

# I WAS A STRANGER

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Hospitality Maximiser – Rob Steed

<http://robsteed.ning.com>

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# 2011 AUSTRALIAN CENSUS

14%

Growth since 2006



A large, diverse crowd of people is gathered for a public event. Many individuals are holding small Australian flags on sticks. The crowd is dense, and the atmosphere appears festive. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the people in the foreground.

# 5181

New Australians  
Identify as Adventists

# THE BIG ISSUE

- “All this is from God, who through Christ **reconciled** us to Himself who gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”  
2 Corinthians 5:18
- Reconciling meaning to integrate, unify, reunite and merge. This is not just some intellectual cognitive exercise but rather a literal movement of a person **from one place to another**. It involves physically bringing a person who is outside of God's family back into a relationship with Christ and his body.

# THE BIG ISSUE

- “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a **stranger** and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” Matthew 25:35,36

# MAIN PURPOSE

- , “It is impossible for us to maintain our schedule if we are always having to stop and pick up passengers.”





# THE PROGRAMME = CHURCH



# OUR ACTIONS

- “If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God’s love be in that person? Dear children, let’s not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.” 1 John 3:17,18





# GOD'S METHOD

God's method of reclaiming the lost is simple!

- Use those who have been found, who are part of God's family, to find others.
- Have them do it by welcoming strangers, people who don't know God, into their lives.
- Unconditionally have them offer friendship to these people so they may have the opportunity to experience God through the life of his body.
- Have the members of the body offer hospitality to strangers frequently.



# A DEFINITION OF HOSPITALITY

- philoxenia, literally means “love of strangers”.
- A compound of two words, **philos**, denoting love, and **xenos**, a stranger, hospitality describes the grace of opening our homes to those we do not know.
- Entertainment is not hospitality.



# BIBLICAL HOSPITALITY

- “When you give a luncheon, or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed...” Luke 14:12,13



# HOSPITALITY IS NOT ENTERTAINMENT

- “Now as they went on their way, he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching. 40 But Martha was **distracted** with much serving; and she went to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” 41 But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; 42 one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the **good portion**, which shall not be taken away from her.” Luke 10:38-42





# VULNERABLE

- The act of giving hospitality shifts the frame of reference from self to others. De-centering perspective
- “...hospitality is not so much a singular act of welcome as it is a way, **an orientation** that attends to otherness, listening and learning, valuing and honouring.” Oden



# CHRISTIAN DUTY

- “Do not neglect to **show hospitality** to strangers...”  
Hebrews 13:2
- “Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God’s people who are in need. **Practice hospitality.**” Romans 12: 9-13
- “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. **Offer hospitality** to one another without grumbling”  
(1 Peter 3:8,9)



# CHRISTIAN DUTY

- “All are called to this ministry, some are gifted for it. For some... hospitality is as **natural** as breathing. For other the practice must be **acquired**.” Karen Mains Pohl Making Room
- Characteristic of an **Elder** 1 Tim 3:2 Titus 1:8

# MEETING CHRIST

- Offering hospitality in the New Testament goes beyond Christian duty. It is a **spiritual discipline** where one encounters Jesus himself.
- Stranger brings **a gift**.
- We are judged on how we care for people.



# ONENESS

- “What a **oneness** Jesus here represents as existing between himself and his suffering disciples! He makes their case his own. He represents himself as being, in their person, the very sufferer. Mark this, selfish Christian; every neglect on your part to care for the needy and to sympathize with those in distress is a neglect of Jesus in the person of his saints. Our heavenly Father has **blessings** disguised in our pathway. Angels are waiting to see if we embrace opportunities within our reach of doing good,—waiting to see if we will bless others, that they in their, may bless us.” Ellen White {HM, July 1, 1891 par. 9}

# WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

Hospitality helps

“Create (a) safe surroundings in which to hear a dangerous message.” Bill Hybels



# CHRIST'S METHOD

- “He eats with tax collectors and sinners”



# CHRIST'S METHOD

- “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour **mingled** with men as one who **desired their good**. He showed His **sympathy** for them, ministered to their **needs**, and won their **confidence**. Then He bade them, ‘**Follow Me**’.” Ellen White Ministry of Healing, p. 143.
- “Here is a lesson for the disciples of Christ through all time, not to exclude themselves from society, renouncing all social communion and seeking a strict seclusion from their fellow beings. In order to reach all classes, **we must meet them where they are**; for they will seldom seek us of their own accord. . . .” {ML 186.4}



# CHRIST'S METHOD

- “There is need of coming **close** to the people by **personal effort**. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick **cared** for, the sorrowing and bereaved **comforted**, the ignorant **instructed**, the inexperienced **counselled**. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit. {TSDF 102.9}

# CHRIST'S METHOD

- “Sermons will not do it. By **visiting** the people, talking, praying, **sympathizing** with them, you will win hearts. This is the **highest missionary work** that you can do. To do it, you will need resolute, persevering faith, unwearied patience, and a deep love for souls.—Testimonies for the Church 9:41.”

# REMAINING STRANGERS

- “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were **strangers** and **pilgrims** on the earth.” Heb 11:13

# EARLY CHURCH

“...the remarkable explosion of Christianity in the first century was due not only to proclamation of the gospel, but to the extraordinary quality of Christian hospitality.” Mortimer Arias (Soul Feast Marjorie J Thompson)

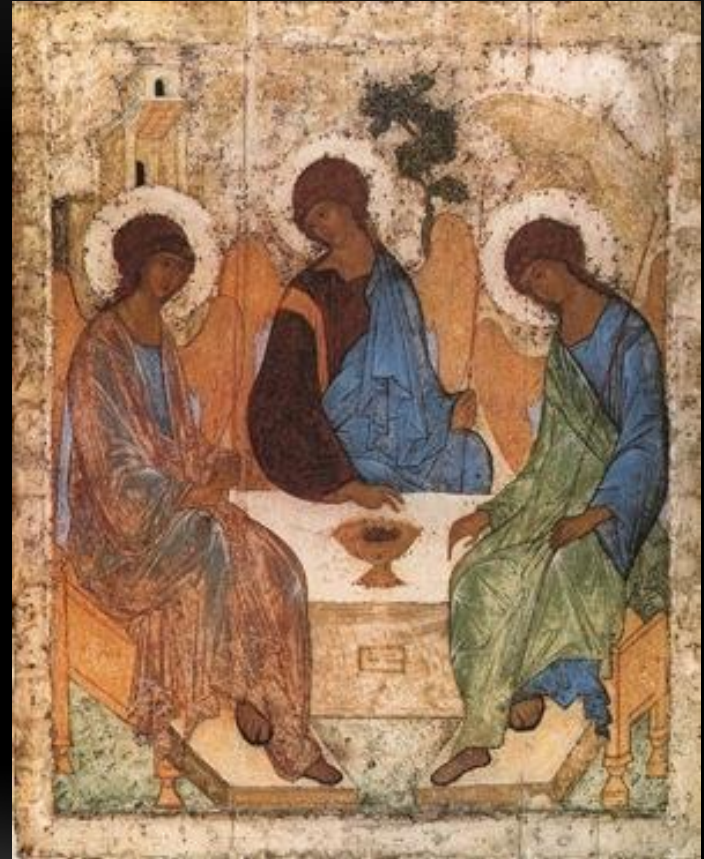


## EPISTLE TO DIOGNETUS 2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY

- “Christians are **not distinct** from the rest of men in country or language or customs. For neither do they dwell anywhere in special cities of their own nor do they use a different language, nor practice a conspicuous manner of life...But dwelling as they do in Hellenic and in barbaric cities, as each man's lot is, and following the customs of the country in dress and food and the rest of life, the **manner of conduct** which they display is wonderful and confessedly beyond belief. They inhabit their own fatherland, but as sojourners; they participate in everything as citizens, and endure everything as foreigners. Every foreign country is to them a fatherland and every fatherland a foreign country...they live on the earth but their citizenship is in heaven.”

# SULPITIUS SEVERUS FROM PAULINUS OF NOLA LETTER 24 (253-431)

“ As I have said you have undertaken two saintly roles, by refusing to own the land you have retained, and by achieving perfection through that which you have sold. So in your apparent role of owner you are perfect, because your mind is free from the ties of possessions; mindful of how short the time is, you fulfill Paul’s injunction by possessing without possessing, for you keep possessions not for yourself but for those with nothing. You play host in your house so that your house may be a hospice.





# SULPITIUS SEVERUS FROM PAULINUS OF NOLA LETTER 24 (253-431)

You are a traveler from your native land and an exile in this world that you may dwell in Paradise and be a citizen of your former country. You do not crowd your houses with dining tables, or cram them with masses of furniture or wealth. You measure off a corner for yourself and fill the house with travelers and beggars. You live as a fellow servant with your own slaves.



# SULPITIUS SEVERUS FROM PAULINUS OF NOLA LETTER 24 (253-431)

The temporary lodging which is your dwelling you do not possess like the father of a household, but you lodge there like a mercenary or a lodger, paying the Lord a regular rent for the favor of the lodging by serving your neighbour with body and mind.” And You Welcomed Me Amy G Ogden



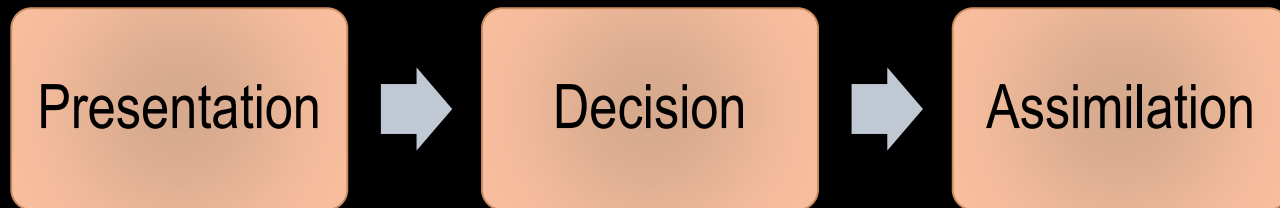
# IMPORTANCE OF HOSPITALITY TODAY

- Few people enter church today without first spending time in a church members home.
- 80% of people joining the church today are brought by a friend or family member.
- Big question:
  - Who are these people with the gift of hospitality?
  - How do we currently use them in our church?
- Need to release people with the gift of hospitality.

# THREE STEPS OF RELATIONAL EVANGELISM



# THREE STEPS **TRADITIONAL** EVANGELISM



# THE STATE OF HOSPITALITY

1. Newcomers are seeking relationship before truth.
2. Adventists do not spend as much time with non-church goers as other Christians.
3. Those with the gift of hospitality and evangelism are often too busy doing “maintenance ministry”.
4. Many ministries of the church are failing to succeed because of their inability to connect with seekers.
5. Newcomers led by a friend or family member have more **staying ability**.



# HOSPITALITY WINS PEOPLE

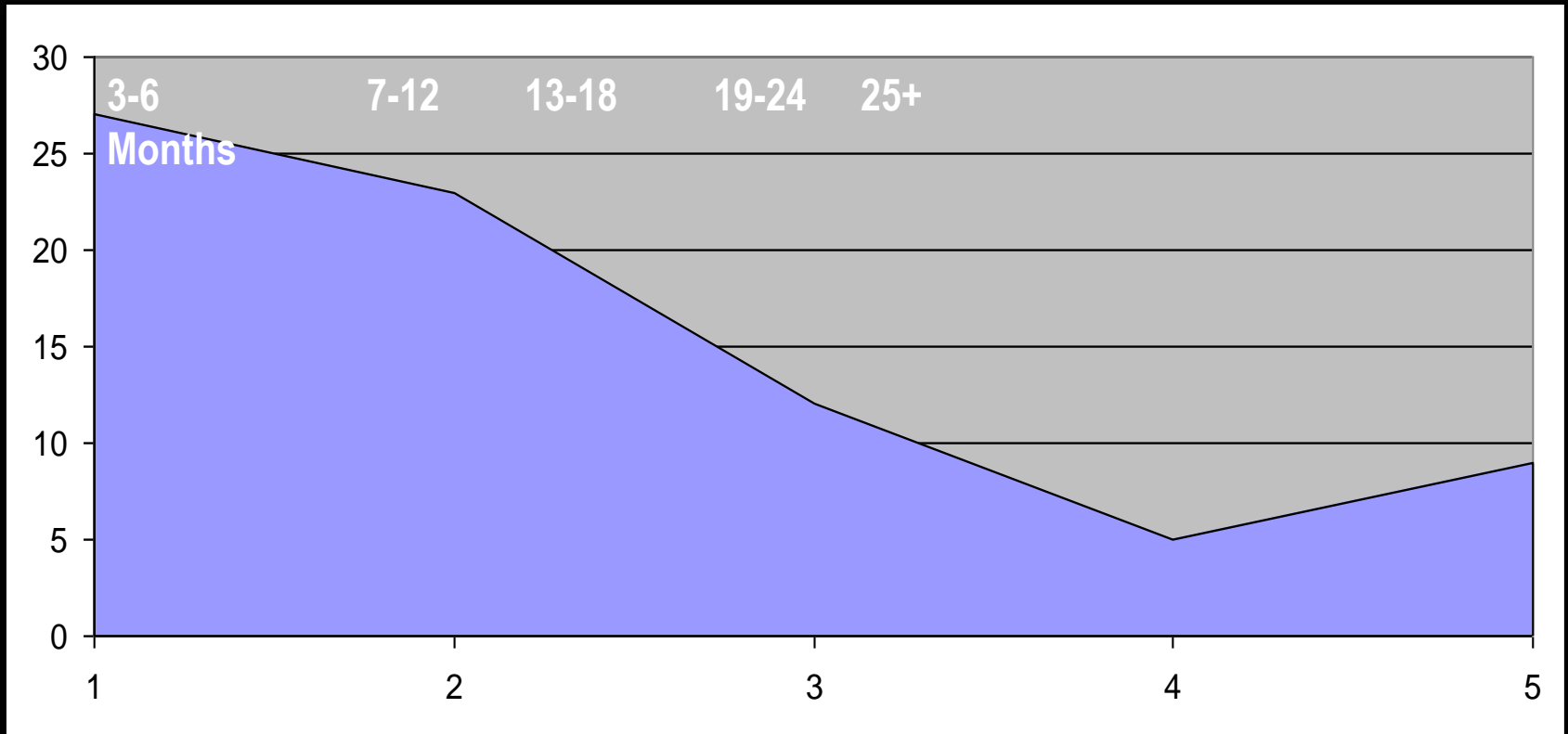
- Homes of Hope Strategy began in 2004.
- Commitment by hosts to connect with an un-churched person weekly.



# HOME OF HOPE 2004-2005

- 34 Homes of Hope Host lead **108 new people** into the church within twelve months.
- This equals around **\$315** per person.
- H of H \$315 versus Traditional \$5,154?

# HOW LONG BEFORE COMMITMENT?



How long was it from your initial contact that they made a commitment?

# HOSPITALITY MINISTRY

- Require a level of **intentionality** and **systematic action** if you are going to lead people to Christ.
- It is about **making friends**, not just being friendly.



# EXPERIENCE FAITH THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

- Most people **experience** the faith through relationships, that they encounter the gospel through a community of faith.
- For most people, “**belonging** comes before believing.” John Finney



KEEP IT SIMPLE

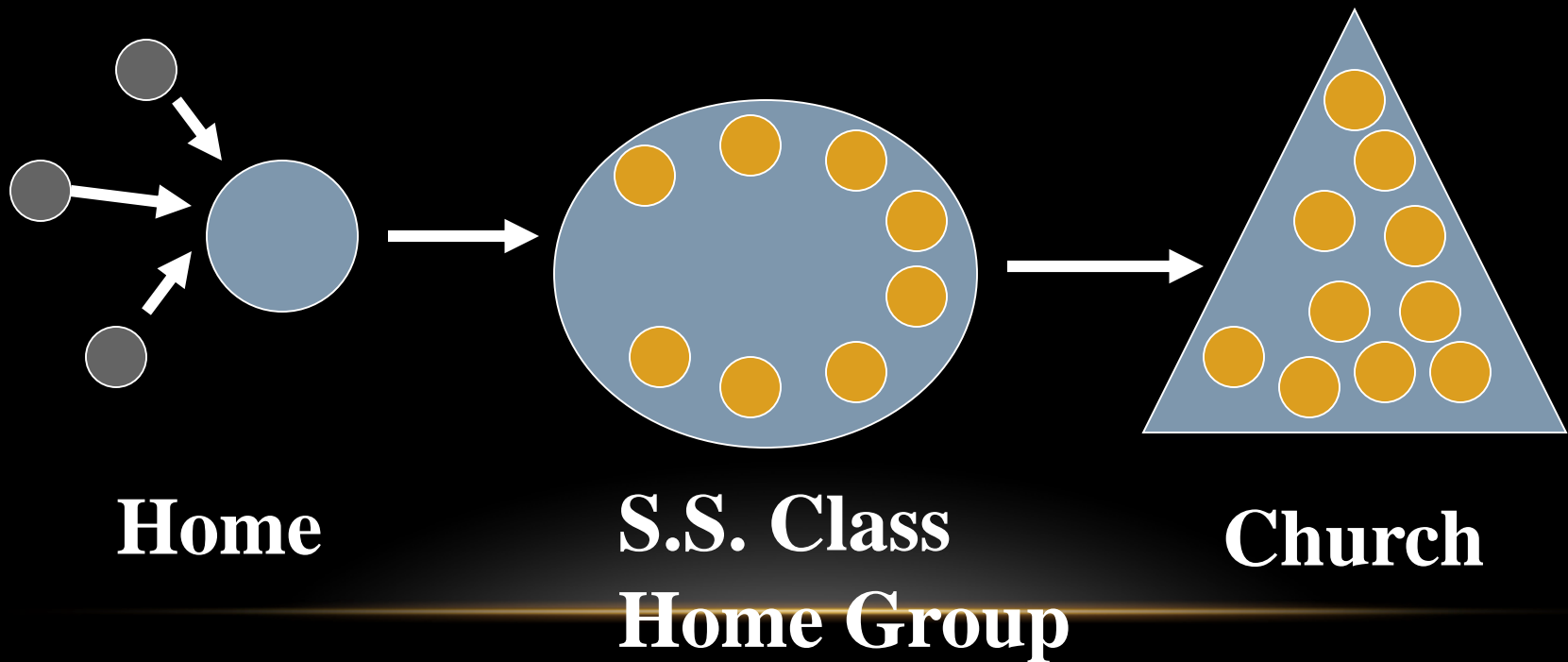




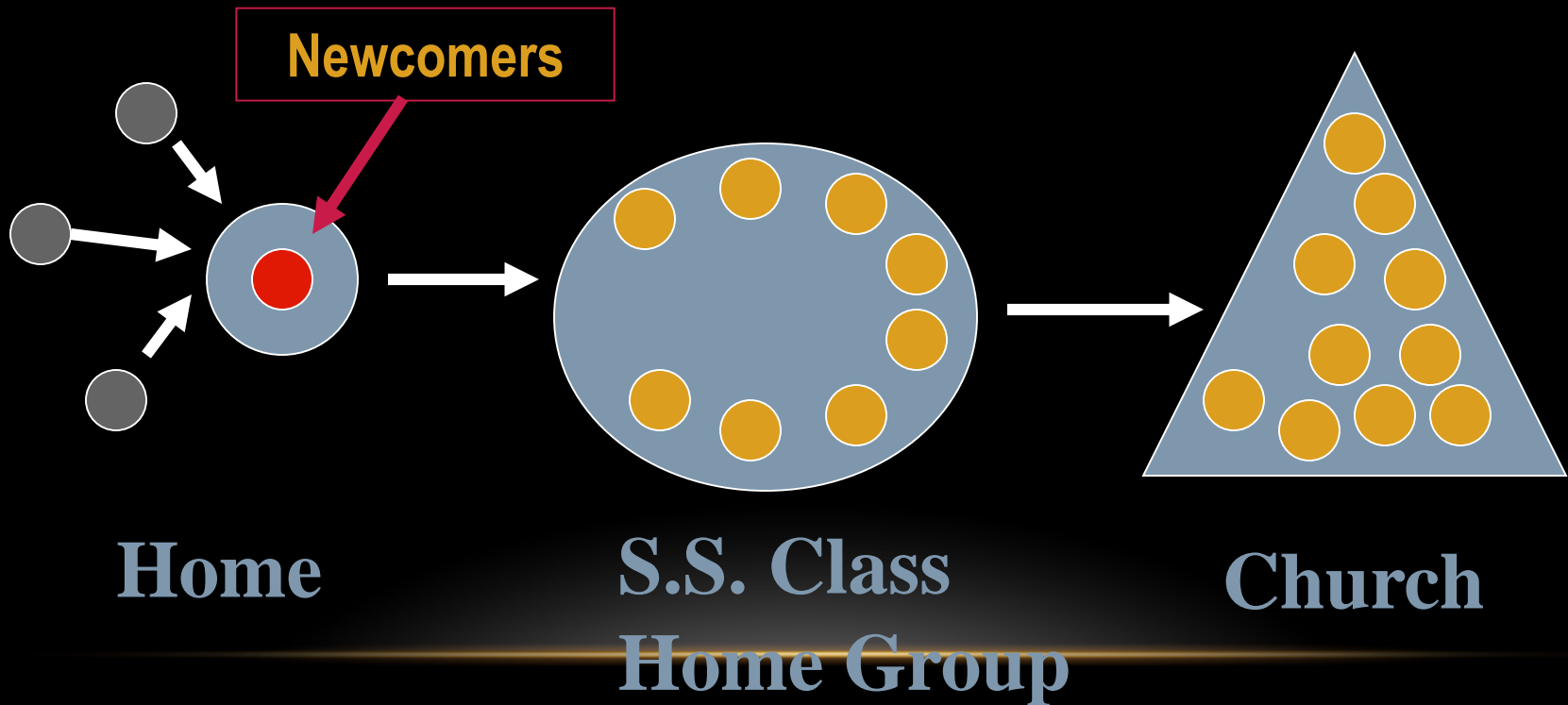
# INCREASING THE STRENGTH OF RELATIONSHIPS

1. Forget the Silver Service. Get to a point of normality as soon as you can in your relationship.
2. Keep your entertainment simple so they can easily return your hospitality.
3. Do lots of fun activities. Fun activities quickly build relationships.
4. Find excuses to love their kids.
5. Take an interest in their interests.
6. Do the little things
7. Anticipate problems in their life.
8. Ask for their help. Make your relationship two-way by asking their assistance when needed.

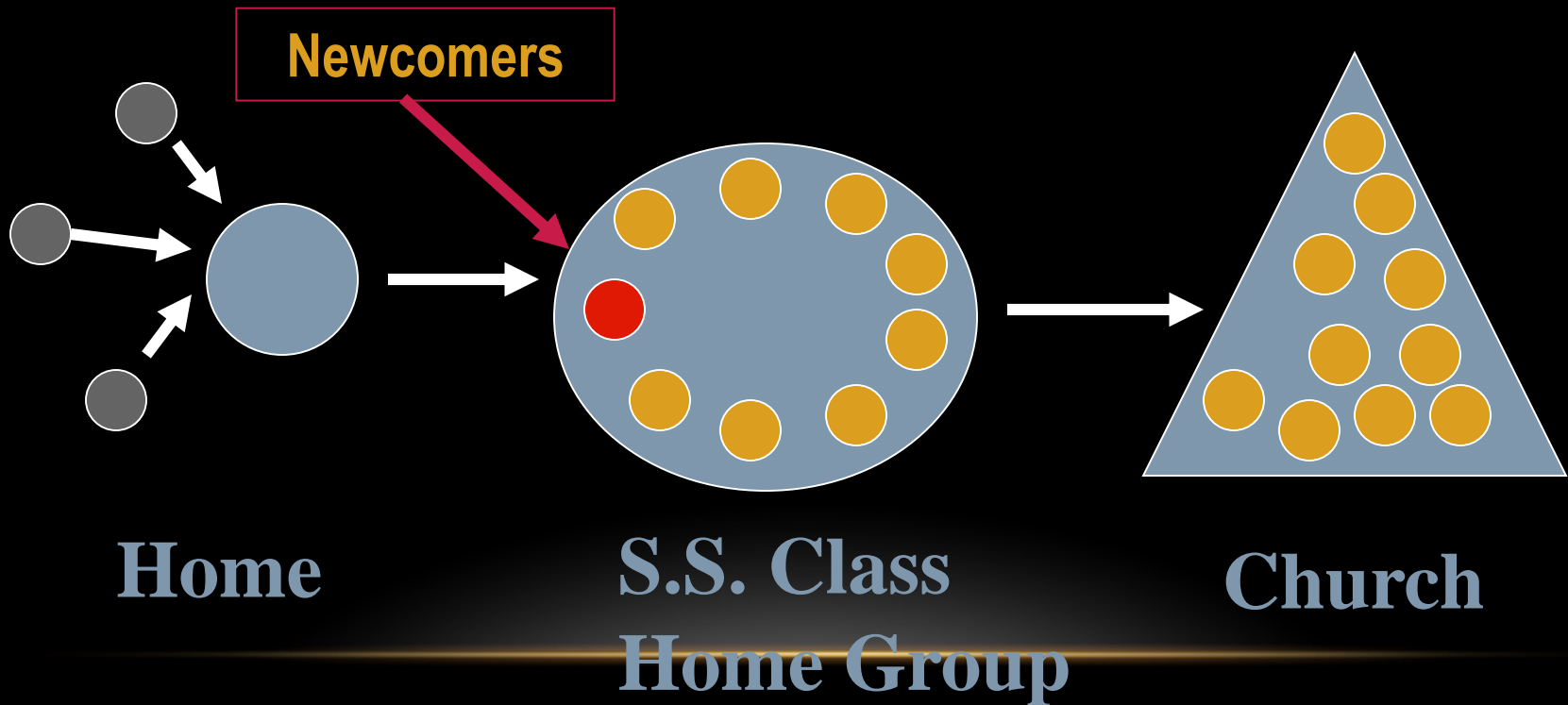
# ENTRANCE INTO CHURCH



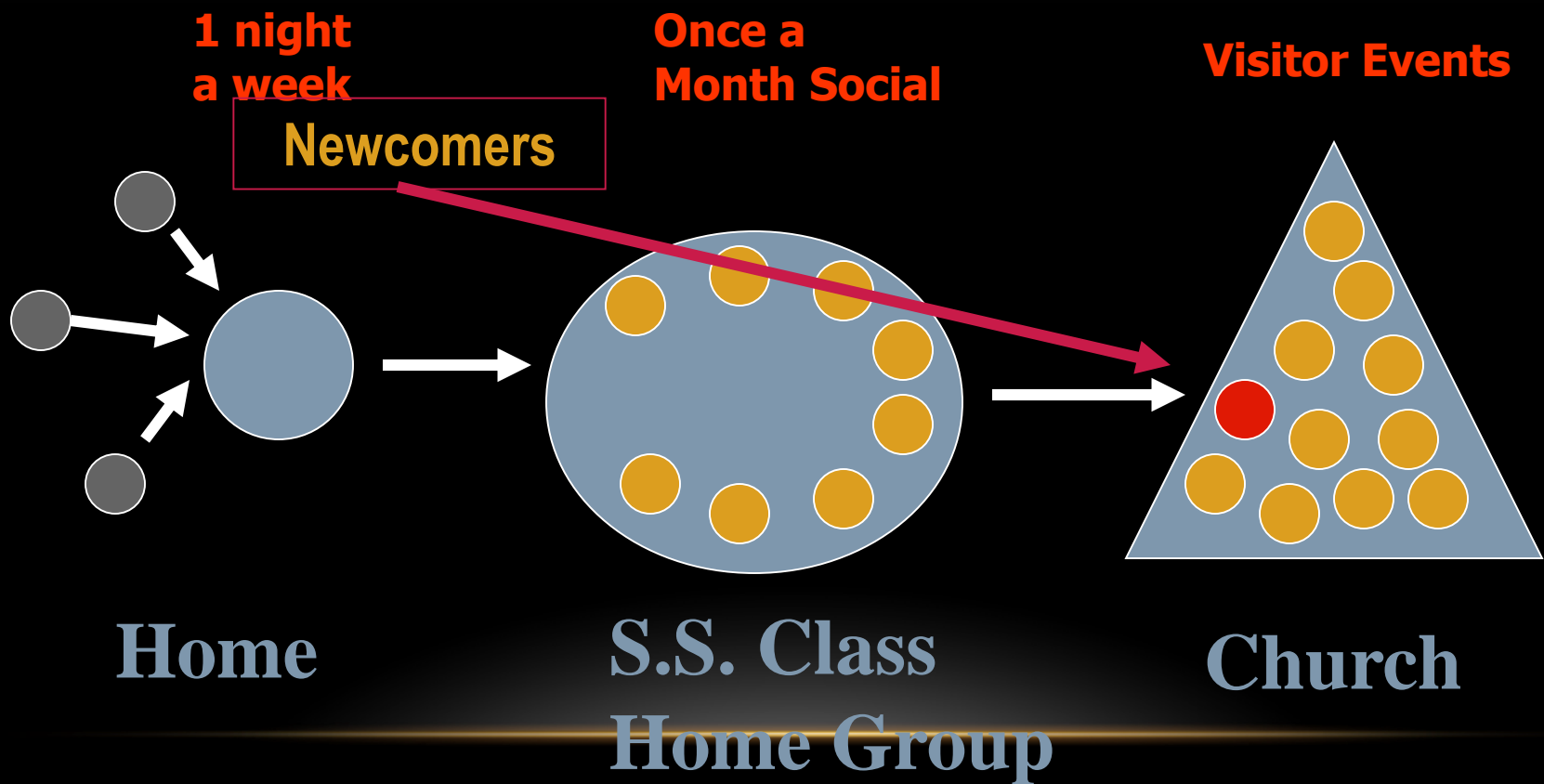
# ENTRANCE INTO CHURCH



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# CONNECTING A NEWCOMER TO GROUP



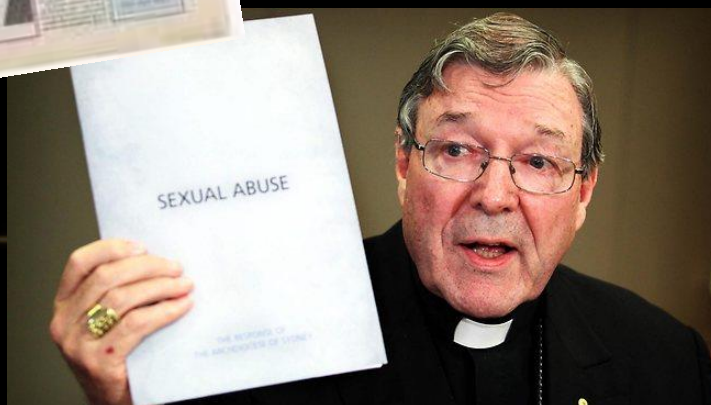
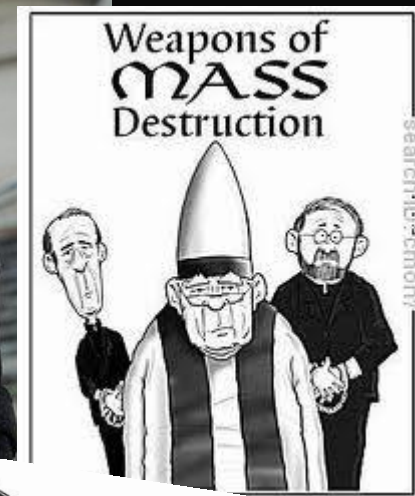


# TEAMS WIN PEOPLE

- Each class-group should have one if not two *homes of hope* hosts.
  - Their role is to take a lead in connecting with seekers.
  - Other members support the hosts in extending the seekers network.
  - Seekers are assigned a mentor when they make a commitment to the group.
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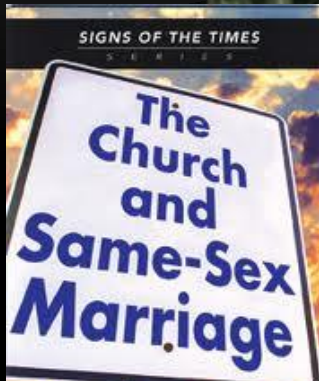
# THE CHALLENGE

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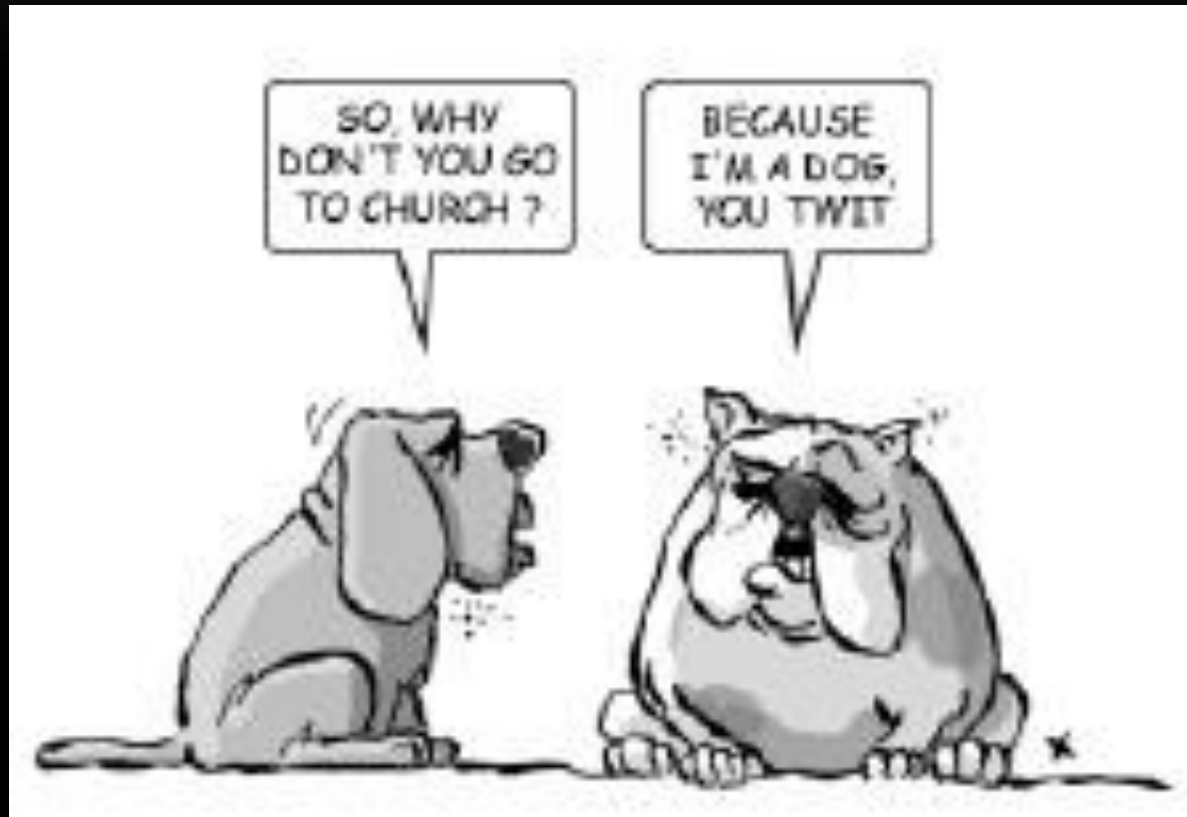




# THE CHALLENGE



# NEWCOMERS ARE NOT SURE THEY FIT



# SOCIALIZE FOR AN ETERNAL PURPOSE

“It is through the  
**social**  
**relations**  
that Christianity  
comes in contact  
with the world.”  
Ellen White

