

Chapter 15

Do You Know You Have a Mission— To Make Disciples?

“For I have chosen him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice; in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.” Genesis 18:19

Take a seat here next to me. I know. I’m talking in a whisper because the professor is already at the lectern. I asked you to meet me in this classroom today because I wanted you to hear someone explain what our next conversation is about. Oh, listen. He’s ready to speak.

Welcome to Administration 321: Long Range Planning. I’m delighted that so many of you in the administrative track have chosen to take this course. It is one of the areas that is sorely lacking in today’s business world. So many in administration are so busy in their get-everything-done-now world that they forget to think about *what* it is they

are going to do, *how* they are going to do it, and *why* they are going to do it—long-term planning.

So today we will start on the most basic of levels. I want to start where I know some of you are already comfortable and knowledgeable, and I’m going to assume that you know nothing at all about planning.

Let me write this simple model on the white board: Why, What, How.

Why: Why do you—and your colleagues, assuming you have colleagues who are helping you with your enterprise—want to do this thing that you are setting out to do? What is it that you and your colleagues so firmly believe, hold in

common, and have faith in that makes you think you could all work together in this common task?

To say it simply, what is your common value set? What values do you share with each other? Okay, that's the "why" question.

What: What is it that you are going to do? What enterprise are you about to undertake? Describe it in as few words as possible, as simply as possible, so that it can be perfectly clear to everyone.

To say it simply, what is your mission? Some don't like the over use of that word, so let's ask, what is the main task you have set for yourselves? That's the "what" question.

How: How will you accomplish this task? What specific steps will you take to get where you want to go? Write them down. Number them in logical order. Make sure they flow from one to the next and that they focus on accomplishing the task. This is your blueprint for every plan and every program that you will come up with to accomplish your task.

Remember, if it has nothing to do with the task, that is, the mission, if it does not get you to where you are trying to go, if it sidetracks you from your goal, don't do it. It's not part of the "how."

To say it simply, list three or four consecutive, focused steps that you and your colleagues will take together—that means you all have to agree on these steps—that will get you to where you want to go. That's the "how" question.

This is the beginning of any long-range business plan. If you don't know the principles that make up your value set, if you don't know the task you are trying to accomplish, and if you don't have a focused plan for accomplishing this task, everything you do will be, at best, just busy work, and at worst, a disastrous waste of time and resources.

Okay. Let's sneak out the back way. You've heard the part I wanted you to hear. We'll talk more when we get back to our comfortable chairs.

That class is focused on training young, soon-to-be executives on how to do long-range planning. In the days that follow the professor will present more specifics and will assign lots of practical work involving SWOT charts and various Rates of Return. I know because I took that class. But it was the introduction that I wanted you to hear, the basics laid out on the first day of class—the Why, the What, and the How.

And I wanted you to hear that presentation because ...?

Now we have come to the practical, how-to of our discussion for our organization—the Seventh-day Adventist Church, God's visible Remnant at the Time of the End. Do you know the Why and the What and the How?

Why: Do you know the common values that bind our church together so that we can work together to accomplish our task? **What:** Do you know what the task is that the Remnant is supposed to accomplish? **How:** Do you know the plan—that we must all agree on—which has been put in place to accomplish our task?

Yes, I'm giving you a test. We've been through a lot of conversations together, enough for you to begin to assemble some answers to these questions. What is the "why" for the Seventh-day Adventist Church? What are the values that we all hold in common? Think back over the first five or six discussions—about being a Beloved Saint, about being in a Covenant Grace-Faith Relationship, about the biblical teachings that not only make us a Christian, but also make us Seventh-day Adventists. We, as a church, have codified these basic values, gleaning them from Scripture. We call them our 28 Fundamental Beliefs. They embody the values that we, as a church, hold in common and form the basis for our ability to function cooperatively together.

Now don't be confused. These 28 Fundamental Beliefs are not the "why." However, they are our best attempt so far to write in human language