

## **Report for the Summit on Nurture and Retention 2013**

Preparing mature disciples is the ideal that God has for everyone that is part of His chosen people. After all, we do not want to only have baptized or registered members in a church, but instead, we want disciples that will be able to live a full and productive life on Earth, and thus become citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The concept and philosophy of discipleship has been lost over the years, and nowadays, rescuing it is no longer an option for the Seventh-day Adventist Church; it is a necessity! Healthy churches prioritize their process of discipleship and they do it in a simple manner.

Our church has been growing rapidly, and every year, thousands of people are added to our books. In the South American Division alone, more than 1.3 million people came to our church through baptism or profession of faith over the last 6 years. Over this same period of time, we lost about 20% of these members to apostasy and desertion.

We know that there are many challenges, but we are taking big steps in the process of discipleship.

There are at least 4 reasons that have contributed for a more sustainable growth in our territory:

1. (first). The strong involvement of the church with mission work. Particularly, the vision of integrated evangelism, when all the areas and institutions are involved in the mission.
2. (second ). An improvement in the process of preparation for baptisms. We are looking for quantity but are also concerned with quality.
3. (third ). The growth of small groups networks. Today, we have more than 70.000 small groups in our territory that function as structures for pastoring and give new converts a sense of belonging;
4. (fourth ). Intentional investment in the belief of discipleship has been the foundation of our actions. Here, we can point out the cycle of discipleship

that works alongside the Sabbath schools, having specific classes for new converts, as a way to deepen their knowledge and to help them achieve their potential as true missionaries. The cycle of discipleship, also includes specific Sabbath School lessons for new converts, to establish a route development.

In the South American Division we want to build a church of true disciples, which is united to save and serve.

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