



## TELL THE WORLD: PERSONAL OUTREACH

February 7, 2015

### Sabbath School Program: “Running” a Great Outreach Project

*Outreach is an integral part of any vital and growing Sabbath School. And one of the byproducts of a strong outreach program in Sabbath School is a warmer and more vibrant sense of fellowship. The mutual planning and execution of service to the community will inevitably bring Sabbath School members together in a very effective way.*

*An emphasis on evangelism may include selfless and disinterested service or it may include a more directly “evangelistic” witnessing approach. Or it may consist of a project that is some combination of both. Above all it should employ the specific gifts of the Sabbath School members.*

Open the Sabbath School program by calling on a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 25:24, 25: “The man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you’” (Matt. 25:24-25, NIV).

Share the following story and comment with the Sabbath School:

Britain’s Chris Stewart, third-place finisher in the 1976 and 1977 New York City marathons, ran a half marathon in Slovenia in 1991. Shortly thereafter he heard about people living in small Croatian towns that had been cut off from international aid. “People were dying from simple infections,” Stewart said, “because they had no antibiotics.”

So, rather than calling a press conference or conducting a fund-raiser or organizing a protest, Chris Stewart decided to get *directly* involved by investing his talent in running. He strapped a pouch to his waist stuffed with medical supplies and ran across battle lines into Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. On at least three occasions Stewart braved snipers and artillery to carry life-saving materials to hospitals and clinics in the war-torn area.

Although we all have at least one talent, unless it is preaching or teaching, too often we get discouraged because we don’t see any direct connection between the abilities God has given us and service for Him. *How can I use my talent to serve God, we may wonder, in baking cookies or writing poems or shooting free throws or playing guitar?*

The answer may not be immediately obvious, but if you consider thoughtfully the immediate needs of the people in our own community and truly dedicate your talent to God’s work, He will help you find a creative way to share it. This is what Chris Stewart did: he noticed that people in his community were cut off from medical supplies, and he personally dedicated his talent—running—to address that need. As the parable of the talents shows, God is counting on you to invest your talent in some kind of service—even if it’s the only one He’s given you.

Sometimes a Sabbath School feels that it isn’t particularly qualified to serve its local community. But God has gifted each Sabbath School with talents and resources that are available to no one else. Here is a way for a Sabbath School to begin to address its role in outreach—service and witness—to its surrounding community.

As a Sabbath School group, brainstorm a list of all the people groups in your community. Write this in a vertical column on a chalkboard or flip chart, allowing space to the right of the listing for further notation. After compiling the list, discuss each group, noting in the blank space what the church is doing to reach each one. Be specific.

Are some groups being overlooked or neglected? Generate ideas for reaching them. What do we know about their needs, culture, language, history, national experience? What can our class do to reach at least one group beyond our own ethnicity or culture?

Discuss the following questions:

- What information can we gather about other people groups so that we can be an effective instrument in God's hands for sharing the gospel?
- How can we get this information?
- With what spiritual gifts, skills, and natural abilities has God blessed our Sabbath School that can be devoted to serving others?
- Why have certain groups in our community been overlooked?
- How can our Sabbath School cultivate the seed of Christian witness?

At this point, encourage the Sabbath School to become very practical and plan an actual outreach project—service or witness—for its local community. Adopt a project, set goals, make personal assignments, and close with a prayer of blessing on efforts to put the project into effect.

### **Musical Selections**

*Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*

375—"Work, for the Night Is Coming"

617—"Rise Up, O Church of God"

*Church Hymnal*

279—"Live Out They Life Within Me"

521—"Jesus Calls Us"

**Note:** This program focuses specifically on outreach, only one of the four essential elements of Sabbath School, also to include fellowship, Bible study and world mission. Be sure that this program fits into a balance of all four in your Sabbath School.