
People leave when they feel invisible or unneeded

Lack of mentorship

Stunts spiritual growth, no guidance, weak faith formation

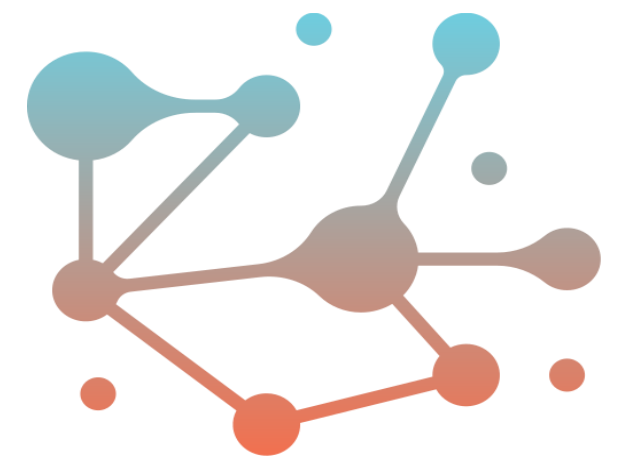
**No Bible/doctrinal
teaching**

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

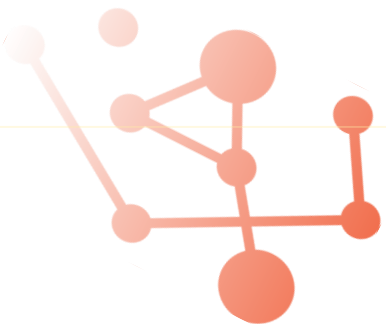
3 months - 1 year

- Frequent doubts if answers are unclear.

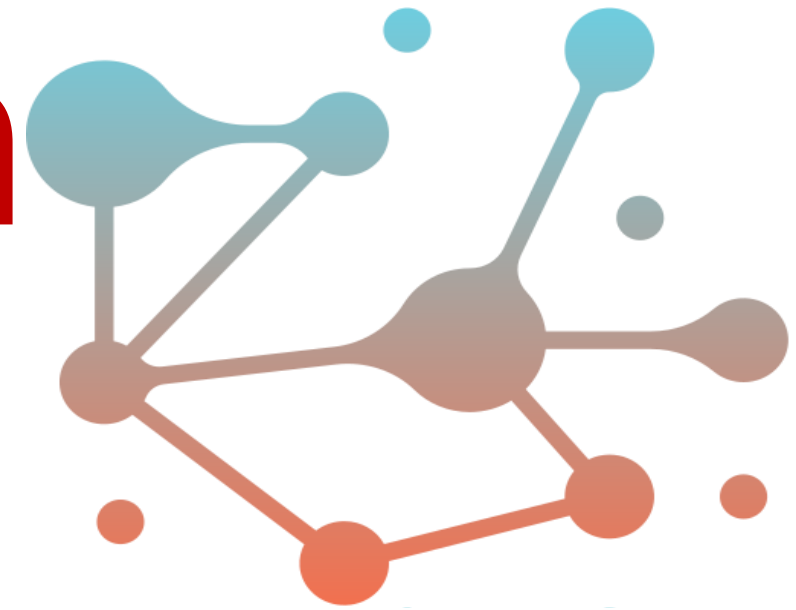
Initial excitement

0 - 3 months

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



The Process of Spiritual Growth

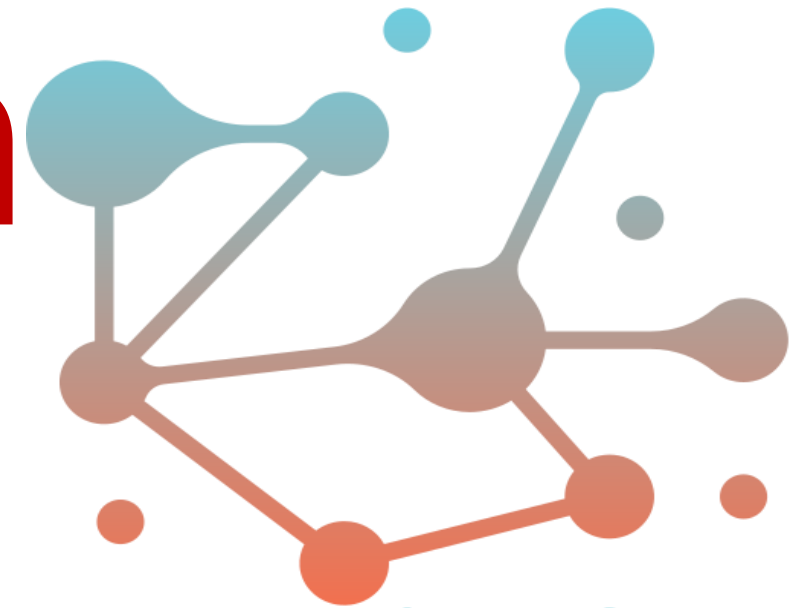


Phase 1: Foundation (0 to 3 months)

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

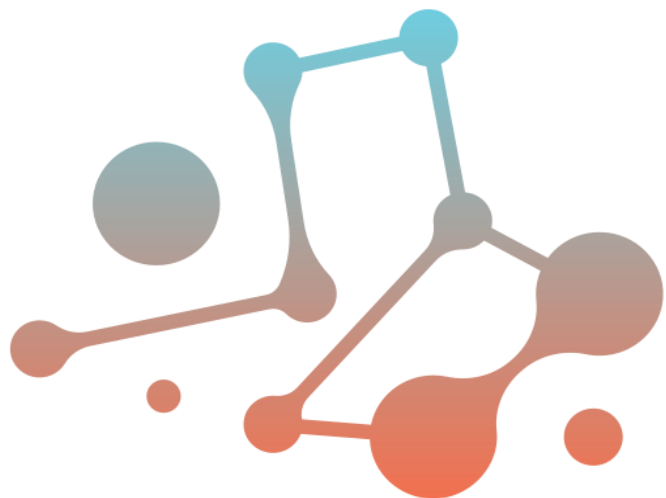


The Process of Spiritual Growth

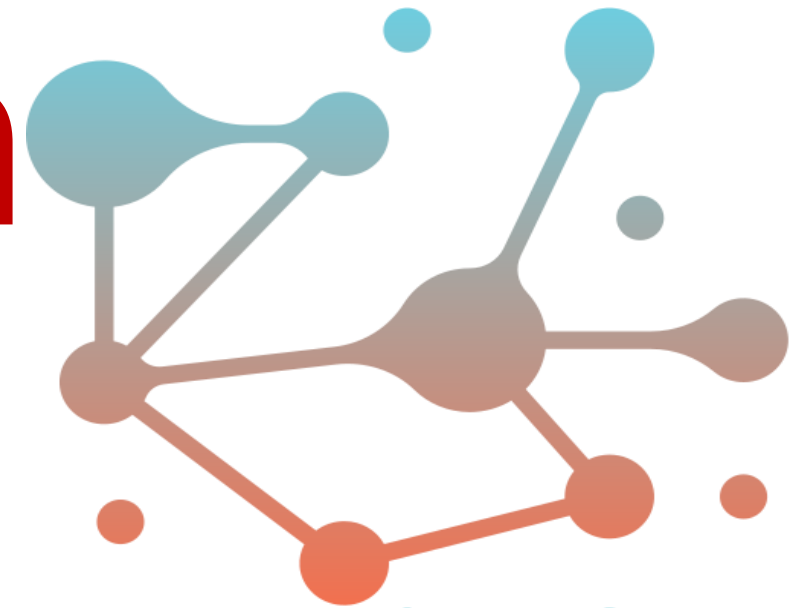


Phase 2: Maturity (3 to 6 months)

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

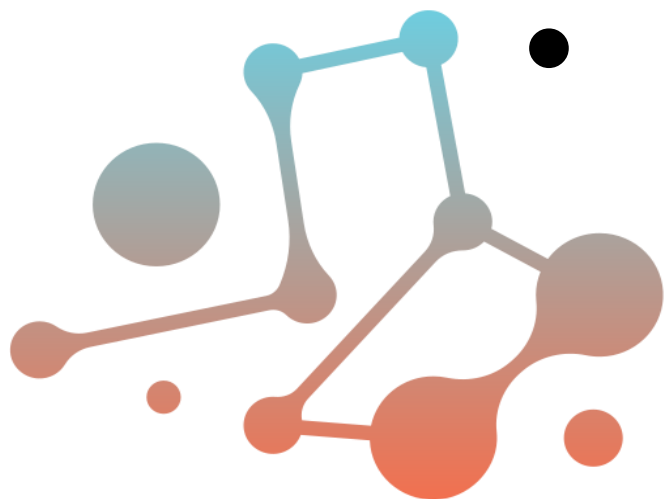


The Process of Spiritual Growth

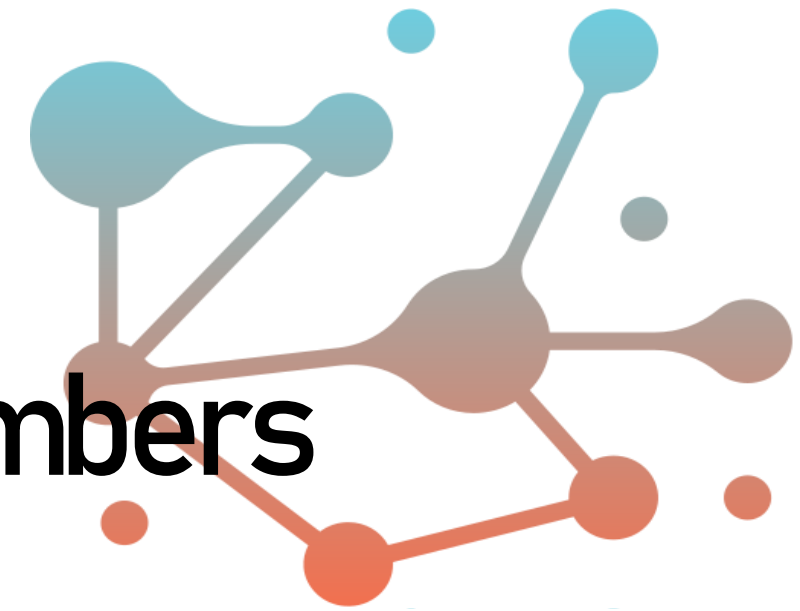


Phase 3: Rooting (6–12 months)

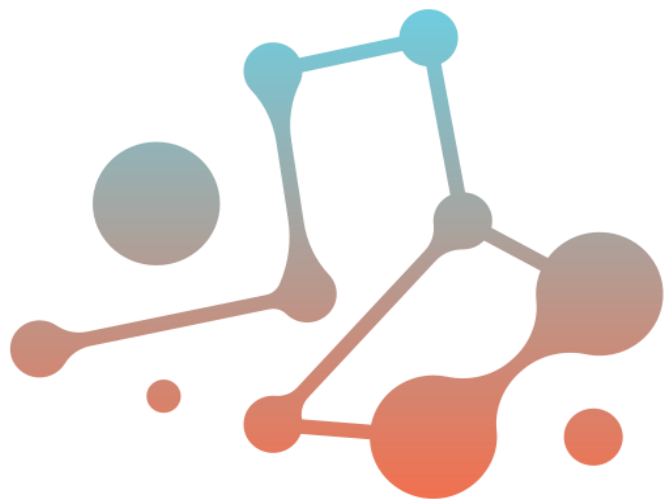
- Weekly Bible studies and prayer meetings.
- Involvement in church service and outreach.
- Personal devotional life: prayer, journaling, Bible reading.



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.

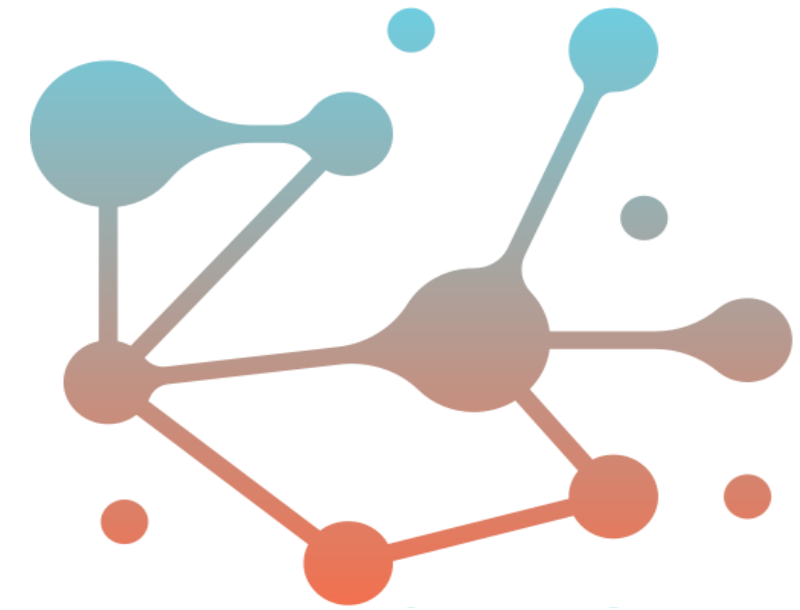


Practical Steps for Retention



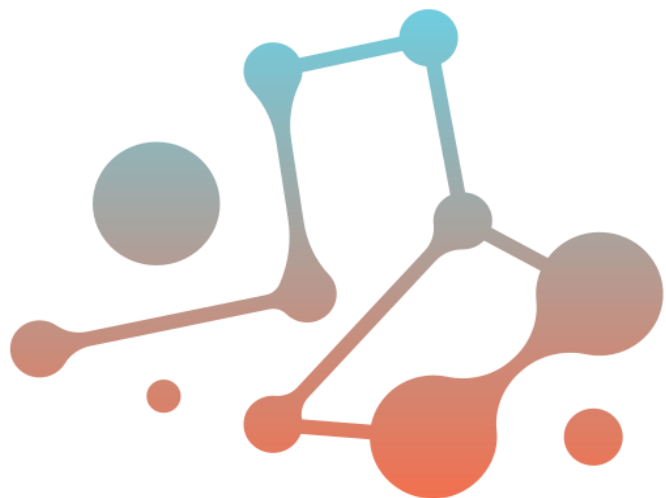
Welcoming
actions

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.



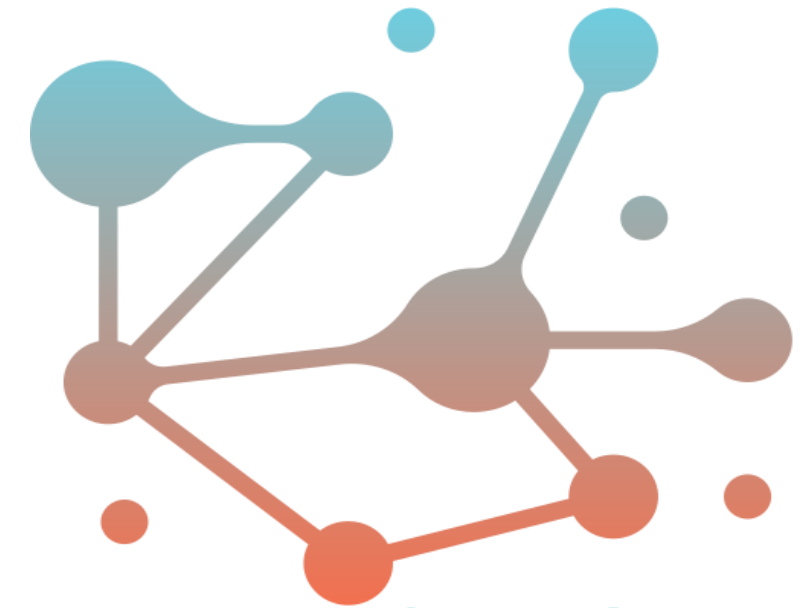
Practical Steps for Retention



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

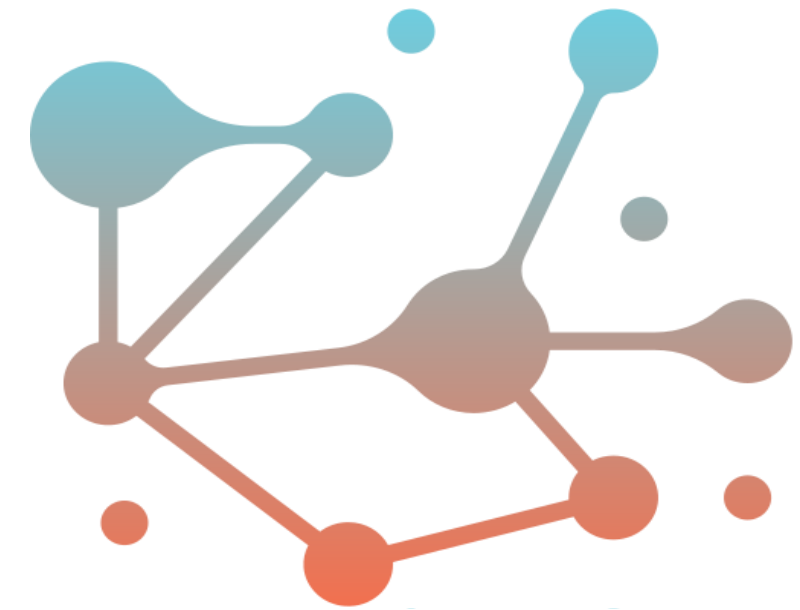


Welcoming
actions

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



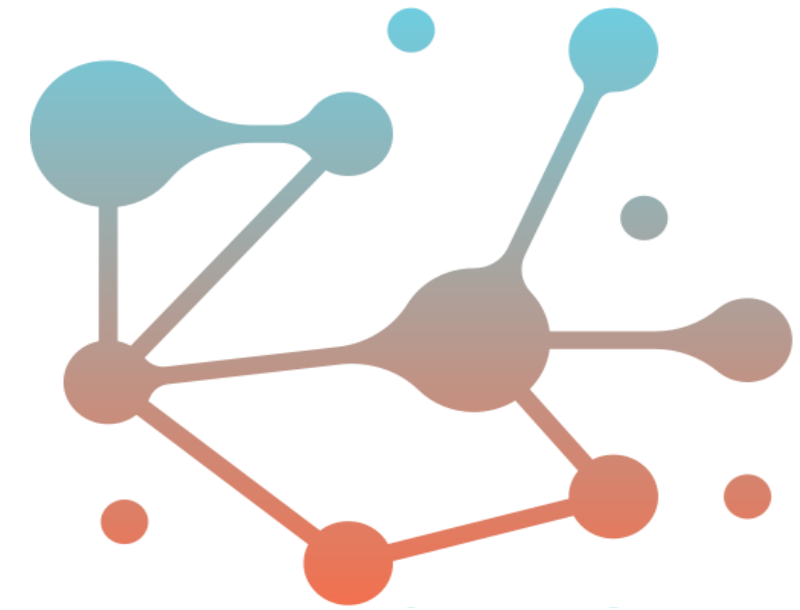
**Welcoming
actions**

**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

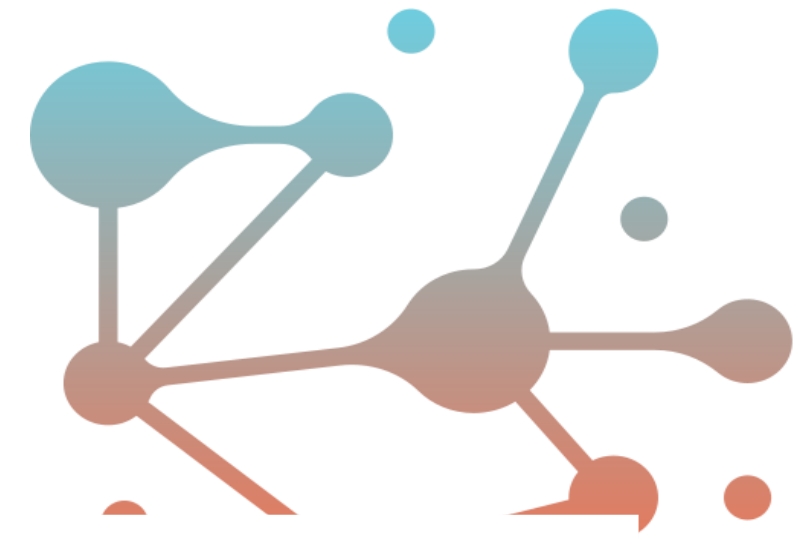
Problem

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.

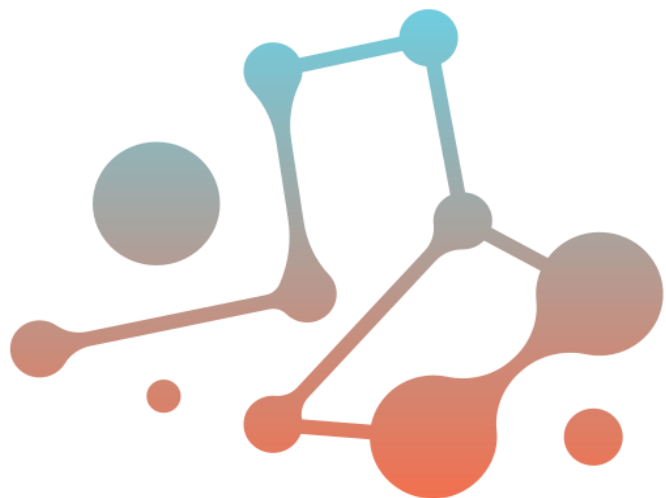
Solution:

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

Global TM



**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

