PERSONAL OUTREACH AND ITS RELEVANCE IN THE END TIME
(Sermon)
February 4, 2023
Edward A. Smith Charles, MAPM
Youth Director Southwest Belize Mission
Inter-American Division

One of the biggest mistakes we can make is to separate the gospel from service to others, making “Personal Outreach” a secondary role. We forget that when Christ was among us, He not only forgave sinners, but He preached repentance and cast out demons. He also multiplied the loaves and fishes to feed multitudes, helped the needy, healed the sick, and raised the dead.

Community service and participating in activities to reach out to other people have their basis from Eden, as we can see in the book of Genesis when it says:

“Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’ And God said, ‘See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food’ ” (Genesis 1:28, 29).

From this text, we understand two things: First, God established work long before man sinned. Sister White says in this regard:

“God gave to our first parents the means of true education when He instructed them to till the soil and care for their garden home. After sin came in, through disobedience to the Lord's requirements, the work to be done in cultivating the ground was greatly multiplied, for the earth, because of the curse, brought forth weeds and thistles. But the employment itself was not given because of sin. The great Master Himself blessed the work of tilling the soil” (2SM 355).

Working does not only imply the personal or family benefit that we can obtain. It is also our responsibility to teach others the biblical concept of work for personal and collective development.

Second, personal outreach is an integral biblical mandate. When we separate the gospel from personal work, we make community service an empty humanitarian work. The same happens when we pay attention to only supplying our own spiritual needs, as we will forget to help our neighbor, the needy, the orphan, and the widow.
Purpose: Therefore, it is the purpose of this sermon to show the relevance of personal outreach and how important it is, knowing that we live in a very solemn time of the final plot of this world.

Allow me to present four principles of Personal Outreach:

**First Principle: “Personal Outreach” is to glorify the name of God.**

Jesus is our ultimate example of how we are to live on this earth, since He focused His ministry on the needs of people. In Luke 4:17-19, Jesus makes His first public statement of what His life and ministry are all about. Verse 17 records that He “found the place,” so it was not an accidental selection. Verses 18-19 affirm the divine anointing of His work and state several purposes or goals: “to proclaim good news to the poor … to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free….”

He is reading from Isaiah 61. It is a passage that refers to God’s intention to establish a Kingdom for His people in which there will be no more poverty, injustice, violence, sickness, unhappiness, or despair. However, the economically poor are not the only ones who have needs that God’s people can address. All populations—poor, middle class, and wealthy—must be served.

As we live in this sin-broken world, we are called to reflect through restored relationships—both with one another and with creation—the glory of God, so that what Jesus said is fulfilled: “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16, ESV).

**Second Principle: “Personal Outreach” is doing something for Jesus.**

It is easy to get sidetracked from the true purpose of personal outreach. When our understanding is limited to doing something to feel good about ourselves, or to receive in return some personal benefit for the work done, it turns “personal outreach” into something meaningless or simply a social task.

The love of Jesus Christ in our lives will make us interested in helping others—to give love, to try to do good, to believe that when I do something for another, I am doing that work for Jesus.

The context of Matthew 24 and 25 talks about the signs of the time of the end. Its parables are relevant in the study before the Second Coming of Christ. It is striking that Jesus, to the group of the redeemed, will say to them: “Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40, KJV). This is a result of all that they had done for the benefit of others while they were in difficult situations.
A healthy, Spirit-driven congregation does not wait passively for people to approach the church and its activities, but proactively approaches the surrounding community and the world at large. It works intentionally, as Christ did, to mingle with the people, to show them sympathy, and to minister to their needs. (Ellen White in Ministry of Healing, p. 143.)

**Third Principle: “Personal Outreach” is sacrificial giving.**

When the congregation is asked to bring food or clothing for the community, more than one may think: “But I am the one in need,” “I want them to help me,” or “Let only those who can give participate”. In the Bible, we see several examples of activities that were done in the midst of some difficult situations, such as the collection of money prescribed in 1 Corinthians 16. The model we see in this passage is not that of a wealthy person giving to another who has no money, but rather we observe Christians giving sacrificially of what God had provided for them,—even amid their scarcity—to bless the one who had less or nothing.

And just as the Lord emptied Himself for them, the early Christians gave all of themselves, not according to their income, but according to the gift of Christ they had received!

We must give of our time to listen to others who need to be heard. We need to love. To give love. To spend time with others. To give our friendship. To tell them about Jesus.

**Fourth Principle: “Personal Outreach” is teaching others to work.**

In the Old Testament, there is a story about a famine. Elisha told the woman whose son had risen from the dead to go and live where she could. She followed Elisha’s directions and for seven years went to live in the land of the Philistines. At the end of the seven years, she decided to return to plead with the king for her house and her land. Gehazi, Elisha’s servant, who was there at the time, confirmed to the king that she was the woman whose son, Elisha, was raised. She told the king her story, and immediately the king ordered an officer to “Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now” (2 Kings 8:6, KJV).

Instead of Elisha supporting the woman for that period of time, he advised her to leave. And when she returned, she had all the words she needed to talk to the king and recover her belongings.

We should help people, but we should also give them tools and advice so that they can support themselves. We must enable individuals to use all the gifts that God has given them.

This is a facet of our integral mission as children of God, which we must not ignore or relegate to a secondary plane. Rather, as Jesus exhorted us, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).
Conclusion:

Personal Outreach is even more relevant as we approach the Second Coming of Christ. We must glorify God with our actions; whatever we do, we must do it for Jesus; c) we must give sacrificially; and we must not only help people but empower them.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Belize organized a plan to carry out various activities for the community. One of the activities consisted of giving a plate of food to people in need. There was a young man who did not belong to the Adventist faith, but when he heard about the work that would be done, he joined the group of volunteers. The young man told the pastor of the local church, “These are the activities I like to do, a church that serves and loves others.” The young man saw the fervor in the brotherhood and his desire to serve arose. Soon after, he decided to study the Bible and then took his step of faith for baptism. Helping serve others, teaching them to work, being like Jesus, and more, especially when we know that Jesus is coming soon, are the qualities of effective personal outreach.

So, I ask you: Why is social action so important to Adventists who believe that Christ will come soon to rescue us from the problems in society? Because it is a living witness to our soon-returning Lord. When we take a stand for justice, compassion, and healing, we demonstrate the values of the coming Kingdom.

I invite you to stand up and offer all the gifts and talents God has given you to serve and help others. Let the Church organize action plans and let the world know us for the love we have for others.

Maranatha! Christ is coming soon.