



Adventist Single Adult Ministries Day

May 20, 2017

Materials and Resources for the Local Church

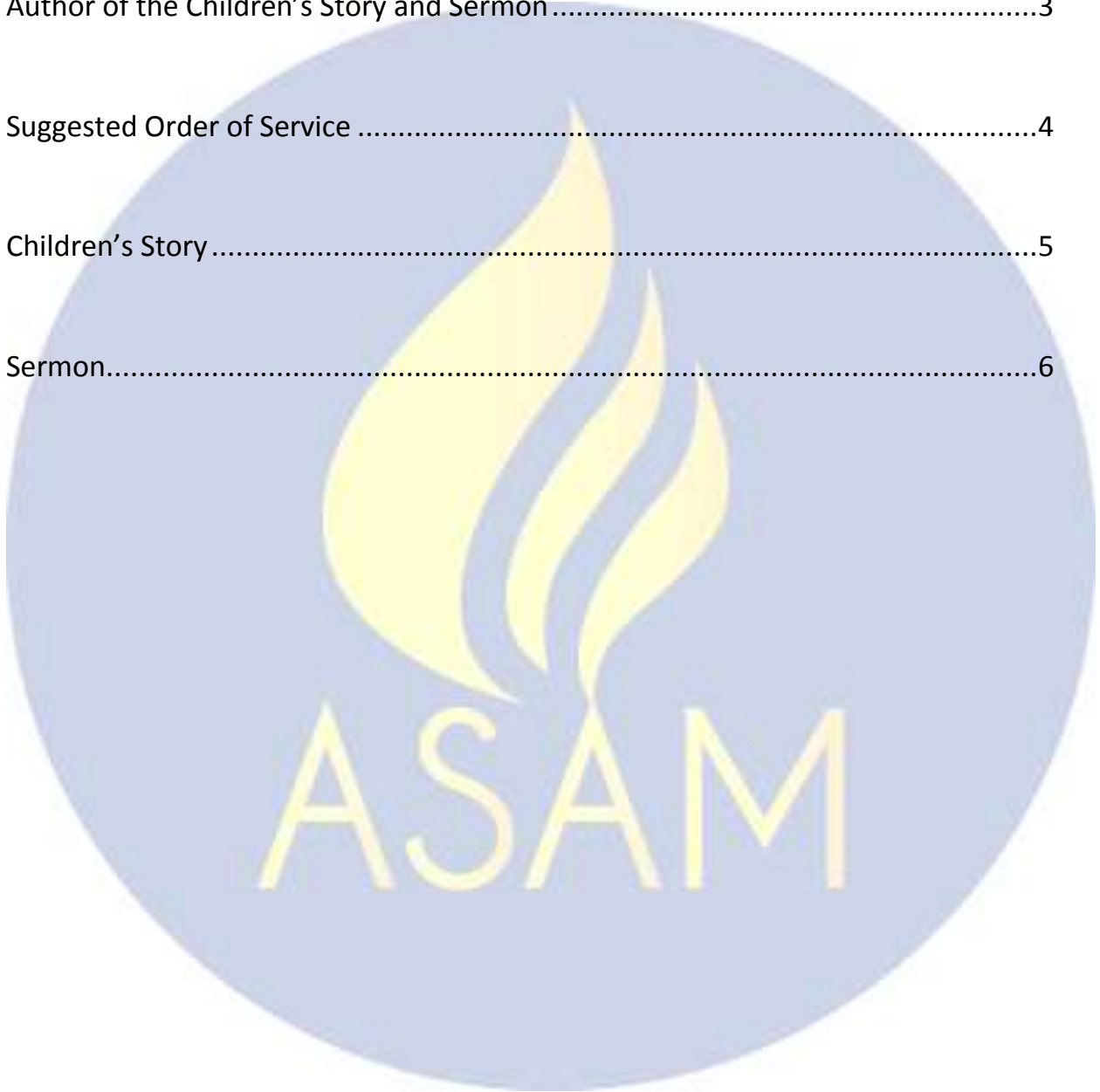
ASAM

Mission Statement

Reaching and empowering Single Adults to create Christ-centered safe places for fellowship, nurture and service.

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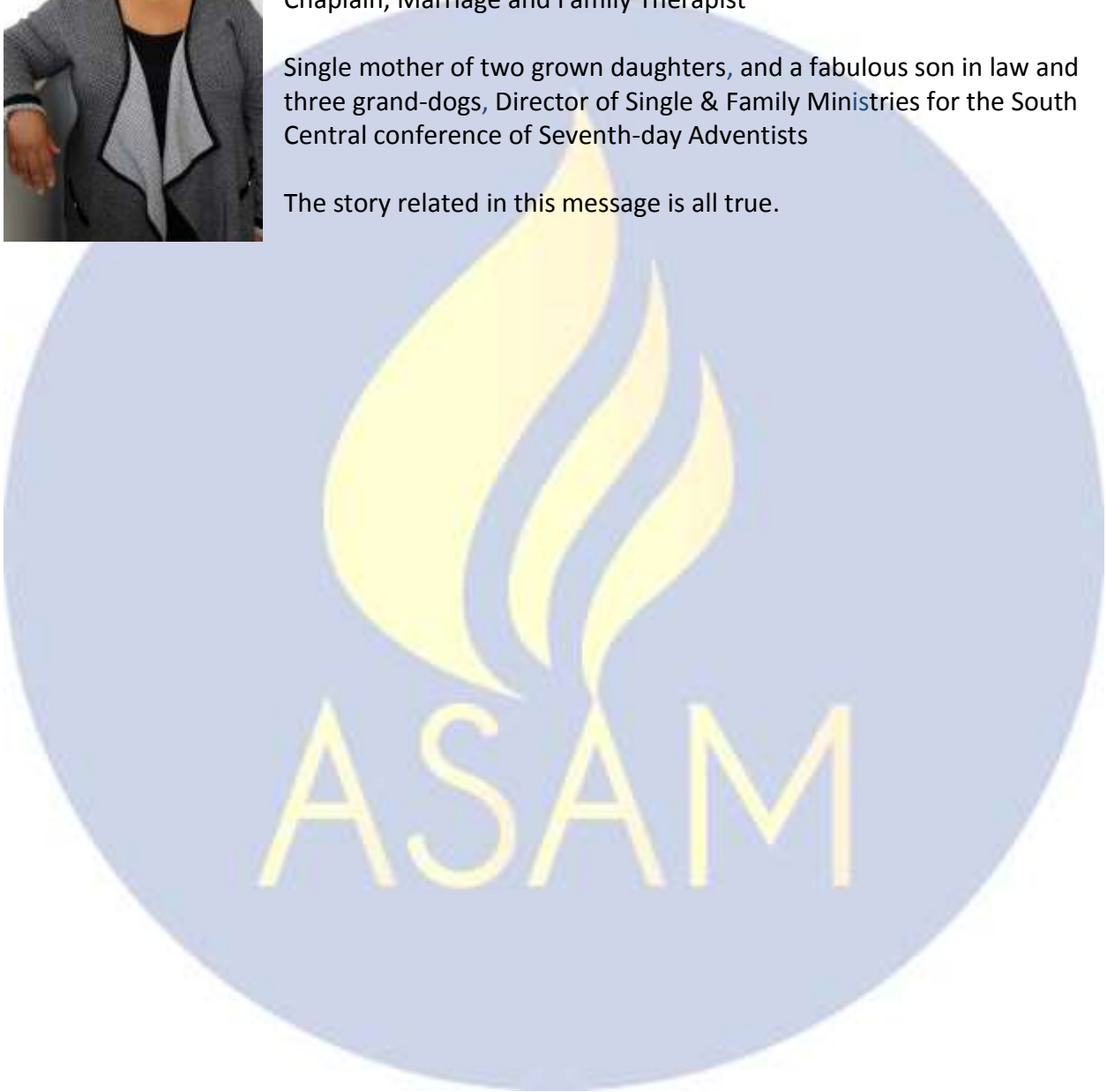
Author of the Children's Story and Sermon

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The story related in this message is all true.



Suggested Order of Service

Introit:

Opening Prayer

Opening Hymn:

Call for the offering:

Children's Story: "It's what's in the middle that counts"

Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:7 "For man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."

Sermon: When the Car Didn't Run Out of Gas

Closing hymn:



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Children's Story

It's What's In The Middle That Counts

Our children's story today comes from the text 1 Samuel 16:7 "For man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." Please repeat this after me, "For man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."

There were twins named Ralph and Lauren. Ralph and Lauren had a great family with parents that were able to buy them most anything their hearts desired. They had the best clothes, and very nice backpacks and went on great vacations to other countries even. Ralph and Lauren's parents really loved God and believed in Christian education as well. One day as mom was sitting in the car waiting to pick them up from school. She heard a very sad thing. Her children were talking bad about another little girl and boy that went to the school. The other girl and boy had a single mom, but she loved God and loved Christian education as well, but she couldn't afford all the fancy clothes, backpacks and trips around the world. But her children were always nice and clean and really nice to others. Mother was so upset but she waited to talk with dad about what they should do.

This next day when Ralph and Lauren got home from school, mom allowed them to have their favorite cookies instead of their usual piece of fruit or carrots and celery. She allowed them to have Oreos!!! They were so excited (show them an Oreo). Guess what their favorite part of the cookie was (ask the children what their favorite part is) You're right, their favorite part was the middle as well. So they did what we like to do (open the middle) yes lick the middle first and YUCK!!!! Ralph screams, Lauren yells MOM THIS IS GROSS!!!! What did you do to our Oreos?

Mom asked very nice and quiet, "Twins what is the problem? The cookie is still black on the outside and white on the inside." Ralph says, "But mom this is mayonnaise in the middle. Mom says, but it doesn't matter it is still nice and creamy "But mom" Lauren says "don't you know it's what's in the middle that counts? It can't just be anything. And mom says your right twins. I heard you all yesterday talking very ugly about your school mates about how their dressed and what they don't have and sad as I was I know God was even sadder. Because He loves everyone no matter what they have or don't have. And I want you to be like God. Don't look on what's on the outside, but how wonderful the person is on the inside. They both hugged mom real tight and said how sorry they were. And at worship that evening they told God how sorry they were and the next day they told their friends they were sorry too. Boys and Girls remember our scripture when you talk and play with your friends "... that man

looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart”, and we should too.



When the Car Didn't Run out of Gas

Now, I can understand why Jesus didn't get married on this earth. I mean just go with me for a minute. Jesus's wife would be like "while you're out healing the sick and raising the dead, the house is falling down around us, and you're supposed to be a trained carpenter!!, What does the Bible say? You know it very well, Matthew 23:23 (paraphrasing) "these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone". Jesus' wife would go on to say - and another thing while we are talking, whenever you come home you have these 12 men with you that I have to feed, and another thing, about this Mary - her washing your feet with her hair, yeah...I want all that to stop. Well you get the picture. So, as I have said I can understand His singleness. But as for the rest of us, we are not the Savior. And I'm not quite sure if I'm totally on board with Paul in 1 Corinthians 7: 6, 7 "Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. I wish that all were as I myself am (in other words, single). But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

I am like a lot of singles, if singleness is a gift, what line do I stand in for returns? And God did say in Genesis 2:18 "It's not good for man or women to be alone". So let us dissect these two passages because as we know the Bible will never contradict itself. Paul here is recognizing that there are two different gifts being talked about here, marriage and singleness. So, it isn't that marriage is a gift, and singleness is a punishment. No, they truly are both gifts. As we look further the two key words here are alone and single. Let us deal with alone first. When we look in the Cambridge English dictionary the word alone means: Being apart from others; solitary. Being without anyone or anything else; ONLY YOU. Considered separately from all others of the same class. Being without an equal.

This would really explain Adam before Eve. Everything in the garden had something/someone that looked, acted, and responded to life the same, and then there was Adam. Hours before Eve was created Adam was “earthly” alone. He had nothing and no one to relate on this earth, now understand that he had all of heaven a breath away.

I wonder if he could see his guardian angel. It’s not out of the realm of possibilities. God Himself visited with Him so why not his angel? But even with all the universe there for him and I am sure God told Adam, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you”, God did understand Adam earthly aloneness. He knew before time began the profound effect being alone would have on the human race. In children, it leads to all kinds of problems. Failure to be socially connected to peers and is the real reason behind most school dropouts. It sets in motion a course on which children spin their way to outcast status and develop delinquency and other forms of antisocial behavior. In adults, loneliness is a major precipitant of depression and alcoholism. And it increasingly appears to be the cause of a range of medical problems, some of which take decades to show up.

Psychologist John Cacioppo of the University of Chicago has been tracking the effects of loneliness. He performed a series of novel studies and reported that loneliness works in some surprising ways to compromise health.

- * Perhaps most astonishing, in a survey he conducted, doctors themselves confided that they provide better or more complete medical care to patients who have supportive families and are not socially isolated.
- * Living alone increases the risk of suicide for young and old alike.
- * Lonely individuals report higher levels of perceived stress even when exposed to the same stressors as non-lonely people, and even when they are relaxing.
- * The social interaction lonely people do have are not as positive as those of other people, hence the relationships they have do not buffer them from stress as relationships normally do.
- * Loneliness raises levels of circulating stress hormones and levels of blood pressure. It undermines regulation of the circulatory system so that the heart muscle works harder and the blood vessels are subject to damage by blood flow turbulence.
- * Loneliness destroys the quality and efficiency of sleep, so that it is less restorative, both physically and psychologically. They wake up more at night and spend less time in bed actually sleeping than do the non-lonely.

Loneliness, Cacioppo concludes, sets in motion a variety of "slowly unfolding pathophysiological processes." The net result is that the lonely experience higher levels of cumulative wear and tear.

In other words, we are built for social contact. There are serious—life-threatening—consequences when we don't get enough. We can't stay on track mentally. And we are compromised physically. Social skills are crucial for your health. The Trinity created us to be relational.

Jesus understood “loneliness” even before it happened. He knew how hard it was going to be to be alone when He would come to this earth. He knew he would be “despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” (Isaiah 53:3) In His humanness he was going to be alone. Imagine what living in this world was like for Jesus.

Imagine what his childhood was like. He would have been odd, sticking out morally like a sore thumb, never quite fitting in with any group, even his own family. His loving parents wouldn't have fully understood him. Nor would they have been able to protect him from others' stinging remarks and maybe cruel mocking over his strangeness.

I wonder how much came from his siblings? His brothers and sisters would have grown increasingly self-conscious around him, aware of their own sinful, self-obsessed motives and behavior, while having this perfect Jesus for their brother.

No one on earth could identify with him. No human being could put an arm around him as he sat in tears and say, “I know exactly what you're going through.” His sorrow and grief began way before Gethsemane. But Jesus's loneliest moment was when He felt “forsaken” by his Father. Jesus knew supreme rejection and loneliness.

So seeing the end before the beginning The LORD God said, “I will make a helper suitable for him.” And from that time to this we have never been earthly alone, unless we choose to. But will never, ever be heavenly alone,

So after taking a closer look at, “not good for us to be alone” does not necessarily mean we have to be or everyone should be married. In order for us to thrive in this life we need to develop a community of family, friends and loved one. And we need to understand that when we do feel alone, lonely, isolated, deserted, abandoned, forsaken or friendless this is not from God. The scriptures tells us in, Psalm 68:5-6 God is a father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling God sets the lonely in families also John 10:10 (KJV) says in a very awesome way that God wants

the best for us, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly”.

So yes, you are hearing right, when God said it’s not good for man or woman to be alone. The kind of aloneness He is speaking about is not the kind where we have to be married to be perfectly whole in this world. So then what is being single? Because that sure feels alone to me. I’m glad you asked. Let’s go back to the Cambridge Dictionary, Single means: only one; not one of several, sole, solitary, by itself, oneself, unaccompanied. If that still sounds like alone to you. I think this story about Gilbert Tuhabonye will help.

Gilbert's ONE passion is running. Gilbert is a long distance runner born in Songa, Burundi, whose early love for track and field helped him win the Burundi National Championship in the men's 400 and 800 meters while only a junior in high school. This passion also helped save his life.

On October 21, 1993, members of the Hutu tribe invaded Gilbert's high school and captured the students of the Tutsi tribe. Those not immediately killed were beaten and burned alive in a nearby building. After nine hours buried beneath burning bodies, Gilbert managed to escape and outrun his captors to the safety of a nearby hospital. He was the lone survivor.

He came to Texas and kept competing, honing his skills. Recruited by Abilene Christian University, Gilbert earned All-American honors six times. After graduation he moved to Austin, where by all accounts he is the most popular running coach in the city. To drill for water in Burundi, he cofounded the Gazelle Foundation, whose main fundraiser is -- wait for it -- "Run for the Water," a sponsored run through the streets of Austin. Do you see the theme running through his life?

From competitor to survivor, from college to career to charity, Gilbert Tuhabonye's passion for running became a skill that led to a profession that opened up an opportunity to give back. He's a symbol of how singleness of purpose can define an extraordinary life. You must be single-minded! The most successful people in the world share the following pattern in common: They have ONE thing that sits on their heart, which they embrace (no matter how trivial) as a sole passion. Then, over many years, the ONE passion is developed and ultimately becomes ONE world class skill. Then, that ONE world class skill is applied and opens the doors to an endless number of opportunities to change the world.

The world understands what Jesus is saying in James 1:8 King James Version (KJV) “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” even if they don’t believe in God

this is true. Now before I go any further, let me just say, that being single does have its advantages:

- * You don't have to live with someone who can't stand your parents.
- * You don't have to share your closet with anyone else.
- * You can talk to yourself without people saying "what?" or worrying about your sanity.
- * You are the master of the thermostat and the remote.
- * It's easier to focus on your career and your dreams.
- * Things stay where you put them.

And I saved the best for last – there is no toilet seat argument. If you want to live a whole life and never put the toilet seat down that is your prerogative. As good as this sounds, this is not what God is desiring from us when God says, being single is a blessing. He is speaking of singleness of purpose. A heart that's single purpose is to please God.

Jeremiah 32:39 New International Version (NIV)

I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me and that all will then go well for them and for their children after them. The Hebrew of verse 39 could be translated more literally: "And I will give them one heart and one way to fear me." The heart, in ancient Hebrew, was the center of thinking and willing. The way had to do with action that reflect the choices of the heart. Thus, the NIV captures the sense of this phrase in its translation: "I will give them singleness of heart and action." Their greatest desire and focus in life will be to fear the Lord, that is, to worship him in reverence in every area of life.

For centuries, the Israelites had many hearts and walked in many ways, including ways of immorality, injustice, and idolatry. But the time would come, God promised, when all the people would seek to serve the Lord. As I read this promise from Jeremiah 32, I'm reminded of the discord and disarray in so much of the church today. In so many ways, we are like the ancient Israelites, who abandoned God's ways in favor of norms of the culture around them. We may not worship literal idols today, but we are tempted to idolize money or riches. We may not offer our children to Moloch, but we may sacrifice them to the "gods" of success and worldly accomplishment. We may not engage in ritual prostitution, but we may ignore the

biblical call to sexual holiness. Don't we, as God's people, need the gift of one heart and one purpose? Don't we need a renewed desire to fear the Lord in all we do, honoring him in every area of life? Don't we all need this gift of singleness?

This is a very true and real story that happen to a lady a few years ago. This lady and her husband moved from one major city to a very small town because of her husband's job transfer. The move was very well planned, their house was sold and they had bought another. They decided to leave their two children with her mom until they get settled and the school year ended. She also found a job about 40 miles away which was a blessing how far she had to go for her job in the big city. All seemed to go well. After the busy week they had with the move, Friday had final come, and they weekend was on the horizon. As they were sitting at the table, the husband gave his news.

The real reason they had moved was he asked for the transfer, because he had the divorce already in the works and planned to marry the lady he had been seeing for the last few years who lived not far from this town. He wanted his now wife to move so he could be close to his kids and knew she wouldn't agree if she knew he was leaving her. Well you can only imagine her devastation. And to make matters even worst he was leaving that night without any conversation or explanation. He stated she could have the house and car to take care of his kids. But upon her investigation. He left her no money, changed bank account and no credit card. With only a little above empty gas in the car. As she began to cry from where only that broken heart place can, her mind turned to the only friend she had who could truly understand, Jesus.

She poured her heart and soul out to Him. After a whole come a part. She tried to formulate some sort of plan. But everything she thought to do seem to be impossible. She thought about her mom asking, "Why go right now and leave the children? Do the long - distance thing for a while and get your bearing, she could hear her mom say. But she had a good job there in her field that started on Monday. She heard her friends saying, there is just something not right about this move and I just don't trust him, and the list wet on and on. She even thought about some signs she a noticed but payed no heed to. Because of all this she felt shame, rejection, totally aloneness and not feeling like she could ask any of them to come to her rescue. Some after spending all day Saturday in bed. She decided she would go to church on that Sunday. The nearest church was about five miles away, leaving her gas needle on empty. She was in a total panic going to work forty miles away with no gas and no way to get any. But she prayed a very simple pray, "God I am totally alone and have nowhere to turn, help me." And help God did, not by giving her a single dime for gas but for the next two weeks going back and forth 80 miles' round trip to and from work, going tens mile round trip to church God keep her car running without one drop of gas in it.

The car stopped after she cashed her check and got right in front of the gas pump. She sat in front of that gas pump and poured her heart out to God in a different way this time, saying, “God I see now where I had made a God out of my marriage and depended on my husband. I had to become single to know what the scripture really means; “I will never leave you nor forsake you”. God I now understand that it doesn’t matter if I am single or married, no friends or family in sight. I am not alone. And I commit this day to spending more time in developing our relationship. And keeping it above all other relationship and tell everyone the story of the time you came down and kept my car running to prove your love for me.”

Brothers and Sisters, some may be single and some married, but we all must pray for and work toward that “Gift of Singleness”, Singleness of purpose. God wants no less of each of us!!

Dear Lord, as I reflect upon your promise to your people, to give them one heart and one purpose, I find myself yearning for the same. To be single in You, both for me and for your church today. How easily we have become distracted from our primary mission as your people. How tempting it is to seek first something other than your kingdom and glory. How often do we abandon your ways for the ways of the world around us? For turning to self. Forgive us, Lord, for all the ways we have been unfaithful to you. Give your people one heart and one purpose. Give us a passion for your glory that we might seek to worship you first and foremost in all we do. Give us all Lord the gift of singleness. Unify your people, Lord, in your truth and by your Spirit. Help us, these congregations that are struggling, to find their purpose to give themselves to you completely. Where churches are floundering, give their leaders new, clear vision for your mission and glory. All praise be to you, Gracious God, because you renew and refocus your people! Amen.

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