

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PEOPLE ARE DISENGAGING FROM FAITH-SHARING AND EVANGELISM (1.3.)

Adherence to Christianity is declining across the globe, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not immune to this trend. This is partially caused by widespread disengagement from faith-sharing and evangelism. While external factors like secularism are partially to blame, little research has been done into the impact of internal beliefs and attitudes of church members, until now.

This study seeks to answer the following question *“How can we better resource and train church members to increase their engagement and participation in faith sharing and evangelism?”* by conducting surveys, focus groups, and referencing existing data sources.

WHILE RESOURCES AND TRAINING ARE USEFUL, INVESTING IN THESE ALONE WILL NOT INCREASE ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION WITH FAITH-SHARING AND EVANGELISM (2.2.)

The first part of this research aimed to measure the value and use of existing resources within the Adventist Church. Across most categories, it was found that there are plenty of resources, but that these are poorly organised and difficult to find. Nevertheless, church members generally are happy to share both physical and digital resources with others.

RATHER THAN INVESTING IN RESOURCES ALONE, STAKEHOLDERS SHOULD IMPROVE EVANGELISM STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY LOCAL CHURCHES BY IMPLEMENTING A CULTURE OF EVANGELISM (COE) (3.1.)

While COE models are often promoted by church administration, research revealed a widespread lack of uptake at a grass-roots level. In fact, up to 75% of church members across Australia reported that their church

had either no COE or an ineffective COE in place, or they weren't aware whether their church had one or not. As explored in Section 3, problems arising from a lack of COE include a lack of motivation or involvement from church members (3.1.1.), a lack of prayer and direction from the Holy Spirit (3.1.2.) and a lack of community focus among churches generally (3.1.3.).

IN ADDITION TO IMPROVING THEIR STRATEGY TO INCREASE FAITH-SHARING AND EVANGELISM, LOCAL CHURCHES MUST ADDRESS THE INTERNAL ATTITUDES OF THEIR MEMBERS (3.2.)

While strategy has major impact on the effectiveness of faith-sharing and evangelism, so do the internal attitudes of church members. Importantly, survey respondents gave their local churches, on average, a net promoter score (NPS) of zero, meaning that they do not regard their church as worthy of promotion.

Further, research revealed that negative assumptions about the public's response to faith-sharing—including fears about being pushy—may actively inhibit both church members and leaders from sharing their faith. Finally, a lack of clarity around Adventism's unique value proposition (UVP), as well as a lack of intimate relationships, may be discouraging members from sharing their faith and inviting people to church.

AMONG OTHER STEPS, THIS REPORT MAKES TWO MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCREASE FAITH-SHARING AND EVANGELISM:

- Invest in updating and organising existing resources for faith-sharing and evangelism.
- Conduct further research into the role and uptake of COE's in Adventist churches across Australia, to more accurately measure opportunities and challenges in this space.