

A Case for HOUSE CHURCHES

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SDA HOUSE CHURCHES

A CHALLENGING OPPORTUNITY

- **Ellen White** predicted in 1911:
“At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His Word.”
- **Billy Graham** warns¹ in 1965:
“... we may witness the spectacle of millions of Christians going outside the institutional church to find spiritual food.”
- **George Barna** research confirms in 2005:
“Well over 20 million have left the church to ‘go find God.’”
- **Josh Packard** research documents in 2015:
“Approximately 104 million (33%) have left the church.”
- **Alan Hirsch** publishes:
“Of 318 million Americans, 208 million (about 60%) are not interested in walking into the front doors of a conventional church.”

As people embrace Westernized values, the decline of conventional church attendance will sweep the globe.

Already impacted is the Global North, with one exception; first and second-generation immigrants coming from the Global South bring with them a strong church attendance value. But by the third generation, they have typically embraced Westernized church values and disconnected from the conventional church.³ Urban centers of the Global South are also beginning to see the effects of Western church trends among their young people.

THE ULTIMATE QUESTION

AS HOUSE CHURCHES GAIN POPULARITY, denominational leaders must decide how they will respond to this trend. In general, denominations either (1) reject, (2) cosmetically adopt, or (3) wholeheartedly recognize and uphold Christ’s commission to believers to do all the work of disciple-making.²

According to a news release from the Office of Adventist Mission at the denomination’s General Conference, the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination has voted house church planting as a viable means to reach today’s mission fields “at a time when many view the traditional church negatively.”³



6 REASONS FOR EMBRACING

House Churches are:

- Sustainable
- Exponentially reproducible
- Missionally effective
- Cost-effective
- A timely opportunity to share the Everlasting Gospel
- Here to stay

A THOUGHTFUL EMBRACE

WORLD-RENOWN AUTHOR AND LEADERSHIP EXPERT John Kotter, in his book *Accelerate XLR8*, describes and showcases a way forward, what he calls a dual-operation system. This model⁴ provides a thoughtful embrace. Kotter’s summary: Don’t try to change the current “church” system. Write policy that will make way for a dual-operating system where both systems serve the same mission and message of the church — using different paradigms.

CONCLUSIONS

IT IS STILL EARLY TO ACCURATELY DETERMINE whether the Adventist Denomination will cosmetically adopt house churches or wholeheartedly re-empower the laity to do all the work of disciple-making.⁵

With the church adopting as its motto “I Will Go,”⁶ there will likely be an increase of committed and Gospel Commissioned laypeople who start house churches for the purpose of including secular and unchurched friends and neighbors who will no longer walk into a conventional church building.

REFERENCES

1. <https://www.simplechurchathome.com/billy-grahams-warning/> (Accessed May 3, 2022)
2. <https://atoday.org/what-about-a-house-church/> (Accessed May 3, 2022)
3. <https://www.adventistmission.org/adventist-leaders-tout-house-churches-as-way-to-reach-non-christians> (Accessed May 3, 2022)
4. With one essential modification unique to denominational settings which is outside the scope of this poster board.
5. Matthew 28:18-20, also see JAMS articles: *Who Gave you Authority to Baptize?* <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jams/vol14/iss1/10/>, and *Window Shopping and Turf Control* <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jams/vol13/iss2/13> (Accessed May 3, 2022)
6. <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2020/10/Demographics-and-the-future-of-the-church> (Accessed May 3, 2022)

Since inception in 2009*

52%

of house church attendance
has been secular or unchurched.

*Statistics taken from the SimpleChurchAtHome.com Network.