

An aerial photograph of a city skyline at sunset, with a large white rectangular text box centered over the image. The sky is a mix of orange and blue, and the city buildings are silhouetted against the light. A river or body of water is visible in the lower left corner with a small boat.

What Motivates the Unchurched to Want to Join the SDA Church in a Postmodern Culture

- **Western Europe** – one of the world’s most secular regions
- **Central and Eastern Europe** – strong link between religion and national identity
- Most people identify themselves as Christians, but few regularly attend church (a few times per year), non-practising

*Pew Research Centre analysis

UK

- Reaching the indigenous – the largest ethnic group
- More than half UK has no religion - 53%, up from 48% in 2015
(British Social Attitudes surveys)

*The Telegraph, 2017

The Full 2019 Funeral Music Chart

No	Song name	Artist	Movement since 2016 chart
1	My Way	Frank Sinatra	Non-mover
2	Time To Say Goodbye	Andrea Bocelli and Sarah Brightman	Non-mover
3	Over The Rainbow	Eva Cassidy	Non-mover
4	Wind Beneath My Wings	Bette Midler	Non-mover
5	Angels	Robbie Williams	Re-entry
6	Supermarket Flowers	Ed Sheeran	New entry
7	Unforgettable	Nat King Cole	Up 3 places
8	You Raise Me Up	Westlife	New entry
9	We'll Meet Again	Vera Lynn	Down 3 places
10	Always Look on the Bright Side of Life	Eric Idle - from Monty Python's 'Life of Brian'	Down 2 places

*Co-op Funeral Directors (conduct up to 100.000 funerals a year.

The Unchurched

- 'no connection with the church'
- no religious affiliation (atheist, agnostic, never been to church)
- those who consider themselves spiritual, rather than religious
- grew up in a Christian home (or have experienced church before) but left church
- those who attend church rarely - funeral, wedding, Christmas

*Jacinta Ashworth, Ian Farthing and Tearfund, 'Churchgoing in the UK: A Research Report from Tearfund on Church Attendance in the UK' (Teddington, Middlesex: Tearfund, 2007)

*David Hay and Kate Hunt, 'Understanding the Spirituality of People Who Don't Go to Church: A Report on the Findings of the Adults' Spirituality Project at the University of Nottingham', (Mission Theological Advisory Group, 2000)

*Alvin L. Reid, *Radically Unchurched: Who They Are & How to Reach Them* (Kregel Academic, 2002), p.21

**Churchless: Understanding Today's Unchurched and How to Connect with Them*, ed. by George Barna and David Kinnaman (Austin, TX: Tyndale House, 2014)

Phenomenological Research

- **6 former unchurched**
- 3 females, 3 males
- Age 20-60 years old
- 5 baptized between 2006-2015
- 1 baptized in 1997

In a journey of **SEARCHING...**

- Answers to Questions
- Meaning and Purpose
- Life crisis
- World tragedies

World Tragedies

- “If God is good, why bad things happen?”
- “One day I listened to a documentary like 9/11 and that documentary led me to research the Bible basically and that is sort of how it all began.”
- “Something in this world is wrong, it made me want to search more.”

Personal Life Crisis

- “Why do I feel this way?”
- “I believe the whole catalyst of my searching was, I wanted to know why do I feel this way and to paint a bigger picture. I wish I could look down on the whole situation and make sense of it.”

Over a number of years:

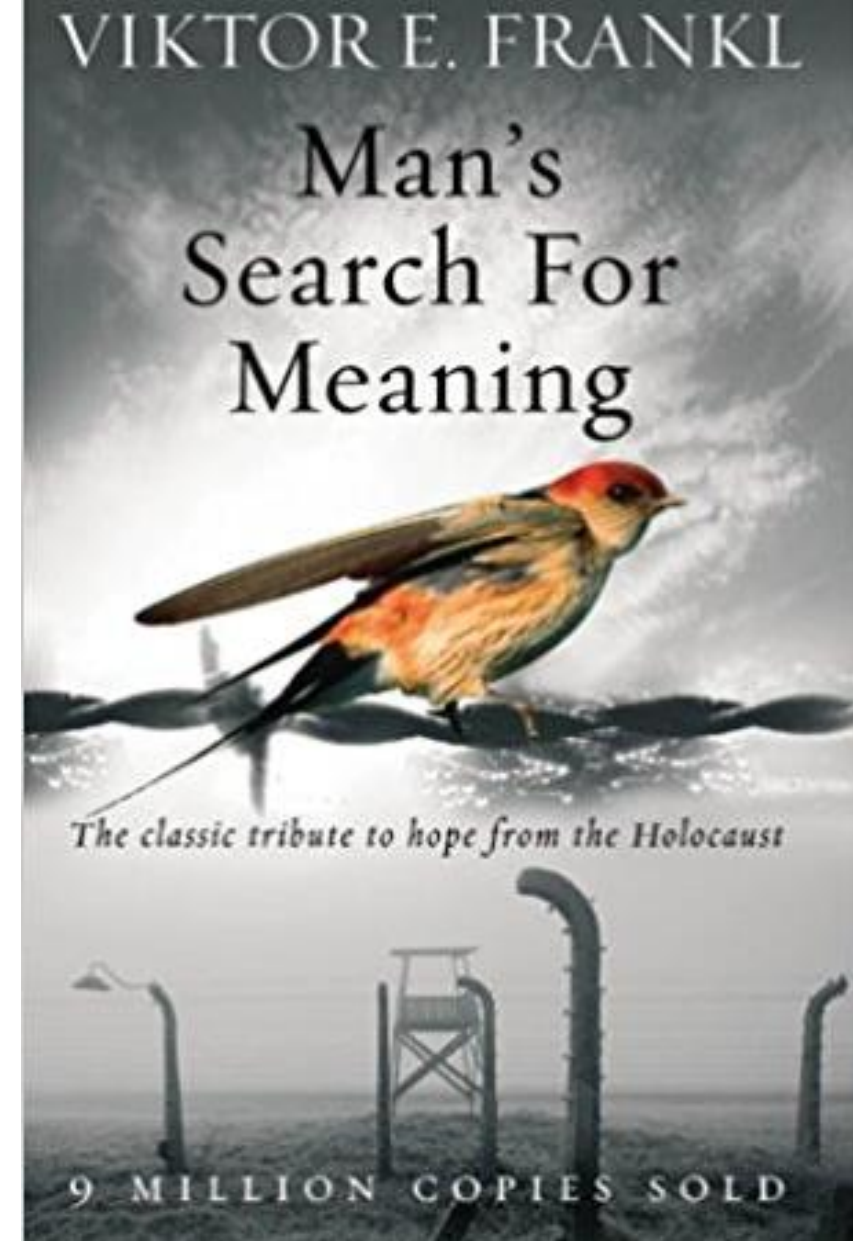
- Buddhism, Hinduism, New Age, yoga, psychology courses, astrology, activism, mediums, spiritualist churches, local churches,... SdA church

Emptiness/ Inner Void

- “I just thought, what have I got to loose. So I just thought, “Why not?” I felt lost and I’ve tried with temporary things to fill that void, but it didn’t remove the pain. Mentally I was still tortured by it.”
- “I lived quite an adventurous life, ...enjoying life for a while, but I got to the point where I felt so empty...it must be more to life than this.”

Victor Frankl describes his experience from the concentration camps. He observed how the prisoners and including himself copped with the experience, and learned that survival and endurance in extreme harsh conditions depends on finding meaning to life.

What helped him survive was the hope of seeing his wife again and lecturing about the lessons learned in the Auschwitz experience.

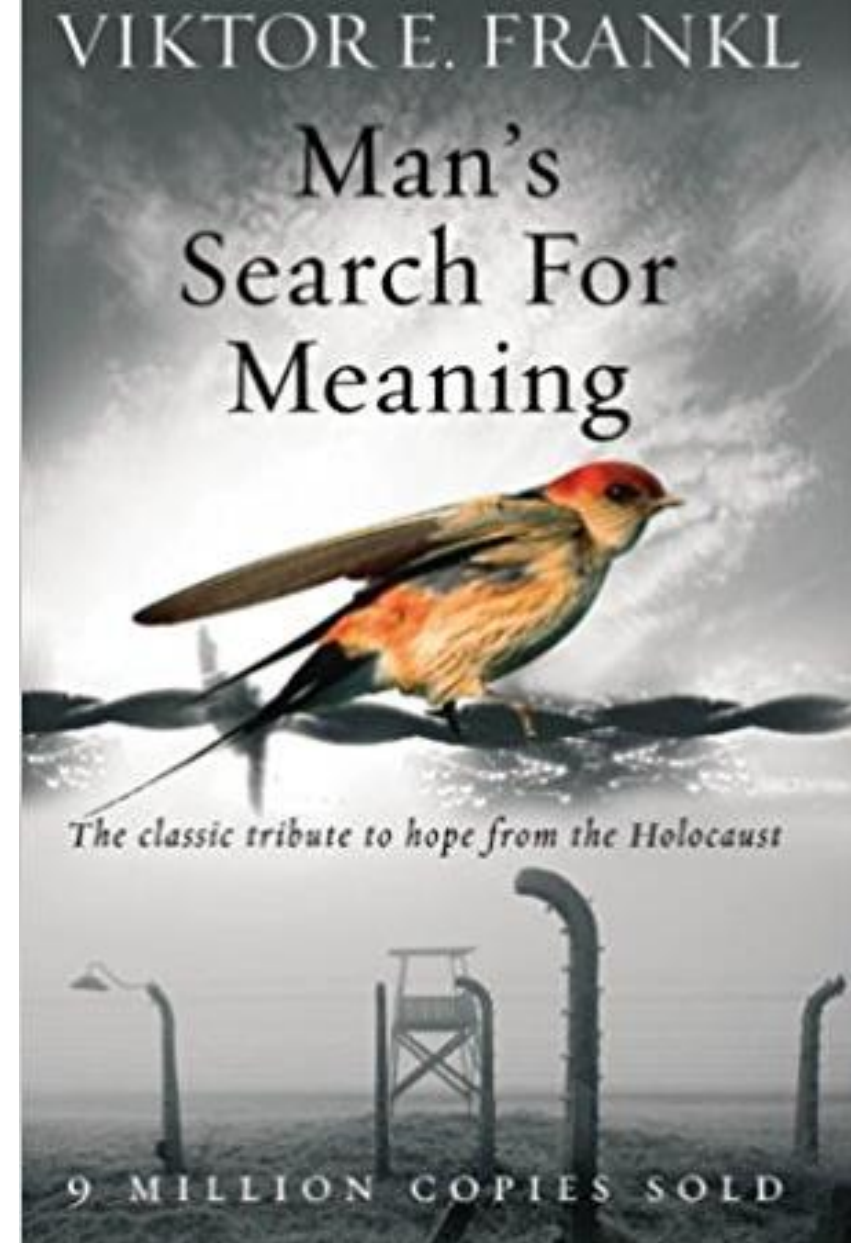


ADVENTISM OF FOR 21ST C EUROPE

Rediscovering Adventist Identity and Mission in 21st Century Europe

“Man is always in a search for meaning and this is his highest desire.”

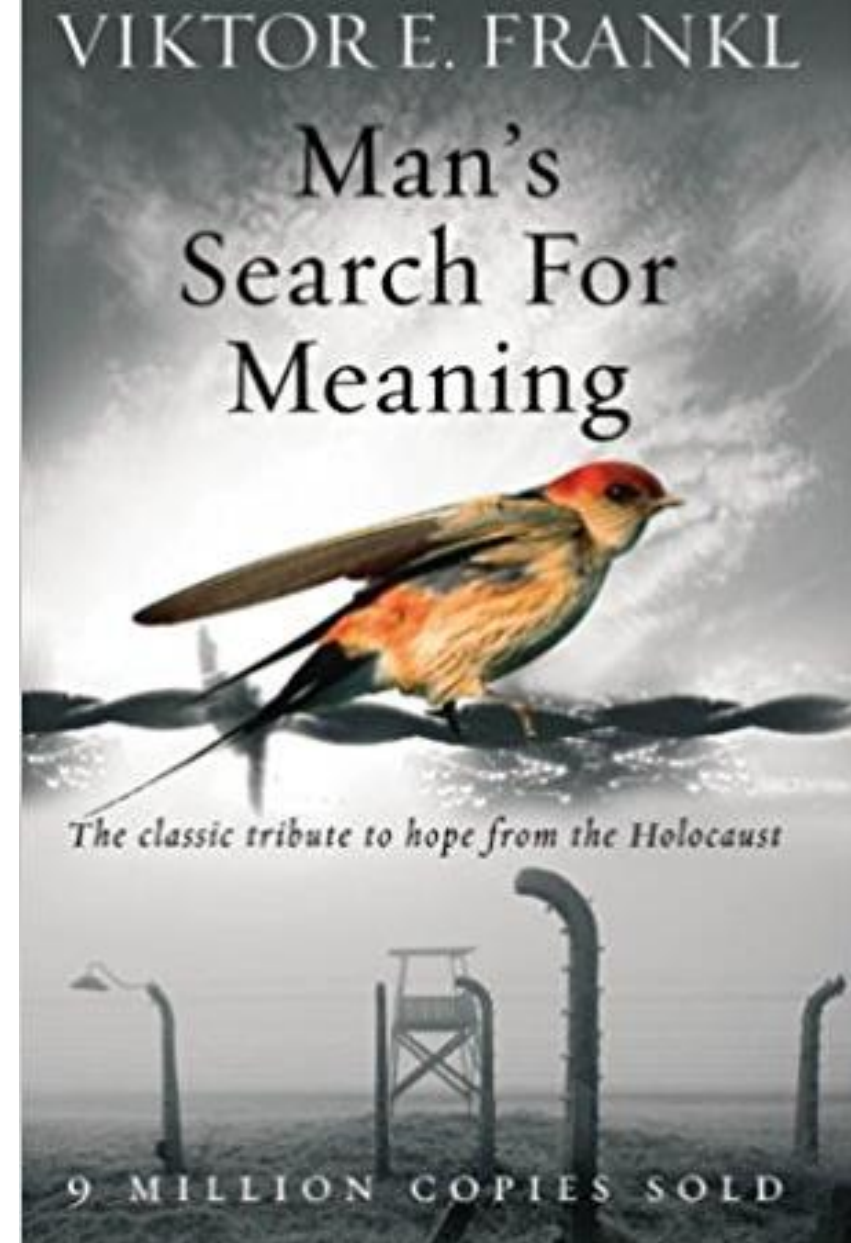
In the Auschwitz experience he learned that, “Life is not primarily a quest for pleasure, as Freud believed, or a quest for power, as Adler taught, but a quest for meaning.”



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“If thousands of hundreds of people reach out for a book whose very title promises to deal with the question of a meaning to life, it must be a question that burns under their fingernails.”



ADVENTISM OF FOR 21ST C EUROPE

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ID Seeker

- Life crisis
- Emptiness/ void
- Questions
- Tries different spiritual groups/different things
- Open minded

What do you see?

How to find them?

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching 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’.” – MH, 143

CHURCH



COMMUNITY

Connector

The influence of a friend has a strong influence in their time of need and search.

- SDA friend
- SDA neighbor and friend
- SDA work colleague and friend
- Former SDA and friend
- SDA friend of a nephew



Biblical Church

- **The church addressed their questions**

“They answered my questions. No other church was able to do that.”

“All the questions I had, the church answered it for me. So how could I’ve been anywhere else. You’ve given me everything I’ve ever wanted. Something to believe in, a faith. As to questions, who am I, where did I come from, where am I going, everything.”

“The SDA were kind of looking at the Bible in a more complete way.”

“This church group was the most biblical that I had come across in my experience.”

Biblical Church

- **The church matched with the Bible**

“Because all matched up with what the church did and believed, it was enough evidence to make me believe that fact that I’m in the right place.”

- **Preaching the Bible messages**

“The message was the most powerful thing.”

- **The church did not impose their beliefs on others, and valued the “freedom of choice” without “Bible bashing”**

“I didn’t feel they tried to preach to me, or come just to get the numbers up or baptism.”

Loving Church

- Accepts them for who they are in spite of look, culture or background
- Loves them with no conditions & the love shown brings them 'closer to Jesus'
- Welcomes the visitors and takes an interest in them
- It's a place where they feel they belong
- Does not judge or criticise them
- "Loving friendships break down any cultural barriers."

- "It's so lovely to feel I belong, I never felt I belonged anywhere. I had no real love from anyone. Being with the church has been for me that family unit that I never had."
- "People were friendly, they welcomed me, people took an interest in me and they didn't judge me. I think this helped me a great deal. The first time when I came to church I had long hair, I didn't change shoes, jeans, T-shirt. But no one condemned me for it, that helped me a great deal.
... One think I'm thankful for was that they were very patient with me. They didn't expect me to change in a day, or even a week, so that helped me a great deal."

“The guy that invited me to church, he started inviting me around his house and shown me love by making me some food and we did a short Bible study, but it was nothing too heavy. His love brought me into the church really. It was in a home setting that helped me a lot.

But when I was coming into the church, I don't like to say it, but it was lack of love. My faith was hanging on a few individuals, and if it wasn't for their consistent effort that they put into helping me, even through tears, through anger, through swearing, through everything, through my whole mess. If it wasn't for them people, I felt like I wasn't welcomed.

If a new comer comes in, you should think 'wow, God led them here' and you should think like to jump and welcome them. You not always get that. Not always get that. ... Love it has to show, you know.”

Reaching to the Unchurched:

- In a journey of Searching
- Personal relationships
- Biblical message
- Loving church

Questions:

- What will you do to find those who are searching?
- When you find them, what will you do to help them & introduce them to Christ?