



PHOTOS BY SKIP BAKER



## ***Resolution or Revolution?***

***Annual Council Resolution  
Could Change Direction of Church***

Some months ago, North American Division President Neal C. Wilson, burdened with a sense of urgency for finishing the work, called together a study group for counsel on implementing this vital thrust. Multiplied hours and days of work ensued, involving earnest and frank discussion on the issues and crises facing the church today. A preliminary document was prepared for wider study. As it has come through the various organizational channels it has been refined, and in some instances strong wording and recommendations were replaced by milder, more acceptable ones. However, the basic thrust and intent of the recommendation is still intact. R. H. Pierson, General

Conference president, believing that the principles outlined in this document were valid for other divisions, urged its adoption on a worldwide basis.

The MINISTRY editors consider the Annual Council action reprinted on the following pages the most important resolution voted at a church council in the past several decades. Because of this, we urge every worker to read carefully and meditate on the concepts presented. These recommendations, if carried out, could change the thrust and direction of the church. As it is heeded and implemented, this document will revolutionize the plans of some, change the direction of many, and touch the lives of all.

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# **Evangelism and Finishing God's Work**

A review of our history, our theology, and God's providential leadership can only deepen our conviction that the singular objective of this global organization, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is to proclaim to the whole world the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ in the context of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14, which, in addition to the cardinal doctrines of the Christian church, embody the distinctive truths of the sanctuary and righteousness by faith. The church exists for the purpose of touching lives with redemptive action, teaching young and old how to live in today's complex world as Jesus Christ lived nineteen centuries ago, and then developing this saving relationship by growing in grace and by witnessing to others and sharing the everlasting gospel with them.

As the final segment of our Lord's true sevenfold church that spans the centuries, we believe that our mission and message are to be the decisive factors in God's eternal judgment of earth's millions before the final disposal of Satan and sin. We also believe that God will yet use us to reach parliaments, palaces, legislatures, and the world's population with His last message and so shake the sinful order of the earth that individuals will either unite with God's loyal remnant and receive His seal or turn against them and receive the mark of the beast. We believe that we are the one remaining challenge to antichrist, and that in earth's last generation this church will be forced to stand against hell's legions, yet, in spite of all opposition, come through victoriously. When Jesus declared that "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," He meant that no enemy could possibly stand in the way of God's conquering church. "Enfeebled and defective as it may be, [the church] is the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme regard. . . . He commissions His angels to render divine help to every soul that cometh to Him in repentance and contrition."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 15.

While recognizing the ultimate victory of God's church, we firmly believe that preliminary victories must and can be ours now, if we fully obey the revealed will of God. Could it be that just as Israel of old needlessly expended precious time and energy in the wilderness when they could have enjoyed the blessings of Canaan-land we today are following a course which is delaying our entrance into the promised heaven-land? Perhaps the greatest enemies of the church are the apathy and rebellion found within its walls. Once we recognize that no enemy can stand before the church of Christ (presupposing its purity

and integrity), we must also recognize that Satan's attack within is a factor that the church has always had to deal with. The great reform churches are crumbling, not because of outside opposition, but from within. There has been a tragic loss of their reasons for existence and the will to pursue their original objectives.

Seventh-day Adventists still contend that their vision is unblurred and undimmed. We would, however, be less than honest with ourselves if we failed to acknowledge that the Adventist Church today is in a struggle not unlike the struggles of other great movements throughout history. It is incumbent upon us as leaders to examine carefully the central objective of this church, the progress we are making in finishing God's work, and the degree to which we are keeping the church on course.

Satan could easily triumph over this church if he either blurred this objective or caused a sleeping church to believe that she was reaching this objective while doing many lesser things of a laudable nature that fall short of this goal. Our danger could well be that of proliferating secondary activities. Yet, in spite of our human failure, let us encourage one another with the fact that we are in partnership with God.

## **Decisive, Unparalleled Action Needed Now**

Most members and ministers recognize that we are weakened by a Laodicean condition in the church. Recently one of our leaders addressed fifty ministers and in the course of his talk asked for response. His first question was "How many of you believe that the church in North America is finishing God's work on earth so that in a given length of time, whatever that time be, the work of God will actually be finished?" This created an uneasy atmosphere, but not a single hand was raised. He then asked the question "How many of you believe that the church is in a 'holding pattern' and is definitely not gaining on the actual finishing of God's work in North America?" Just about every hand was raised.

This presents problems of many dimensions, a few of which are listed below:

1. *Meeting highest pastoral objectives.*—As illustrated above, a significant number of our ministers are frustrated because they are not meeting their highest objectives. The things they believe about the finishing of God's work do not seem to materialize as a result of their ministry. Administration in the Adventist Church must study this problem with all diligence and find out how to "free" the pastoral-

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evangelistic worker in such a way as to let him feel the glory and the joy of meeting the prime objectives of the church. To focus our attention on this emphasis and to seek by the grace of God to implement His counsel is the purpose of this document.

2. *Fully implementing God's plan.*—Ellen White states that the Spirit of God, which lightens the whole earth with His glory, will never come while the largest portion of the church is not laboring together with God. We recognize that in the membership of our churches there is a vast potential that has not yet been fully realized. It should be our studied effort to involve all in harmony with God's plan.

3. *Concern for souls.*—The lack of concern over lost souls throughout our churches is a cause of great concern to all. The winning of souls by our members appears to some to be so awesome and difficult that it requires professional training. Pastoral sermons on evangelism have had a measure of success, but we long for a far greater response from our people. The term *evangelism* has come to have shades of meaning that are not scriptural, and therefore clear statements must be made to restore it to its scriptural definition.

4. *Proper balance between field and office personnel.*—While recognizing the fact that we must choose administrative and departmental leaders from among our strongest workers, we must admit that in doing this we may weaken instead of strengthen that area of work where soul winning mostly occurs. The church must diligently and faithfully seek to restore the basic evangelistic work force. In the process it must also seek to make all Adventist workers in all categories evangelistic and to lead the members of our churches to join in setting new priorities, norms, and objectives for accomplishing our task of a finished work.

5. *Standards and family worship and personal Bible study.*—The church has reason to be concerned about the slippage in standards of recreation, dress, and morality among us. Surveys conducted at selected academies, colleges, churches, and camp meetings would indicate that in North America, at least, there is a great need for special emphasis and continual endeavor to foster personal Bible study and family worship in our Adventist homes. We believe neglect in these areas has contributed to an inevitable decline in the spiritual strength of the church. Even more basic is the lack of evangelistic purpose and objectivity that has removed to a large degree the impetus for deep spirituality among us. In a tragic sense we are following the fearful trend of the early church in which, after the apostolic leaders were laid to rest, Christianity accommodated to paganism and little by little adopted it.

It is our conviction that if a sense of mission and commitment to evangelizing the world in an unprecedented manner is brought before the church through bold leadership we will witness a true revival and reformation.

After the restoration of the demoniacs, Christ commanded them to go and tell the story of their salvation to others. The comment of Ellen White on

this experience is most significant. "It is in working to spread the good news of salvation that we are brought near to the Saviour."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 340. Pentecost dramatically teaches us this same basic truth. We believe that the latter rain will be poured out and the upper-room experience of the disciples will be repeated when the leadership and laity of our movement, as the disciples of old, pray "with intense earnestness for a fitness to meet men. . . . The disciples felt their spiritual need and cried to the Lord for the holy unction that was to fit them for the work of soul saving. They did not ask for a blessing for themselves merely. They were weighted with the burden of the salvation of souls."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 37.

Surely, this sense of urgency and love for the souls of lost sinners must grip our hearts before we enjoy the mighty blessings of the latter rain. Furthermore, this concern for souls will give purpose to our study of the Word and to our personal and family devotions.

6. *Why has our Lord's coming been delayed?*—With deep heart-sorrow we acknowledge the delay of our Lord's return. Long ere this God's people should have been in the kingdom. Our insubordination, our spiritual apathy, our indifference to the urgency of soul winning in our personal lives as leaders and members, our failure to make first things first, delay our Lord's return. Today's Adventist generation can with God's blessing be the generation that will arise and finish God's work and put an end to the tragedy of our Lord's delay.

### The Real Issue

The real issue before the leadership of God's church is whether or not we are serious enough to take decisive action now to overcome the church's inertia and thus arise with holy courage and faith to finish God's work in all the world. At stake is the mission of the church and whether or not the powerful calls given by our General Conference president for revival and reformation, in which we have all shared, will be realized in a context of the greatest redemptive thrust in our history!

Administrative action is urgently needed to help reclaim this glorious Christ-centered purpose. The essence of righteousness, demonstrated by a faith that works, is evangelism, revival, and salvation. This work is to penetrate all the ranks of the church. We are, in these last days, called upon to do the kind of work upon which God can signally pour out His full blessing. It is time for the showers of the latter rain and the finishing of the work. We, as leaders, have permitted the pressures of our church and the influence of people and programs to distract us from our central work. It could well be that we are standing under a certain indictment of Heaven for not courageously and faithfully pursuing the finishing of God's work through direct evangelism, and that because of a "business as usual" attitude the calls for revival have not been followed with desired results as God has promised.

"All that the apostles did, every church member today is to do. And we are to work with as much more

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fervor, to be accompanied by the Holy Spirit in as much greater measure, as the increase of wickedness demands a more decided call to repentance. . . .

"At this time, when the end of all things is at hand, should not the zeal of the church exceed even that of the early church? . . . Should not the power of God be even more mightily revealed today than in the time of the apostles?"—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 33.

"If human agencies would but cooperate with divine agencies, many, many souls would be won to the truth. But the Lord's professing people have been sleeping over their allotted work."—*Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 46.

### Plan of Action

We have only words of appreciation for the leaders who have preceded us and who valiantly, under God's guidance, laid the foundations upon which we now seek to build. Ellen White expressed it beautifully when she wrote, "Having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what God has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 31.

It is for us now to determine the steps to take in order to give absolute priority to evangelism at all levels and on all fronts. To do this, we must let go certain areas of emphasis that now consume our time and attention and break loose for God in dynamic

evangelism. To continue in the status quo will only find us becoming more and more the victims of the church's miscellany, reacting instead of acting. As one writer expressed it, "We are so busy doing the urgent that we have no time to do the important."

A diligent effort has been initiated to focus and coordinate the soul-winning talents and energies of the entire church. This conditioning progress brought us closer to our goal of "every-member involvement." Our Annual Councils, through repeated discussions, appeals, studies, and prayer sessions, have directed our minds toward an all-out revival, reformation, and evangelistic thrust. During this time we have witnessed a greater advance in evangelism than ever before. We acknowledge, however, that God calls for a finished work. Therefore, with our potential of human and financial resources and under the direction and power of the Holy Spirit, and because of the promises of our Lord, we are determined that the gospel will be carried to everyone everywhere.

The task of moving the world church in the direction of placing unquestioned priority on evangelism, with attendant revival and reformation, is an awesome one and is fraught with difficulties. Leadership has either gotten us where we are or remained neutral when wrong trends took over. Hence, decisive administrative conviction and action are essential now in programming the priorities necessary for finishing God's work.

What do we mean by the term "finishing the work"? IT MEANS BOTH AN INWARD AND OUTWARD WORK—A PEOPLE SAVED BY GRACE, WORKING TO SAVE OTHERS. IT IS THE REACHING OF EVERY PERSON ON EARTH WITH THE CLAIMS AND PROMISES OF GOD'S MESSAGE OF LOVE AND SALVATION, SO THAT THIS GENERATION MAY HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO BE RESTORED IN HIS IMAGE, NOW AND FOREVER. THUS, THE "FINISHING OF THE WORK" MEANS ONE THING: COMMUNICATING GOD'S MESSAGE THROUGH THE POWER AND MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO ALL OF EARTH'S POPULATION SO THAT GOD CAN PROCLAIM HIS WORK FINISHED. WHEN THIS HAPPENS, JESUS WILL COME. "AND THIS GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM SHALL BE PREACHED IN ALL THE WORLD FOR A WITNESS UNTO ALL NATIONS; AND THEN SHALL THE END COME" (Matt. 24:14).

In the light of the foregoing, we accept the following plan of action:

1. *That every effort be made to bring about a clear, unequivocal, churchwide understanding of the crucial nature and primacy of evangelism.* All evangelism centers in Jesus Christ, who was and is the original evangelist. To be evangelistic, then, is to be like Christ, and the result of evangelism is Christ-likeness. The essence of redemptive concern was originally in the heart of God and Christ, and in the eternity of the past the plan of redemption was compacted between these Evangelists. The life of God's dear Son was given that mankind might be redeemed.

Perhaps one of the errors many Christians make is to believe that evangelism is optional, that it is one of



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many equal functions of the church of Jesus Christ. This is a fatal deception. The life-blood of the church is evangelism; without it the church cannot exist. The church was organized in order to evangelize, and its singular mission is to "carry the gospel to the world" (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9). The church that misuses, wrongly defines, buries, or strangulates the vast and wonderful force called evangelism puts the knife to its own jugular vein, for it fails in the only object of its existence. If we can permit the concept of the primacy and centrality of evangelism to penetrate every action made by the church, we will always keep priorities where God wants them to be. Any activity within the church that threatens or replaces evangelism is surely a tool of Satan and is illegitimate. The church's health and well-being are synchronous with that of its evangelistic fervor and success.

"Evangelistic work, opening the Scriptures to others, warning men and women of what is coming upon the world, is to occupy more and still more of the time of God's servants. . . . The Lord designs that the presentation of this message shall be the highest, greatest work carried on in the world at this time."—*Evangelism*, pp. 17, 18.

"Our greatest burden should be, not the raising of money, but the salvation of souls."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 85.

The primacy of evangelism makes it imperative to define it clearly and to keep this definition continually before the entire church body.

EVANGELISM IS THE COMMUNICATING OF THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE SETTING OF THE THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES IN SUCH A WAY AS TO MAKE POSSIBLE A RESPONSE IN THE HEARTS OF THE HEARERS TO ACCEPT GOD'S PROVISION OF SALVATION FROM SIN AND HIS PROVISION FOR VICTORY OVER SIN.

There are many excellent programs and projects that are most advantageous to use in the pre-evangelistic context, such as those concerned with diet, smoking, welfare, and other social benefits. But, worthy as they may be, if they do not lead to the new-birth experience in Christ and acceptance of the doctrinal tenets of God's remnant church, they consume the time, attention, and money of the church and its working force without achieving God's ultimate objective of saving a person for eternity. This salvation includes a much-needed emphasis on better living, which encompasses the restoration of the whole man.

"The principles of health reform are founded in the word of God. The gospel of health is to be *firmly linked* with the ministry of the word. It is the Lord's design that the restoring influence of health reform shall be a part of the last great effort to proclaim the gospel message."—*Medical Ministry*, p. 259. Emphasis supplied.

"The union of Christlike work for the body and Christlike work for the soul is the true interpretation of the gospel."—*Evangelism*, p. 514.

Therefore, through administrative action, it must be made clear by precept and example that programs

of the church shall be given attention and funding only as they aid in accomplishing the church's basic mission. We must demonstrate our commitment to our evangelistic objective by giving it our highest priority in the use of our personal and corporate time, talent, and means.

"Now is the time for the last warning to be given. . . . Decided efforts should be made to bring the message for this time prominently before the people. The third angel is to go forth with great power."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 16.

2. *That the role of the pastor be clarified.* Ellen White made a significant comment on the episode in Christ's ministry when a certain man appealed to the Saviour to correct an injustice relative to his parents' inheritance.

"The Saviour's mission on earth was fast drawing to a close. Only a few months remained for Him to complete what He came to do in establishing the kingdom of His grace. Yet human greed would have turned Him from His work to take up the dispute over a piece of land. But Jesus was not to be diverted from His mission. His answer was: 'Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?' Luke 12:14. Christ gave the man plainly to understand that this was not His work. He was striving to save souls. He was not to be turned aside from this to take up the duties of a civil magistrate. How often today labor is forced upon the church that should never be allowed to enter the work of the gospel ministry!"—*Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 217.

a. Church policy shall clearly state that the pastor-evangelist's first work and that for which he be held accountable is the giving of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the setting of the three angels' messages. This shall be done through Biblical preaching, teaching, and dynamic witness in personal and public evangelism, according to the gifts God has given.

"The minister who is a co-worker with Christ will have a deep sense of the sacredness of his work. . . . He has but one object in view—the saving of the lost."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 16.

"If our ministers realized how soon the inhabitants of the world are to be arraigned before the judgment-seat of God, they would work more earnestly to lead men and women to Christ."—*Ibid.*, p. 34.

b. Pastors who lead churches shall accept the responsibility of training and organizing ALL laypersons in the church for involvement in effective pre-evangelistic and evangelistic action with conference assistance in harmony with the Spirit of Prophecy instruction.

"The church of Christ is organized for service. Its watchword is ministry. . . . Christian ministers, physicians, teachers, have a broader work than many have recognized. They are not only to minister to the people, but to teach them to minister. . . . The monotony of our service for God needs to be broken up. Every church member should be engaged in some line of service for the Master. . . . Every church should be a training school for Christian workers."—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 148, 149.

"The work of God is retarded by the criminal unbelief in His power to use the common people to carry

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forward His work successfully.”—*Review and Herald*, July 16, 1895.

c. Pastors, with the help of conference leadership, shall select and train strong, capable laypersons to carry the various necessary “overhead” programs of the church, including financial, plant construction, maintenance, janitorial, and budgeting responsibilities, church school administration and planning, and certain departmental programs that the conference may promote. This shall be done in order that the pastor can be more free to do the spiritual work he is uniquely qualified to do—that of being soul-winning leader of the people and shepherd of the flock in personal and corporate redemptive witness and ministry.

“I have been instructed in regard to the importance of our ministers’ keeping free from responsibilities that should be largely borne by businessmen. . . . Those who are employed to write and to speak the word should attend fewer committee meetings.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 246, 247.

d. The pastor’s relationship to conference departments shall be such that he, as the leader of the church, can expect the active, practical support of the departmental leaders. Rather than submerge the shepherd of the flock in promotional material, the departmental leader will ever strive to make the pastor’s work more productive by keeping such material to an effective minimum. He shall make his

skills available to the soul-winning program of the church. While the pastor will lend his influence and encouragement to departmental programs, the departmental leader shall keep in mind that the soul-winning leader, with his church, and in the climate of complete evangelistic priority, must be allowed to make decisions as to which departmental materials and programs, aside from the conference-recommended projects, will enable him to have maximum success in his and the church’s endeavors. All programs must serve the evangelistic enterprise of the local church.

This freedom of choice given to the pastor and his church is not intended to eliminate or weaken denomination-wide programs, such as Sabbath school, Ingathering, et cetera. However, the success and responsibility of the various programs, campaigns, and goals must be placed largely on lay leadership, rather than on the pastor. The resultant benefit of this plan should open up new challenges and dimensions of service for departmental leaders in equipping and training their lay counterparts in the local church.

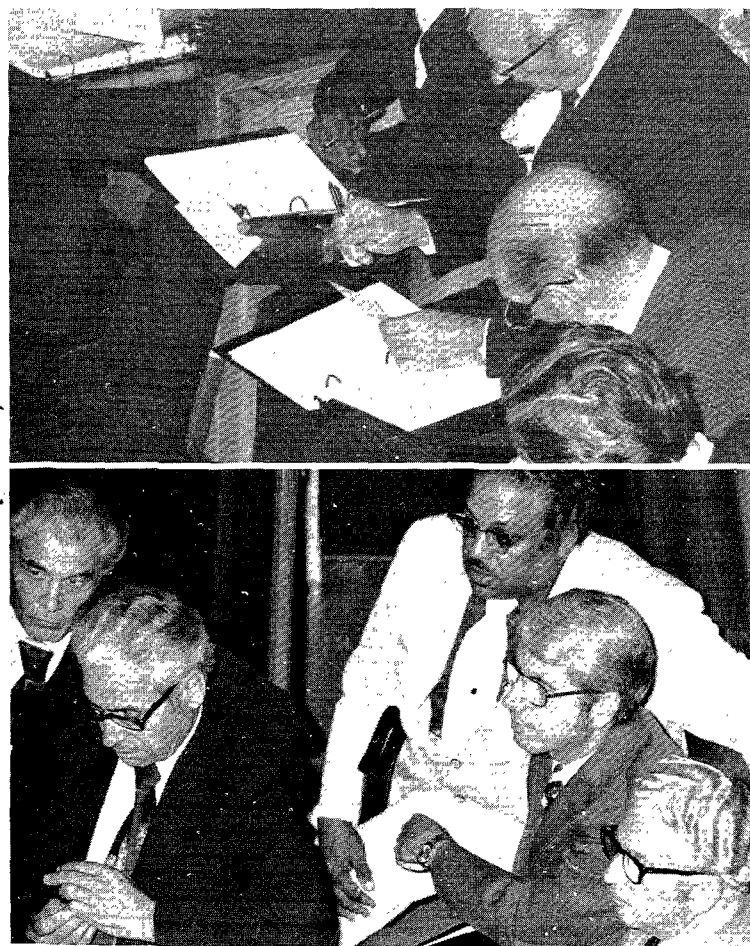
Thus the departmental system of the church will serve as a “resource bank.” This concept will allow the local church leadership to select and use programs and materials to supplement their evangelistic thrust. The role of the departmental leader shall be to prepare for field consumption the finest materials and the most efficient training programs, and to provide the best expertise and service to assist the pastor and laity in having success in the grand work of preparing earth’s final harvest. As the primacy of evangelism and the defining of the role of the pastor are made prominent, we believe there will be an urgency and desire on the part of pastors to call upon departmental leadership for assistance in executing the programs selected for the attainment of the twin goals—the winning of souls and the upbuilding of the spiritual life of each member.

3. *That the role of the ordained or licensed “non-pastoral” ministers be clarified.*

a. The large body of ministers in the General Conference and its divisions, the union and local fields, the institutions and other types of work shall be expected to give priority of their time, talent, energy, and planning to evangelistic work, according to their gifts, in preaching, personal witness, and teaching. As a means of making this priority possible, more attention shall be given to the voices of lay experts in the organizational structure, so that those called and ordained to the ministry may devote themselves to the ministry.

“The state conferences must have men at their head who love and fear God—capable men, who will learn in the school of Christ to be laborers with Him, to wear His yoke and lift His burdens. They are to be partners with Christ in the sacred service of soul-saving.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 320.

“When we follow plans of the Lord’s devising, we are ‘laborers together with God.’ Whatever our position—whether presidents of conferences, ministers, teachers, students, or lay members—we are held accountable by the Lord for making the most of our



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opportunities to enlighten those in need of present truth."—*Counsels to Parents and Teachers*, p. 530.

b. In the General Conference and its divisions, unions, local fields, and institutions, the spiritual leaders shall direct all other persons within their jurisdictions who earn their livelihood from the church into soul-winning labors, in fulfillment of the inspired counsel that ALL Christians be instrumental in winning souls to Christ and leading them to spiritual maturity. (When the family of full-time employees of the church engage in redemptive effort for the lost, then we can expect to succeed with the remainder of the church.)

c. The conference president, prayerfully and earnestly, with the executive committee, the conference lay advisory council, through personal interviews with every worker, through workers' meetings, and by using the local Church Evangelism councils, shall make certain that every action and plan of the conference is directed toward the primacy of evangelism and finishing the work. He is to set as the supreme goal of all phases of the work the reaching of every person in the conference territory with the message.

d. The conference administration shall lay the foundation and create the climate in all churches to assist the pastor in developing strong lay leadership to carry those church leadership functions that will serve to release the pastor from many miscellaneous duties, so that he can be the shepherd and soul-winning leader he is expected to be.

e. Conferences shall lay definite plans with every church, company, Sabbath school, and institution to reach every home within its territory with the three angels' messages between now and the time of the 1980 General Conference session in Dallas.

f. Conferences shall make specific plans for the follow-up of names of all persons who have been contacted through the various departmental activities of the church. One of the weakest links in our evangelistic chain is the follow-up of the multiplied thousands, if not millions, of names that have been gathered in during the past years. Immediate action must be taken to remedy this situation.

4. *That the funding of evangelistic outreach be provided for.*

a. In view of the primacy of evangelism, the local conference shall take from its share of retained tithe income at least 10 per cent annually and set it up for evangelistic funding. Unions shall set up at least 10 per cent of their share of retained tithe income to be added to evangelism funds received from the General Conference and shared with the conferences to be used for evangelism as the Union Committee may direct. The General Conference shall provide at least 10 per cent of tithe received from North America as an Evangelism Fund for North America, this percentage to include such funds as Tithe Reversion for Evangelism, Large City Evangelism, and operating appropriations to the Radio, TV, and Film Center. (Overseas divisions shall designate for evangelism an amount equal to 5 per cent of each Division Base Appropriation for Evangelism.)



In applying the above plan, retained tithe is defined as the balance of tithe available to the field after deducting any percentages passed on to higher organizations by policy such as tithe of tithe, percentage to General Conference, sustentation percentage, and small-conference percentage, but not including tithe exchanged.

The above amounts are to be considered the minimum amount of tithe funds that each organization shall designate for evangelism. If it is able to make financial provision beyond this, it should be done. In addition to funding direct evangelism, these funds could:

1) Make it possible for young ministerial graduates not currently employed to be used in direct evangelism in unworked areas.

"The opening of new fields requires more ministerial efficiency than we now have, and there must be means in the treasury."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 250.

"There should today be in the field one hundred well qualified laborers where now there is but one."—Manuscript 82, 1904.

2) Assist in expanding our radio and television outreach (including cable stations, local broadcasting, and adequate advertising) so as to get the three angels' messages prominently before the peoples of the world.

3) Assist churches with the purchase and distribution of a full-message, inexpensive magazine that could be distributed by the millions. If we are serious about giving the three angels' messages to every person by the end of this quinquennium, we can do no less than this.

b. In North America, all divisionwide projects shall be funded by the General Conference and by such amounts as may be contributed by each union. Distribution of these funds shall be approved by Annual Council action. It is understood that funds received from higher organizations shall not be considered a part of the minimum percentages required by this plan.

This new proposal is not intended to release for other purposes funds that would normally go for evangelism.

"Let the work no longer be hedged up because the



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tithe has been diverted into various channels other than the one to which the Lord has said it should go. Provision is to be made for these other lines of work. They are to be sustained, but not from the tithe."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 250.

c. On the level of local and union conference organizations the percentage of funds designated for this purpose in 1977 shall be at least 4 per cent, with a plan to increase this by 2 per cent each year until the minimum goal of 10 per cent is attained. (Overseas divisions shall begin at 2 per cent for 1977, increasing by one per cent each year until the minimum of 5 per cent is reached.)

5. *That limitations on building projects be established.* A serious attempt shall be made to be conservative in our building expansion so that only absolutely essential buildings are constructed. Buildings and furnishings should be attractive, functional, of sturdy quality, and economical. Let us demonstrate to our people and to the world that we do not believe in building extravagantly as though we intend to make this world our home. We must remember that the only things that will survive the destruction of the last days are the souls who are prepared for the coming of the Lord. We must also remember that our great institutions can be, and are now being, nationalized in many places of the world. The one purpose of this economy would be to release more funds for the church to use in giving the last warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

"It is not a great number of institutions, large buildings, and outward display that God requires, but the harmonious action of a peculiar people, a people chosen by God and precious, united with one another, their life hid with Christ in God."—*Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 183.

"It is not large, expensive buildings; it is not rich furniture; it is not tables loaded with delicacies, that will give our work influence and success. It is the faith that works by love and purifies the soul; it is the atmosphere of grace that surrounds the believer, the Holy Spirit working upon mind and heart, that makes him a savor of life unto life, and enables God to bless his work."—*Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 93.

6. *That the call to God's people be renewed.*

a. An unprecedented call to universal action is to be heralded by our leadership, coupled with a new emphasis upon the previous calls to revival and reformation, with the urgent summons to arise and finish God's work NOW!

"Let the gospel message ring through our churches, summoning them to universal action. . . . Those who place themselves under God's control, to be led and guided by Him, will catch the steady tread of the events ordained by Him to take place. Inspired with the Spirit of Him who gave His life for the life of the world, they will no longer stand still in impotency, pointing to what they cannot do. Putting on the armor of Heaven, they will go forth to the warfare, willing to do and dare for God, knowing that His omnipotence will supply their need."—*Ibid.*, p. 14.

b. Positive leadership through departmental expertise is to provide the necessary diversity of redemptive programs and materials that can be used to

organize, inspire, train, equip, and lead our vast army of church members into programs that are pre-evangelistic, evangelistic, and post-evangelistic in nature, and which will definitely reach souls for Christ and truth.

c. The Church Evangelism Council in each church is to fulfill its potential as the "command center" to organize every member and the whole church for one-to-one witnessing and all-out evangelism.

d. Methods shall be developed for training laypersons of talent in order that they may lead the local church in areas such as those listed below, which will have the effect of freeing the pastor for his unique role:

- 1) Financial management
- 2) Church school management
- 3) General church administration
- 4) Certain departmental programs

7. *That unworked areas and special groups be reached.* Each local field shall give study to the advisability of setting up a commission composed of ministers and laymen with the urgent assignment to study the entering of dark areas (counties, cities, sections within cities) in each conference, reaching the wealthy and foreign-language groups. Literature evangelists, lay members, sustentees, retirees, and youth volunteers should be actively recruited to form teams to begin work in unentered areas. A call should be made to all ministerial sustentation workers to move into those areas where the church needs strengthening.

"Instead of keeping the ministers at work for the churches that already know the truth, let the members of the churches say to these laborers: 'Go work for souls that are perishing in darkness. We ourselves will carry forward the services of the church.'"—*Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 30.

"Brethren who wish to change their location, who have the glory of God in view, and feel that individual responsibility rests upon them to do others good, to benefit and save souls for whom Christ withheld not His precious life, should move into towns and villages where there is but little or no light and where they can be of real service and bless others with their labor and experience. Missionaries are wanted to go into towns and villages and raise the standard of truth, that God may have His witnesses scattered all over the land, that the light of truth may penetrate where it has not yet reached, and the standard of truth be raised where it is not yet known. The brethren should not flock together because it is more agreeable to them, but should seek to fulfill their high calling to do others good, to be instrumental in the salvation of at least one soul. But more may be saved than one."—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 115.

8. *That ministers of other faiths be reached.* It is time seriously to follow God's instruction that "teachers of the gospel whose minds have not been called to the special truths for this time . . . should be the first to hear the call."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 230.

"Mistakes have been made in not seeking to reach ministers . . . with the truth. . . . There are honest

## Annual Council Action

ones everywhere for whom we should labor cautiously, wisely, and intelligently, full of love for their souls."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 580.

"We have a work to do for the ministers of other churches. God wants them to be saved. . . . We must labor for them earnestly that they may obtain [immortality]. God wants them to have a part in His special work for this time. He wants them to be among the number who are giving to His household meat in due season. Why should they not be engaged in this work?"

"Our ministers should seek to come near to the ministers of other denominations. Pray for and with these men, for whom Christ is interceding. A solemn responsibility is theirs. As Christ's messengers we should manifest a deep, earnest interest in these shepherds of the flock."—*Ibid.*, vol. 6, pp. 77, 78.

"There are many ministers now preaching error, who will preach the truth for this time."—*Evangelism*, p. 562.

9. *That evangelistic radio-TV ministry be utilized.* The North American Division leadership should make use of the existing Radio, Television and Film Center in Thousand Oaks, California, to produce radio-television and audio-visual evangelistic

programs or "spots" that will most effectively and quickly warn the population of the world that Christ will soon return, and that will urge the necessity of final preparation. We should not rest until we find successful follow-up methods that involve the members of our local churches. TV specials should be designed and produced to take advantage of special occasions, such as the beginning of an evangelistic campaign or a national holiday.

10. *That a section on witnessing be included in the chapter "Statement of Fundamental Beliefs" in the CHURCH MANUAL.* Since witnessing is a doctrine of prime importance both for the personal spiritual growth of the witness and for the fulfilling of Christ's command to reach every person on a worldwide basis with the good news of salvation, a section dealing with this basic philosophy should be included and/or strengthened in our Statement of Fundamental Beliefs, Baptismal Instructions, and Baptismal Vows in the *Church Manual*. It was further

VOTED, To recommend that overseas divisions adopt the principles enunciated in the preceding document with the understanding that each division will prepare a similar document suitable to conditions in its field.



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adise Restored, Eden to the Judgment, with perhaps the most emphasis on the life of Christ. It contains a liberal supply of pictures dealing with His teachings, miracles, healings, and parables. A large number are devoted to the Old and New Testaments, with sections on Advent history, Acts to Revelation, as well as historical and political topics, plus a large selection of miscellaneous pictures.

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The program contains all of those wonderful pictures you have seen on our calendars and in our periodicals over the years that you have wished you had, e.g., the Golden Gate Bridge collapsing in an earthquake, as seen recently on the cover of the *Signs*—Christ knocking at the U.N.—the hourglass over earth orbited by satellites—Jesus enshrouded by a majestic universe, with protecting arms about the world—and many more.

# There Must Be Death Before Burial

ELLEN WHITE was in Napier, New Zealand, April 9, 1893, when she wrote to A. T. Jones, one of the speakers on righteousness by faith at the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference session. Elder Jones had presented some powerful, Spirit-filled messages from God to help prepare a people for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the loud cry, and the finishing of the work. The Lord's messenger strongly endorsed those messages.

Evidently, however, A. T. Jones went further than the Lord intended him to go in disassociating works from faith. He had swung the pendulum so far from legalism that some of his remarks, at least, left his hearers with the impression that works play absolutely no part in the Christian's quest for eternal life. This was the "cheap grace" of the 1890's.

Ellen White had a message from the Lord dealing with this "too-easy salvation." Listen:

"I was attending a meeting, and a large congregation were present. In my dream you were presenting the subject of faith and the imputed righteousness of Christ by faith. You repeated several times that works amounted to nothing, that there were no conditions. The matter was presented in that light that I knew minds would be confused, and would not receive the correct impression in reference to faith and works, and I decided to write to you."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 377.

Notice these words, "I knew minds

*From One Leader  
to Another*



*Robert H. Pierson*

*Robert H. Pierson  
is president of the  
General Con-  
ference of Seventh-  
day Adventists.*

would be confused." The Lord's messenger did not accuse Elder Jones of wrong motives or insincerity because he had left the impression "that works amounted to nothing, that there were no conditions" laid down by God for the reception of Christ's righteousness. But she was concerned about the confusion that his unscriptural position might bring in among the people.

The Word of God is clear—"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). When we confess we are forgiven. There is no long probation during which God holds us at arm's length to make sure we are truly repentant and that we are going to maintain our experience.

We must be certain, however, that our confession has been born in a truly *repentant* heart—that we hate the sin that caused us to fall. If this is our experience God fulfills His promise. We are forgiven. At that moment we stand justified before God because His Son's death has paid the penalty for our confessed sins. For us eternal life begins then. This is imputed righteousness.

Is this all? No, it is only the *first* step. But it is a most important step.

Justification through faith in Christ's atonement cares for the sins of the past. What about sin as an ever-present power? What about our need for daily victory in our lives? This too is vitally important. From the point in time when justification is first received the work of sanctification begins. We are but babes in Christ when we are born into the family of God. If we live we shall grow and develop. Our characters are to become like our divine Pattern—Jesus.

Accepting Christ is the first step on the road to the kingdom. Repentance, confession, restitution, obedience, are of utmost import. We are to "follow on to know the Lord" (Hosea 6:3). Jesus makes clear that if we love Him we will keep His commandments (John 14:15).

While we are not saved by keeping the commandments, he who is saved will choose to keep them. The law points out sin (Rom. 3:20). The Holy Spirit through the broken law points us to Christ for forgiveness and cleansing (Gal. 3:24). Our commandment keeping will be prompted by a great love for Him. We love Jesus. We have committed our lives to Him. With the indwelling power of His Spirit we bring our living into harmony with His will.

It is true that during the initial con-

tact with an unsaved person we do not need to explain the twenty-three hundred days, the state of the dead, the Sabbath question, et cetera, but we should reveal the part that repentance, confession, and even restitution play in the new convert's walk with Christ. These important steps in their quest for eternal life should not be passed over lightly.

### First Steps Only the Beginning

As he takes these first steps the repentant sinner should know that this is just the beginning, that there is much more to follow! It will be a glorious beginning, and that which follows will be filled with help and hope through Christ. This loving frankness will not turn men and women away nor cause them to make an unfavorable decision. *Candor, when Christ-centered, can beget confidence!*

In her letter to A. T. Jones from New Zealand, Ellen White underscores the need for making clear the close relationship between faith and works: "There are conditions to our receiving justification and sanctification, and the righteousness of Christ. I know your meaning, but you leave a wrong impression upon many minds. *While good works will not save even one soul, yet it is impossible for even one soul to be saved without good works.*"—*Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

Jesus and inspired writers of the Word always sought to make the way to eternal life plain. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). There is *self-denial* in following Him. Denying self is no easy matter. It may well involve a bitter struggle. Following Jesus means bearing a cross. Cross-bearing is an agonizing experience, for crosses "cut across" our natural inclinations and tendencies.

"The foxes have holes," Jesus said, "and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (chap. 8:20). The Saviour did not hold out an easy life as a reward to those who would follow Him. Walking in the Master's steps involves, at times, bearing the self-denial cross, and even physical discomfort. Candidates for the kingdom need to be given the truth about these facts.

*"While good works will not save even one soul, yet it is impossible for even one soul to be saved without good works."*

***We must see the fruits of righteousness in a candidate's life before we baptize him.***

This is very plain. Jesus, Bible writers, Ellen White, all give works their proper place—they are the *fruit* of faith.

Sanctification is the experience of becoming like Jesus. While justification is the work of an instant, our character-developing process will continue for a lifetime. Our ultimate goal is the development of characters like our Saviour's.

To develop such characters we need to learn about the spotless One and what He requires of those who follow Him. We must know what is right and what is wrong. We need to know what Jesus did. This means we must be taught. The Word of God, the Gospels, His perfect law, all point us to Him and reveal the attributes of His sinless character. "The principles of the law of God were wrought out in the character of Jesus Christ, and he who cooperates with Christ, becoming a partaker of the divine nature, will develop the divine character, and become an illustration of the divine law."—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 58.

That is why Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19, R.S.V.). Note well that a person becomes a disciple before he is baptized. This is Jesus' order of experience. But what does it mean to become a disciple and how is it accomplished? The Greek word used for making disciples means to instruct, train, teach, and discipline. Disciples are made by thorough instruction and teaching. A disciple is one who has "professed to have learned principles from another" (*Unger's Bible Dictionary*). This must precede baptism.

Before a person is baptized, under the conviction of the Holy Spirit he is led to repentance and confession of sin. Then comes the teaching, the instruction. The candidate should understand what it means to be baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." For this reason Jesus amplified the disciples' mission by instructing them to teach the people to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded (verse 20).

There are many things that God has reminded us to observe. Call them externals, call them works, call them anything we may choose; but Jesus said, "teach all nations," "observe all things," and the teaching is *before the baptizing*. There should be the outward evidence of

a transformed inner life before a person is baptized. The old man must be dead before he is buried. With some it may take a few days, with others it may require a few weeks or even months—but there must be every evidence of a *death* before there is a *burial*.

The Lord's messenger places emphasis on this order of events: "The accession of members who have not been renewed in heart and reformed in life is a source of weakness to the church. This fact is often ignored. Some ministers and churches are so desirous of securing an increase of numbers that they do not bear faithful testimony against unchristian habits and practices. Those who accept the truth are not taught that they cannot safely be worldlings in conduct while they are Christians in name. Heretofore they were Satan's subjects; henceforth they are to be subjects of Christ. The life must testify to the change of leaders."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 172.


We all desire to see men and women accept Christ and His last-day message and join the ranks of His remnant church. These numbers will continue to increase until "thousands in a day" will find their way through the door of the

***The old man must be dead before we have a burial.***

church—and into the kingdom of heaven. Coming into the front door of the church is not enough. They must come with an experience in Christ that assures that they are also candidates for the kingdom.

"Only when the church is composed of pure, unselfish members, can it fulfill God's purpose. Too much hasty work is done in adding names to the church roll. Serious defects are seen in the characters of some who join the church. Those who admit them say, We will first get them into the church, and then reform them. But this is a mistake. The very first work to be done is the work of reform. Pray with them, talk with them, but do not allow them to unite with God's people in church relationship until they give decided evidence that the Spirit of God is working on their hearts."—Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, May 21, 1901.

We must see the fruits of righteousness in a candidate's life before we baptize him. The evidences of the new life must be apparent to all. The old man must be dead before the new man can truly live.

We must be as certain as we can be that there has been a death before we have a burial. 

## ***The Messiah as the Branch***

W. E. READ

Several Scripture texts refer to the Messiah as the branch. Some of these texts mention BRANCH, spelled in capital letters (see Zechariah 3:8; 6:12). It is evident from the context of both these scriptures that they had at that time a futuristic hope and longing.

In the Brenton LXX, the English text for Zechariah 3:8 contains the reading "The Branch," but the Greek text has *anatolen*—and Young's *Analytical Concordance* mentions as possible translations—"dayspring" or "sunrising" or "branch."

This is seen more clearly in the Thomson LXX, for his English version reads "Behold, I am bearing My servant *Anatolē*, the Dayspring."

The same rendering is given

in the New Testament in several texts, in the K.J.V. and other versions. See:

1. *Luke 1:78*—"Whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us." Margin reads "sunrising, or, branch" and refers to *Malachi 4:2*, "The Sun of righteousness."

The New American Standard gives "Sunrise." The New English Bible gives "The morning sun." See also Syriac Peshitto, Holy Name Bible, Sacred Name New Testament, Cunningham, et cetera.

### **On Other Texts**

The expression "Day-star" appears in other scriptural texts, but stems from a different Greek word—*phōsphoros*.

2. *2 Peter 1:16, 19*—"The Mes-

siah" "the Morning Star" (Amplified). In other texts, all in the Apocalypse, we read of another Greek word, *proionon*, as "morning Star." See also New American Standard, Kleist and Lilley New Testament, Amplified, Jerusalem Bible.

Note the following English translations:

*Jerusalem Bible:*

"The Title 'Son of God' was to be conferred on King-Messiah" (on Rev. 22:16).

*The Kleist and Lilley translation of the New Testament:*

"Christ is the Morning Star" (Rev. 2:28).

*The Weymouth Translation of the New Testament:*

"The Morning Star [is] Christ Himself" (Rev. 2:28).



# "Giants in the Earth"

HOW HEALTHY could man be, how tall might he grow, and how long might he live, if he were given the best of conditions? What is the true potential of human life?

Ellen White writes, "As Adam came forth from the hand of his Creator he was of noble height and of beautiful symmetry. He was more than twice as tall as men now living upon the earth, and was well proportioned."—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 21.

A few years ago my teen-aged son and I were browsing through the fantastic museum of antiquities, the Louvre in Paris, when I was stopped short by an imposing pedestaled sculpture. Labeled simply "Antinous," it probably represented the head of a distinguished citizen of Imperial Rome. What caught my attention was the size of this handsome work, done far larger than life. Hasty measurement confirmed that the distances between the pupils of the eyes, between the centers of the nose and the ear, and between the tip of the nose and the chin were essentially twice those of my own. The enormity of the head was amazing, almost awe-inspiring.

Adam must have been one of those individuals described in Genesis 6:4 as "giants in the earth, . . . mighty men which were of old, men of renown." Whether or not being "well-proportioned" meant having a head the size of Antinous' sculpture, Adam would certainly have been an imposing figure among men of today. Had his limbs and other body proportions been double those of modern men as well (with an eight-fold increase in volume and weight), he would have weighed more than 1,200 pounds.

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ton.*

More remarkable than the large size of these antediluvian "men of renown," however, were the long lives recorded of those we now call patriarchs. Nine of those who preceded Noah attained more than seven hundred years of age; some approached a thousand (see Gen. 5:4-31).

What could one do with such a lifespan? Ellen White writes, "Notwithstanding the wickedness of the antediluvian world, that age was not, as has often been supposed, an era of ignorance and barbarism. The people were granted the opportunity of reaching a high standard of moral and intellectual attainment. . . . Could illustrious scholars of our time be placed in contrast with men of the same age who lived before the Flood, they would appear as greatly inferior in mental as in physical strength. As the years of man have decreased, and his physical strength has diminished, so his mental capacities have lessened. There are men who now apply themselves to study during a period of from twenty to fifty years, and the world is filled with admiration of their attainments. But how limited are these acquirements in comparison with those of men whose mental and physical powers were developing for centuries."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 82, 83.

What about the level of technology before the Flood? "There perished in the Flood greater inventions of art and human skill than the world knows of today."—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on Gen. 6:4, p. 1089. The servant of God adds, "More was lost in the Flood, in many ways, than men today know."

We think of the present-day proliferation in areas of invention, knowledge, and technology as resulting from centuries of accumulated bits and pieces gained from hundreds of thousands of discoveries and works contributed by countless individuals. Each of these persons had a productive life "of from twenty to fifty years." But think what it must have been like in a time when lives spanned nearly a thousand years, and no one ever forgot what he once heard or saw! "It is true that the people of modern times have the benefit of the attainments of their predecessors. The men of masterly minds, who planned and studied and wrote, have left their work for those who follow. But even in this respect, and so far as merely human knowledge is concerned, how much greater the advantages of the men of

that olden time! . . . The antediluvians were without books, they had no written records; but with their great physical and mental vigor, they had strong memories, able to grasp and to retain that which was communicated to them, and in turn to transmit it unimpaired to their posterity. And for hundreds of years there were seven generations living upon the earth contemporaneously, having the opportunity of consulting together and profiting each by the knowledge and experience of all."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 83.

The potential for such life boggles the mind—the opportunity to live through ten consecutive lifetimes! How much important history has occurred in the past 900 years! What would it have been to live through it all? How much we could learn, and how much life we could savor, with that much longevity and the health and vigor to accompany it!

***Think what it must have been like in a time when lives spanned nearly a thousand years, and no one ever forgot what he once heard or saw!***

PHOTO BY AUTHOR



But the Scriptures record a more dismal facet of this idyllic period. The prospect of living so far into the misty future turned the minds of many of these hardy antediluvians. In terms we can only partially grasp today, the Bible says that "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and . . . every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." "The earth . . . was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Gen. 6:5, 11). God commented specifically on this. He said, "The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence," and "it grieved him at his heart" (Gen. 6:13, 6).

Such violent behavior inevitably results in sorrow, suffering, and death. Practiced on a large scale, violent lifestyles must have condemned many people to unhappy lives from childhood on up. As a consequence, the Lord said that man's life-span would be diminished. Since the last of the patriarchs died, few people in all of recorded history have exceeded 120 years of life. Ellen White writes: "Looking upon the world, God saw that the intellect He had given man was perverted. . . . God had given these men knowledge. He had given them valuable ideas, that they might carry out His plan. But the Lord saw that those whom He designed should possess wisdom, tact, and judgment, were using every quality of the mind to glorify self. By the waters of the Flood, He blotted this long-lived race from the earth, and with them perished the knowledge they had used only for evil."—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on Gen. 6:4, p. 1089.

It is always sad to see people abuse a potential for happiness and life. As the antediluvians lived like spoiled children, so people today neglect their possibilities too. Longevity as we know it comes about through a combination of many factors. The longest-lived people we know of have a strong genetic and constitutional inheritance, practice proper nutrition, and get adequate exercise. They also remain relatively free from pathological organisms, metabolic diseases, and traumatic accidents or violence, and they hold proper mental attitudes. An individual cannot, of course, help his inheritance, but he can control many of these other factors. Though few really die of "old age" today—there is always failure of one organ or another to precipitate death among the aged—at best there seems

to be almost a built-in trajectory of life. The growth centers of almost all the bones have fused by age 22, and growth stops. From one's middle twenties onward, processes of arthritis and other degenerative conditions begin, and the body's regenerative powers slowly decline. This trajectory and the accompanying decline of regenerative processes were evidently much different in antediluvian days. Ellen White writes, "God did not create the race in its present feeble condition. This state of things . . . has been brought about by wrong habits and abuses, by violating the laws that God has made to govern man's existence."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 23.

Healthwise, the antediluvians far surpassed anything we know today. "It took more than two thousand years of crime and indulgence of base passions to bring bodily disease upon the race to any great extent."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 23. "We find no record that an infant was born blind,

Unfortunately, even with our present limited life-span, people still behave as if they thought their gift of life was forever, and they squander precious years with reckless behavior and willful disregard of the laws of their nature.

People who treasure life for what it can give them and for what they can do for others will try to make the most of their opportunities for building health and strength. Aided by the grace of Christ, they will avoid the things which tend to shorten life and will actively pursue those which extend it. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," Paul wrote (Phil. 4:13). Seventy years, or ninety years, though far short of antediluvian centuries, are enough to give us a taste of life well lived.

A primary object of the plan of redemption has been to restore to man his "original inheritance," long life in an environment like that which Adam enjoyed (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 682). Someday, when Christ comes, we will

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## ***Healthwise, the antediluvians far surpassed anything we know today.***

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deaf, crippled, or imbecile. Not an instance is recorded of a natural death in infancy, childhood, or early manhood. . . . It was so rare for a son to die before his father, that such an occurrence was considered worthy of record: 'Haran died before his father Terah.'"—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 117.

It took only a few generations after the Flood for deterioration to become evident. Man's life-span tapered off almost immediately. Within less than 1,500 years David was reckoning the age of man at "threescore years and ten" (Ps. 90:10), a figure which stands in our day.

By the time of Abraham, less than four hundred years after the Flood (according to the usual interpretation of the Masoretic text chronological data), Sumerian tablets were already describing diseases of the eye and ear, rheumatism, tumors, abscesses, diseases of heart and skin, and venereal disease (see Arturo Castiglioni, *A History of Medicine*, p. 39).

As we realize something of the extent to which man has fallen and degenerated from the time giants walked the earth, we can better grasp our need to utilize, in the best way possible, the life resources we have left to us.

be given a new body in a world free from pathological bacteria and viruses, and we will live in a community of peace-loving, redeemed neighbors. We will have access to the tree of life with its regenerating qualities. Then we may look forward to a far better state, when we will grow both in body and in mind. As Ellen White observed, "All come forth from their graves the same in stature as when they entered the tomb. Adam, who stands among the risen throng, is of lofty height and majestic form, in stature but little below the Son of God. He presents a marked contrast to the people of later generations; in this one respect is shown the great degeneracy of the race. . . . All blemishes and deformities are left in the grave. Restored to the tree of life in the long-lost Eden, the redeemed will 'grow up' (Mal. 4:2) to the full stature of the race in its primeval glory."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 644, 645.

When Jesus said, in John 10:10, "I am come that they might have life, and . . . might have it more abundantly," He portrayed not only a glorious future but a better present. He came to put years into our life and life into our years, and to help us get a foretaste of our real potential. 

# The SDA Security Blanket

"JESUS IS COMING! Jesus is coming! We must get ready! We must get ready!" You would expect these words from a preacher. But, instead, Satan is the speaker. He has called an important meeting of all his executive devils to plan the last great deception of man.

"Jesus is coming!" he exclaims. "We must find a way to deceive the world. Are there any suggestions?"

Hands fly up all over the assembly. Fallen angels, who have spent thousands of years tempting man, are eager to share ideas on how to trap the human race. These masterminds of deception are happily involved in planning a great, masterful delusion to falsify the coming of Christ.

Every man, woman, and child will be duped by their persuasive powers. Everyone, that is, except those who have built a firm foundation upon the Scriptures. For "none but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 593, 594.

The devil is planning one last massive attack against man. The Bible speaks of it. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (chap. 24:11). "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14).

Climaxing the book of Revelation is a description of the greatest deception in the history of the world. The entire population will wonder after the beast, who

gets his authority from the devil himself. All the world will be deceived—except one small group. John refers to them as those who "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:17). Jesus calls them God's "elect." "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. 24:24).

Perhaps you are sitting smugly in your chair thinking, I won't have a problem with deceptions. I have the truth about prophecy. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has had it for more than a hundred years. The early church fathers figured all this out. I can't possibly be deceived!

Don't be so sure! Do you honestly believe that Satan is naive enough to carry out his deceptions the way you think he will? Are finite men conceited enough to think they can outsmart one of the greatest minds in the universe?

Too many times people tend to study the charts and examine the diagrams *someone else has prepared* and never study the Bible for themselves. Out of this surface study comes speculation. Such as, "When Russia and the United States get into such and such an alignment you'd better watch out!" or, "Those

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DAN GODDARD

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Arabs and Jews are at it again. This is Armageddon for sure!"

It is this speculative thinking, based on superficial Biblical knowledge, that lulls people into a false sense of security. Many sit, like the *Peanuts'* character Linus, holding their blanket of teachings and speculations in their arms and feeling secure that they know exactly what will happen. This is the "Seventh-day Adventist security blanket." But the security it brings is false!

It will take more than a shallow study of last-day events to become one of God's elect. The elect of God are a select group. Select because of their diligent study of the Word. Satan knows that if he can lead a Christian to neglect Bible study, he has him. "Satan well knows that all whom he can lead to neglect prayer and the searching of the Scriptures, will be overcome by his attacks. Therefore he invents every possible device to engross the mind."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 519.

This is why study of God's Word is so important. It is not a way to pass the day; it is the Christian's survival kit. With this concept in mind, Paul's words to Timothy take on new meaning, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, . . . rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

A knowledge of God's truth is essential. Why? "So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested."—*Ibid.*, p. 593.

### Our Lie Detector

Isaiah tells us, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20). God's Word becomes our lie detector. Only with a genuine understanding of what the Bible says can we detect the devil's lies.

When he comes our senses will tell us, "This must be Christ! Look at all the wonderful things he does and says!" All logic will confirm what we see and hear. But we cannot depend upon logic or senses. We must depend upon God's Word.

This is why every Christian must know the truth for himself. He cannot depend on friends, for they might fail. He cannot depend on books or articles, for they could be erroneous. He can't even depend on the leaders of the church, for they may be deceived. The only

### ***The Bible is the Christian's survival kit.***


thing he can count on is his Bible, and he must know what it says.

After Christ talked of false prophets and teachings, He told a parable. "All who listen to my instructions and follow them are wise, like a man who builds his house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents, and the floods rise and the storm winds beat against his house, it won't collapse, for it is built on rock. But those who hear my instructions and ignore them are foolish, like a man who builds his house on sand. For when the rains and floods come, and storm winds beat against his house, it will fall with a mighty crash" (Matt. 7:24-27, T.L.B.).\*

I believe that in Christ's parable of the houses the two men involved built their houses side by side. They were the same type of structures. But there was one very important difference. One man was impatient. He didn't bother to build a foundation but threw his house together quickly. The other spent time digging down deep through the sand and the earth until he struck solid rock. It was upon this rock that he built his foundation. Both houses appeared the same until the storm came. As a result of wind, rain, and flood, the house with the firm foundation remained while the other was destroyed.

Many do not see the importance of diligent Bible study. They are content to dig a little here and there, barely scratching the surface. But there are some who are not content with a shallow understanding of God's Word. These are the ones who dig deep into the words of God until they have found a firm foundation.

Certainly every believer today knows that deceptions are coming. But few realize the strong possibility of their being deceived. A time is coming like no time this world has ever known. Our only guideline will be the Bible. This Book is our lamp, our light. It is our detector of deception. It will be impossible to distinguish Satan's counterfeits without a deep understanding of its contents.

When the winds of deception blow upon us and the rains of uncertainty beat down, it will be painfully obvious who has built on the rock of the Word and who hasn't. It will be seen who it is that has been clinging to the false promise of a speculative "security blanket" rather than searching the Bible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit for understanding of what is happening and what is yet to take place. 

\*From *The Living Bible, Paraphrased* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1971). Used by permission.



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# No Soft Option

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OUR SOCIETY has become so sophisticated that the role of the preacher is no longer viewed as authoritative in his community. Indeed, the erosion of traditional attitudes to ministers is a social change that has a particular effect on the church and its ministers. It is no longer possible for people, institutions, or beliefs to compel acceptance simply by authority supposedly inherent in them. It is becoming increasingly true that in our age there are people we cannot hope to reach with our message unless we are prepared to take the initiative; prepared, indeed, to move in a physical sense, as well as in a mental and spiritual one, onto the territory of these men and women we love to win.

More than half of our opportunities in this field could be realized through the literature ministry. Where the clearest and most powerful statements from the pulpit fail to reach particular souls, a few words uttered in conversation in the home of an individual, along with the placing of a book or piece of truth-filled literature in his hands, may help to remove difficulties that have been encumbering the way to the cross.

The canvassing work, properly conducted, serves to awaken and convict and may lead directly to commitment and conversion. This sort of work is extremely fascinating, because one can select and apply the gospel, with all its amazing range and fullness, to the immediate needs and problems of an individual at the particular moment in his life, and beginning there, can go on to show its relevancy to his whole life.

"God has ordained the canvassing work as a means of presenting before the people the light contained in our books, and canvassers should be impressed with the importance of bringing before the world as fast as possible the books

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necessary for their spiritual education and enlightenment. This is the very work the Lord would have His people do at this time. All who consecrate themselves to God to work as canvassers are assisting to give the last message of warning to the world. We cannot too highly estimate this work; for were it not for the efforts of the canvasser, many would never hear the warning."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 313.

The ministry and mission of the church is to minister to man as he is and where he is, with his strangely mingled hope and despair about the nuclear era, with his justified and unjustified criticisms of Christianity and Christians, and his dawning hunger for spiritual reality. To this kind of man the literature evangelist must bring the good news, which, as the statement quoted above puts it, is needed "for their spiritual education and enlightenment." If we do not care enough about this man, have we any right to approach him in the name of God, who laid Himself fully alongside us in Jesus Christ, His Son?

The form of service Jesus left us is that which says that God is to be found and served, loved, and honored, not only in some spiritual activity but among men in their need. This is Jesus' kind of compassion that made Him go out to seek the lonely, the individual, the rich and the poor, the religious and irreligious, too. It is a compassion born of love and therefore patient enough to explore the questions, doubts, criticisms, hopes, and yearnings of individuals in an effort to bring to them a triumphantly relevant gospel.

## Greatest and Best Opportunity

Our church must face honestly the fact that of the various ways we have for presenting an individual with the gospel, the literature ministry offers us the greatest and best opportunity for reaching him in his situation. Here is found a major opportunity for the church to move out in an engagement with the world. The church has not always responded by looking for ways and means of maximizing the opportunities presented by this dimension of its life. Ellen White, recognizing the critical importance of this work, warns the church in her time, and by extension in our time, that our attitude toward the canvassing work can determine our sense of urgency in finishing the task.

In speaking to this point she says, "We have no time to lose. Important work

is before us, and if we are slothful servants we shall certainly lose the heavenly reward. But few have broad and extensive views of what can be done in reaching the people by personal, interested efforts in a wise distribution of our publications."—*Review and Herald*, Dec. 19, 1878.

This is a very forceful and pertinent statement. Those of us who have made a careful study of the church's attitude toward the literature ministry are bound to agree with Ellen White's observation that "few have broad and extensive views" of the possibilities and potentialities of the canvassing work. The impetus for doing this work comes from Christ's pointed statement: "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2).

Not too many of us apply this text with any force to the canvassing work. I have chosen to do so because, if there is an area in the total life of the church that cries out for more laborers, it is the literature work. Moreover, only a blind pessimist will deny that the harvest is truly great. The fact is, the conditions facing our civilization are frightening and foreboding, and people are looking more and more to religion for answers and deliverance.

"The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." A force lies hidden in these words that could give an astonishing impetus to the missionary outreach of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Do you believe as a Seventh-day Adventist that there is a great harvest waiting to be gathered in? Are you persuaded that there are hundreds and hundreds of ordinary folk in the towering city, village, or parish in which you live who are hungering and thirsting for the satisfaction that Christianity alone can give—even if it is also true that many of them are unable to understand their own need and require some Christian like yourself to interpret it for them? Or, to make the matter more personal, do you think it is highly likely that if, after reading this article, you were to persuasively encourage some of your church members to go out to prepare themselves to accept God's call to the literature work, that the response might well be generous and overwhelming? These questions are as awkward to answer as they are to ask.



Perhaps the questions are not so difficult, but it is our faith that is too small. We have the assurance from Ellen White that precisely this might be expected in our time: "God will soon do great things for us, if we lie humble and believing at His feet. . . . More than one thousand will soon be converted in one day, most of whom will trace their first convictions to the reading of our publications."—*Review and Herald*, Nov. 10, 1885.

Since this is a moment of supreme spiritual opportunity when God is so unmistakably active that many fields are already white unto harvest, the first great need in the church is the need of vision and larger faith. We must have eyes to see that indeed the fields are white and ready for harvest, but that the literature work needs laborers now more than ever.

What did Jesus say? "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." Do you see the picture again? On the one side a mighty harvest, on the other side a devastating paucity of workers, and between the two a vast gulf. How can the gulf be bridged? The bridge, Jesus tells us, is prayer. No one can really long for God to act without being willing to be the man through whom He acts. Thus any program for recruits must be initiated with prayer, followed by the offering of ourselves to God, who may use us to help others to become His servants. What we find in practice is that as we pray for the increase of workers, our own desire to be at God's disposal is greatly strengthened.

In a day of great peril and great promise the church is being called to a new vision of what God can do through the publishing work. We dare not take it upon ourselves to judge what can or cannot be made of our service by the Spirit of God. The final issue is in God's hands. The field, the harvest, the work,

are His. Ours is the privilege of being invited to share the divine labor. It is His work, not ours; and it only becomes our work, by the "paradox of grace," as we acknowledge it to be first His. The Lord of the harvest, who works with us and through us, was at work before us and will be at work after us. We serve Him best when we serve in the quiet confidence that He will complete what He has begun.

It seems to me that there are what I sometimes describe as two major hesitations in our attitude toward literature ministry. The first is our hesitation about an adequate educational training for colporteurs. We can still hear mentioned the misconception that one does not need too much formal education to canvass.

This becomes evident when we consider that our church has a massive educational program that provides the opportunity for training in the various branches of its total life, except in the precise area of literature ministry. Indeed, we have been engaged in the training of preachers, teachers, physicians, nurses, and paramedical personnel, businessmen, and the list could be extended on and on, yet in our educational enterprise we are just now beginning to give consideration to a more serious and planned educational training for the literature ministry. Is it conceivable that just as young people are recruited and encouraged to choose the preaching ministry as their lifework there are also those who should be encouraged to enter the publishing ministry, as well?

The work of literature evangelism in our day demands as never before the training of the colporteurs for the task in hand. They are the ones who have the contacts and the opportunities that the clergy never get; they are exposed firsthand to the thinking and the problems of those with whom they share everyday life and work in the world.

One of the most vivid memories of my life as a theological student and a literature evangelist is that of the summer of 1969, when I sold more than \$17,000 worth of literature in about eleven weeks. I recall this experience not because of the value in dollars, but precisely for the contacts and exposure I received. During that summer more than 75 per cent of the people who bought the books I was selling were highly educated. Their work ranged from the medical and legal professions to the teaching and theological fields, as well as political and

***The church should encourage young people to enter publishing ministry as a lifework.***

business. Many of those with theological training were ministers of other denominations, and one of the politicians was the Speaker of the Canadian Parliament. Meeting with these people in their homes and at times in their offices was indeed a serious challenge, but I somehow had the confidence and assurance that I would be able to dialog with them on a level that they would appreciate. In this situation one's education is of vital importance, because much more than the knowledge of a prepared canvass is required.

These sophisticated people were attracted to my work and were prepared to take me seriously only when they discovered that I was a graduate student at McGill University, Faculty of Divinity. To begin with, they were not interested in talking about the books I had, but on the contemporary issues in the various areas of their particular interest. While far from competent to talk on all subjects, yet I had a breadth of understanding and appreciation that impressed them. Education is not simply the amassing of facts or the storing up of knowledge, it is also the training of the mind to think critically and analytically; to ask appropriate questions, and to perceive ideas and articulate them in a way that is intelligible and communicable.

### **Basic Human Needs**

Perhaps one of the greatest lessons that was reinforced in my mind during that summer was that the human heart is much the same everywhere, with the same basic needs and longings, and that the literature evangelist, perhaps more than any other gospel worker, must be as Paul said, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

Trained, educated minds must be convinced of the adequacy of the spiritual resources in the Christian message. Such an achievement cannot be accomplished in a perfunctory way. It requires careful preparation and an education that is both spiritual and rational.

A letter from a leading journalist in a large Canadian city speaks eloquently to this: "As a journalist, I have read with deep and appreciative interest the books you left in our home and have invited some of my colleagues to meet with me to discuss them. I remain convinced that such a work as you are doing seems urgently necessary for the church to fulfill its role in our society."

It should be clearly understood that

when we speak of education and training for our colporteurs, we are not referring to colporteur institutes, or such short-term periods of intensive instructions. Our model is more that of what theology students are required to take as basic preparation for the ministry, but it should be so constructed that it clearly reflects the kind of preparation that fits one for the primary work of the literature ministry.

The second major hesitation we must face squarely is our hesitation to acknowledge the literature ministry as of equal importance as our evangelistic pastoral programs.

It is very unlikely that a pastor or conference president will recommend that a new convert to the Adventist Church be given the responsibility of going out on his own to conduct an evangelistic campaign. It is even more unlikely that if a worker has had poor results as a pastor or teacher he would be encouraged to seek employment as an evangelist or youth leader. Yet this is precisely what happens in so many instances. I know from experience that many new converts have been encouraged to take up the canvassing work without any preparation.

### Many People Turned Off

We must reckon with the fact that many people today are turned off by aggressive, authoritarian, and insensitive forms of evangelism. But there are people I have found who are quite eager and open to a quiet discussion of the truths of Scripture in an intensely personal way. The approach to this kind of individual must be made with the respect due to human personality. Men and women are not to be hustled, far less bludgeoned, into the kingdom of God. But sensitiveness needs to be blended with a loving Christian boldness. Many of us who are now heirs of the kingdom might not have been if some wise, untiring literature evangelist had not cared enough and dared enough to speak to us or our parents about a personal faith in God and to leave some Christian literature in our homes.

The romance of the church pilgrimage is the romance of the recurring discovery of what the literature ministry can mean for its own life and the life of the world. For this reason, this and every generation of Adventists must learn afresh that the only gospel that grips the world is the gospel that has first gripped the church. ■■

# Upgrading

SPEAKING at the H. M. S. Richards Lectureship in 1964, Norval Pease raised a challenge for every minister and member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as he expressed his conviction: "The success of the church to which we are devoting our lives depends to a great extent on what happens between eleven and twelve o'clock on Sabbath mornings."<sup>1</sup>

He pointed to the frightening possibility that, although we spend millions of dollars and put forth uncounted hours of effort to lead people to Christ and the church, the results of all this endeavor and expenditure may be dissipated by irreverent and unsatisfying Sabbath services, which dishearten new converts and drive interested persons away. He also observed that even though we as a church have made much of the *day* of worship, we have given little attention to the *way* of worship.

Pease, during his years as professor in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, did his part to meet this situation in his course Principles of Worship. For many students it proved to be one of the most profound and helpful courses included in the seminary curriculum. His book *And Worship Him*, which resulted from his series in the Richards Lectureship, continues to instruct and influence Seminary students, pastors, and church members everywhere.

Pease is the author of the fourth quarter's Sabbath school lessons for 1976. This authorship presents him with an opportunity to lead the entire church into a careful Biblical study of the subject of worship. These lessons deal with historical, theological, and practical issues connected with this theme. They relate to all types of worship, including personal and family worship, and point to

# the Worship Hour

the climax of the experience of worship, which should come in the Sabbath service.

This series of lessons presents us as ministers with a golden "once in a long time" opportunity.

The fourth quarter is an ideal time for pastors, church elders, and all who share the privilege and responsibility for planning and leading out in Sabbath worship services, to make a careful examination of their understanding and actual practice in preparing for and leading in these sacred services.

Thoughtful coordination of the worship services with what will be taking place in the Sabbath school lesson-study hour needs to be planned. In this way every element of our worship services—the reading of Scripture, leading in prayer, singing of hymns, worship in giving, and the preaching and hearing of the Word of God in the sermon—all may come to be understood and experienced in a more profound and meaningful way.

Our worship services all too easily can become a weekly ritual, through which we move with comfortable familiarity but little life and understanding. We need to consider again the bracing challenge of words first written in 1885: "Is it not your duty to put some skill and study and planning into the matter of conducting religious meetings—how they shall be conducted so as to do the greatest amount of good, and leave the very best impression upon all who attend? . . . God is displeased with your lifeless manner in His house, your sleepy, indifferent ways of conducting religious worship."<sup>2</sup>

The divine charter of Revelation 14 puts the call to worship at the forefront of the reasons for our existence and mission. With the worship services this

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quarter creatively related to the Sabbath school study, we have the exciting possibility for responding in a more effective way to the high calling given us to make our services "intensely interesting. They should be pervaded with the very atmosphere of heaven."<sup>3</sup>

Some specific things that might help in moving toward this goal could include the following:

1. A careful reading or rereading of Norval Pease's book *And Worship Him*.

2. A series of sermons on the subject of worship that, while not duplicating the lesson study material, would build on and be enriched by that study and would supplement and reinforce its impact.

3. A number of informal discussions with the church elders about the actual worship service. By using a tape recording of the service to recall and reflect on what actually happened, the group can recognize in a concrete way the elements of strength in a given worship service and the elements that can be made still more effective.

4. Some tactful experimentation with a somewhat different order of service. This new order should be accompanied by an explanation of the reason and purpose for such change.

5. Informal Sabbath afternoon or Wednesday evening feedback sessions, in which leaders and members can respond to and discuss their church's experience and service of worship.

Above all, let us pledge ourselves never to offer to God in our worship what has cost us little or nothing in time, effort, prayer, or preparation. ■

<sup>1</sup> Norval Pease, *And Worship Him* (Southern Publishing Assn.), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, April 14, 1885.

<sup>3</sup> —, *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 609.



# Amos— Prophet With a Fishing Pole

WOULD it seem rather strange to you if you lived in Bethel around 775 B.C. and had an appointment with Amos, the city prophet, at 1:00 P.M., Thursday afternoon, that you found a note on the door reading, "Sorry I missed you. Gone fishing"? Undoubtedly so, for I too think it highly unlikely. But it is true that Amos knew something about fishing. This is apparent in Amos 4:2, where he draws a comparison between God's people being captured by the enemy and a fish being drawn in by a fishhook.

Whether Amos himself had ever personally fished or whether he had watched someone else fish, he knew that once a fish was well hooked there was little chance for escape. He knew too that the pain of being drawn out by a hook became doubly severe through attempts to resist. The use of Amos' figure of speech as a comparison seems to suggest that even a top official of the Lord still had time to consider other interests and hobbies.

Amos apparently did have many interests. For we can infer from his choice of words, his figures of speech, and his allusions the kinds of things that interested him most. There is a particular language that suggests what a person's occupation is or where his interests are mainly focused. We know, for example, that a wheat farmer has his own particular jargon and that he enjoys drawing illustrations from the farm life with which he is most familiar. He would probably feel uneasy attempting to communicate with an accountant, a ham-radio operator, or a professional ball player. He would feel even less comfortable attempting to explain something to another person using accountant, ham-radio, or ball-player terms or ideas. With these things in mind, let us shake hands with Amos, meet him a little more personally, and discover more of his interests.

If the prophet lived in today's society

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he, like countless others, would undoubtedly plan for that yearly vacation in the country. But, as a matter of fact, Amos had very little planning to do to find himself in the country. For, as is evident from his language, figures of speech, and many allusions, we can say that he was most likely an independent shepherd. Not only are we told in Amos 1:1, R.S.V.\*, that he was "among the shepherds of Tekoa" but we see that he constantly alludes to places only a shepherd could truly appreciate.

Bashan (chap. 4:1), according to several Bible dictionaries, was noted for its beauty of landscape and its pastures. We can imagine that just as a mechanic would have a trained eye for a beautiful piece of machinery, so Amos must have contemplated those choice pastures and beautiful pastoral settings. Often he may have been drawn closer to God through his meditation of the Creator's handiwork.

Even as Amos contemplated the beautiful pastoral settings and used them in his figures of speech, he was also awed by some of God's other creations. In Amos 2:9 we find an interesting comparison between the strength of the oak, the height of the cedar, and an Amorite soldier. He seems to magnify the greatness of God by using the powerful and stately oak tree to suggest the Creator's strength. Amos enjoyed a communion with God that many can have today if they pause for a season to take in His handiwork and digest His greatness as seen in the second Bible, nature.

Amos, it is true, appreciated landscape and trees, but even more, perhaps, he enjoyed animals. Living as he did in the country, he had his own zoo of sorts, for there he had many opportunities to observe wildlife. He respected and appreciated the lion (chap. 3:4) and the bear (chap. 5:19). And with his flock to consider, it would not be unusual to imagine that the prophet carefully studied these predators' habits and abilities.

When Amos uses these figures to show how terrible will be the coming of the day of the Lord to those who remain unprepared, he leaves a vivid and lasting impression of God's sure judgment. And in relationship to that sure judgment, Amos uses yet another metaphor in chapter 3:5 when he asks, "'Does a bird fall in a snare on the earth, when there is no trap for it?'" clearly pointing to the certainty of God's judgment.

Amos' breadth of interest does not end with nature and wildlife. In a more

serious vein, he certainly took more than a passing interest in international affairs and warfare. In Amos 1:9 the prophet charges Tyre with failing to remember the covenant of brotherhood. In verse 11 he charges Edom with pursuing a brother with the sword. The Moabites are promised swift destruction (chap. 2:2), and the Amorites (verse 15) are given no hope for survival, as Amos alludes to their archers ("he who handles the bow"), their infantry ("he who is swift of foot"), and their cavalry ("nor shall he who rides the horse save his life"). "I slew your young men with the sword; I carried away your horses; and I made the stench of your camp go up into your nostrils." Perhaps only a prophet who was personally acquainted with the horrors of war could depict them in such a vivid manner as Amos does in chapter 4:10.

Amos also carefully observed domestic and internal affairs. Much as a Ralph Nader of his time, he warns those who oppress the needy. In chapter 5:11 he calls to task the wealthy who have built fine houses from their dishonest exactions, warning that they will not inhabit these houses of hewn stone. And again Amos promises sure judgment to those who "make the ephah small and the shekel great, and deal deceitfully with false balances" (chap. 8:5).

As many today enjoy looking up to the heavens to identify constellations and admire God's universe, Amos too had an interest in the stars. He aptly draws our attention to the majestic Creator "who made the Pleiades and Orion, and turns deep darkness into the morning" (chap. 5:8). With stars for a blanket and moon for company, Amos must have seen God's handiwork in the heavens, just as surely as he did in the fields and trees and plants. That he knew these groups of stars by name seems to suggest that astronomy was a hobby he practiced often.

Like those shepherds who later saw the miraculous "bright morning star," Amos undoubtedly spent many an evening contemplating the firmament. He probably knew something about the weather too, for watching out for his flock certainly required a knowledge of changing conditions and seasons. Those ancient shepherds of Tekoa must also have discussed the weather, just as we often do today.

The many interests of the prophet of God also included masonry. Amos tells us the "Lord was standing beside a wall




built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand" (Amos 7:7). He goes on to tell us that this very same plumb line will be placed in the midst of the people of Israel. As you know, a plumb line is a weight suspended on a string that is used to determine the perpendicular, the standard of uprightness of a structure. Who more than someone interested in masonry or building would recognize the import of such a device?

Amos' understanding of masonry does not end here. In chapter 9 he refers to the shaking of thresholds, and we realize almost immediately that he understood the strengths and weaknesses of structures. If you have ever noticed what has become of buildings after an event such as an earthquake you probably noted that the thresholds were usually all that remained. The prophet's reference suggests just how powerfully God will shake those who refuse His call.

Music was apparently another of Amos' interests. When he tells us that "Moab shall die amid uproar, amid shouting and the sound of the trumpet" (chap. 2:2) we know that he realized the power and range of such an instrument. In chapter 5:23 and again in chapter 6:5, he refers to songs and harps. It is not difficult to imagine that many solitary hours, while he tended the flock, were taken up with song and the playing of instruments. Perhaps, like David, Amos even found time to invent some of his own musical instruments. It may have been that on warm summer nights the prophet's own harp could be heard, as melodic strains gently serenaded the herd and wafted over the grassy leas.

In almost everyone's bundle of interests there is room for sports. Even Amos may have had some time for such interest. Amos 2:15 mentions both the bow and horseback riding. Perhaps an independent shepherd like Amos found some time to practice a little with the bow. We know that David had time to practice with the sling, so it is not entirely strange to imagine that Amos had time for such things. Perhaps he and others from neighboring villages even had time for games once in a while.

Don't you find now that you have gotten to know Amos a little better, that he is more interesting than you once thought? Perhaps, like Amos, there are other Bible characters waiting to get to know you. Why not pay some of them a visit in the near future and see what hobbies and interests you share? 

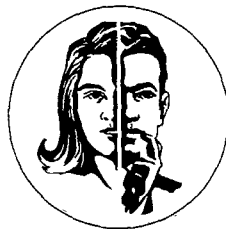
\* The Scripture quotations in this article are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

## by his side

Sponsored by Catherine Dower  
for the Shepherdess.

Dear Shepherdess: "'Tis the season to be jolly," the song says, and I wish for each of you a truly happy December, climaxing with memory-making holidays.

As I think of Christmas I think of it as a time of remembering; a time of giving; a time of magic—especially for children;



a time for telling the good news of the Christ Child—how He loves us, gave Himself for us, and wants us to live with Him throughout eternity. Christmas is a time for loving and for sharing His love with others.

We know you'll enjoy our story for this month by June Taylor, who tells us of one memorable Christmas when she discovered a remedy for loneliness.

May God richly bless you with love and peace this Christmas time and throughout the new year. With love, Kay.

THE profusion of blooming poinsettias in the neighbors' yard across the street and the aroma of carrot "fruit" cake baking were about the only indications that Christmas was anywhere near. The ache in my heart was reflected in the slow motion of my fingers as they reluctantly hung satiny blue ornaments on the white-sprayed tree. Why *did* my husband have to get a tree, anyway—it only made the lonesomeness that much worse.

Thoughts of past Christmases, when an enthusiastic son and two lively daughters with their friends helped decorate the tree, bake the cookies, and wrap the gifts, made the heartache a bit more intense. All three seemed to be endowed with an amazing capacity for collecting school friends with no place to go for Christmas. And they had possessed an equally amazing confidence that Dad and Mother would provide a nook and a welcome for their friends.

Although sometimes I had felt a slight tendency toward acquiring a martyr complex—for instance, the time one daughter brought home four friends and the other one brought two—I always ended up enjoying the young people more than they could have enjoyed being with us. They never complained, even when their "nook" turned out to be only space to spread out a sleeping bag on the rug. They pitched in to help with everything, and were appreciative of home cooking and the kind of Christmas weather that encouraged picnics on the beach. Memory recreated the young faces for me now—faces with thoughtful blue eyes and mischievous brown ones. But curly red heads, long straight blonde hair, and waving brown hair faded into the corners

## No Empty Chairs

JUNE TAYLOR

*June Taylor is a secretary at the General Conference headquarters. She and her husband, Charles, recently returned from 32 years of mission service in the Inter-American Division.*

of the room as I reluctantly pulled my mind back to the quiet present.

"So what's so bad about a little lonesomeness?" I began a little lecture to myself. "You know you're glad your son is a minister pilot in a jungle area—well, the minister part, at least! And for sure you're happy he has a wife to back him up and a little son who keeps life from getting dull." The self-inflicted lecture continued, "Even if you could, you wouldn't turn your author-teacher-of-a-brand-new-doctor daughter back into a little girl again, would you? Well, maybe not, but . . ."

Just then my hand automatically picked up the star for the top of the tree, and I remembered the day when our younger daughter helped select it. At that point all stoicism collapsed, and tears splashed onto the star. Reflected in the shining drops, I saw our younger daughter as we had last seen her more than a year before through the window as our plane took off from the airport in Queenstown, New Zealand. Even though we were happy she had married a fine young minister, news of her poor health in the past few months was causing us great anxiety. And Australia was literally half a world away!

But, after saying a prayer for each of the three, I firmly placed the star on the tree, hopped down from the chair, and set about putting the house in order. At the same time I was mentally making plans for Christmas dinner the next day.

We had invited a friend of one daughter to bring her parents over for Christmas dinner. She had been baptized a short time before, and was finding it difficult to explain her new faith to dad



and mom. Then we found out about another couple who were facing their first Christmas without any of their children home, so we invited them.

Some time later, as suppertime neared, the house looked invitingly hospitable, and good smells were issuing from the kitchen. The telephone rang. I picked up the receiver and heard my husband's voice saying, "Honey, this is going to be a shock to you, but I didn't know what else to do."

He explained that while working alone in the office (it was a half-holiday) he answered the telephone, and a young woman told him she was in desperate need of help. Several years before she had been a student at the local academy, where she became an Adventist in mind if not in heart. Then she ran away from home to get married, and was alienated from her family. Now she had a three-week-old baby. Her husband and brother were out of work, and they had been put

out of their apartment the day before because they couldn't pay the rent. The three adults and the three-week-old baby had spent the previous night on a park bench. Now they were exhausted and hungry.

"There was nothing else I could do, honey, so I told them I'd go pick them up. You'd better get some food ready because they haven't eaten for three days," he added, and hung up.

Half in a state of shock, I stood holding the silent receiver to my ear for a minute longer. My thoughts were in a turmoil as I put water on to boil for spaghetti. Some of those thoughts were fearful ones. "Is it safe in these days to take strangers into your home?" Verses from the Bible came to mind:

"Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me" (Matt. 25:45, R.S.V.).

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have enter-

tained angels unawares" (Heb. 13:2, R.S.V.).

About then I heard the car turn into the carport and I went to open the door. A lean and bedraggled girl who couldn't have been more than 18 or so carried a beautiful baby boy in her arms.

"Do you know how to make formula?" she asked me. "I don't seem to have enough milk for him."

I did the best I could with what I had in the house, and soon the baby was contentedly drinking from a bottle.

When the rest of us sat down to eat, the heaped-high platter of spaghetti disappeared fast. "You're a good cook," the girl's brother said, adding that he had been assistant chef at a tourist hotel. Then as I went out to the kitchen to refill the platter, I stopped in my tracks as I heard the new father, who was quite a bit older than his wife, refer to his time in prison. He also mentioned his parents' running a business in a small Midwestern town. When I returned to the table I asked him whether he'd like to call his parents, but he replied, "No. They won't have anything to do with me since I was sent to jail."

Later, after the unexpected guests had taken showers and were in bed, my husband, recognizing that the problem was too big for us to handle alone, went to the office and called the pastor of the church we attended. He said that in the morning he would get in touch with a local organization that was set up to handle such cases.

After that, we settled down for the night ourselves. Was it lack of faith or was it prudence that made me lock the bedroom door? Long after my husband was asleep, thoughts on how to put Jesus' teachings into practice in a world plagued with sin and crime kept me wide awake.

On Christmas morning there were no empty chairs at the table. Our three guests again ate heartily. When the church pastor came for them, the husband expressed their appreciation for food and warmth and said it had given them courage to face the future.

At Christmas dinner late that afternoon, we felt a new closeness to the other lonely couple, and we strengthened the friendship already begun with the parents of our daughter's friend.

As I knelt to pray that night, I was astonished to realize that the dreaded lonely Christmas was over, and I hadn't even had a minute to feel sorry for myself. The empty chairs had been filled.

## Prayers From the Parsonage

CHERRY B.  
HABENICHT

Dear God, I like to think I would have been waiting for Your Son. Familiar with the prophecies, watching for the Redeemer, speaking of the soon-coming Messiah, I would not have missed the significance of His birth. I would have worshiped Him, presenting just the right gift—perhaps a perfect lamb, a length of soft cloth, or a carved toy rather than gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Yet, I am *never* ready for Christmas as I'd like to be. Though advertisements have alerted me since July, December always comes upon me too soon.

I hate to hurry through this beloved season. Yet caroling preoccupies the evenings, and besides preparations at home, I am caught up in church activities—the thirteenth Sabbath program, a party at the retirement home, food baskets for needy families.

Oh, for the leisure to unwrap memories and to capture beautiful moments! Please give me insight to cut out non-essentials and avoid commercial pressures. Thank You for Jesus. May we prepare for Christmas in a manner that shows we welcome Christ's presence in our home and eagerly await His second advent to our world.

Sitting in the congregation, I watch my husband and the elders enter the sanctuary, move quietly to their places and kneel in reverent prayer. I wait to hear Dick's voice as he gives the invocation, and later I try to catch his eye when he scans the room moments before he rises to preach.

I am proud of him, Lord, but today I wish he weren't the minister. I would like us to be just a family in the church with no responsibilities separating us. Then we could sit together, sharing the beauty of worship. I wouldn't have to be alone to struggle with a diaper bag, books, Sabbath school supplies, and a tugging toddler. Perhaps I could hear a sermon without distraction, and Dick could know the joy of seeing our little daughter's response to the service.

Please take my thoughts away from myself, dear Father. Other women in this congregation are also alone. But they are widowed, divorced, or heart-sick because their husbands (or children) refuse to attend church. It is not, after all, a big sacrifice I make.



# ***Step-by-Step in Better Living Evangelism***

EVERYWHERE TODAY there is a real health-emphasis explosion. People are interested in health problems and in protection of our environment. They are concerned about diet, and there is a fast-growing interest in the prevention of disease.

Even vegetarianism has become a very live issue. In our evangelistic outreach in the past several months we have noted an even stronger public interest in our health programs.

Health is often thought of in just the physical realm, but it actually involves the whole man. With our long exposure to the principles of physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being, Seventh-day Adventists are in an extremely strategic position to take advantage of this current interest and to help people find restoration to the state of existence originally intended by the Creator. Because many in these last days are becoming gospel hardened, the health approach presents a challenging and fruitful evangelistic opportunity.

The Better Living evangelism approach envisages making an impact on, and bringing out to public meetings, a class of people who will not ordinarily attend the usual type of evangelistic services. Public evangelism as a whole in the United States today is, for the most part, reaching people who are al-

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J. WAYNE  
MC FARLAND,  
J. R. SPANGLER,  
AND LEO R.  
VAN DOLSON

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ready evangelically oriented. This means that a large segment of the population is not being exposed to Adventist preaching. These people *must* be given an opportunity to hear the third angel's message.

Public interest in such health-centered programs as the Wa-Rite Weight Control Program and the Five-Day Plan to Stop Smoking is evidence that there can be approaches that do appeal to classes of people not now being reached. But this kind of evangelism necessitates much more careful field preparation and planning than does the usual three- or four-week public effort currently conducted in the United States.

In fact, it is most successful when not only the community but the church has been carefully prepared well ahead of the actual blended ministry effort itself. Some have been able to obtain satisfactory results by going into a community "cold turkey" with the Century 21 Better Living evangelism program, but the greatest success is bound to occur where both the church and the field have been adequately prepared. Out of our experience with this approach to evangelism over the several past years, a step-by-step methodology has been developed that we wish to share with our readers in this issue. This consists of a five-step program as outlined below.



Fig. 1

Better Living evangelism, actually, must begin with Seventh-day Adventist church members themselves. It has been an eye-opening experience that in every case where we have attempted Better Living evangelism we have found the general public more enthusiastic and responsive than our own members. After visiting with church members about this and after several lengthy analytical sessions with those participating in our programs, we have concluded that a large part of the reason for this observed phenomenon is that Adventist members are somewhat gospel hardened when it comes to the health message.

We have also learned that many who know what they should be doing in order to enjoy better health are not willing to give up their pet habits and are resistant to participating in a health series because they are afraid they will be put under pressure to adopt practices they don't want to follow.

In order to meet these objections and to encourage our members to become medical missionaries it is essential to begin with a church medical missionary training program that is designed to meet the following three objectives:

1. The necessity for personal practice of health principles in the achievement of sanctification.
2. Training our members in a wide range of medical missionary work.
3. A realization of the urgency of using medical missionary work to help finish the gospel task.

We can't expect the public to rise above the experience of church members. Therefore it becomes imperative to begin with a program that will help the church realize the tremendous opportunity we now have for doing medical missionary work.

## **Step 1- Better Living Break- through**

*Better Living Breakthrough Control Booklets and Manual can be ordered from the General Conference Health Department. Control Booklets are \$2.00 per set of 8; Instructor's Manual, 25 cents.*

J. Wayne McFarland, Josephine Benton, and Leo Van Dolson have shared the privilege of not only preparing but conducting several pilot programs of a church training program we call Better Living Breakthrough. It not only fulfills the objectives spelled out above but outlines simple methods of meeting people on the level of their physical, mental, and social needs in order to lead them to Christ, who alone can supply all their real needs.

Materials and instructions for conducting the Better Living Breakthrough classes are now available and include the following topics:

1. Breath of Life
2. Water of Life
3. Start Moving!
4. Eat to Live
5. Sunlight and Sonship
6. A Little Poison Now and Then
7. The Body Temple
8. Heritage of Health

An Instructor's Manual not only gives the details of how to conduct the program but provides a night-by-night script for doing so. (See Figure 1 for a picture of Better Living Breakthrough materials.)

At the conclusion of Better Living Breakthrough the church is organized into medical missionary working bands that provide opportunity for every church member to serve in a way that he can most comfortably and effectively work. These encourage continuing involvement and joint effort. It's much easier to sustain interest in missionary activity when the members are part of an enthusiastic team effort and have opportunity for creative input in deciding what methods and plans their band will follow.

The key to holding people's attention is finding out what they are most interested in and then presenting programs that fit within their range of interest. As basic as this seems, most evangelistic campaigns held by Adventists do not provide for time, effort, or money to be expended in this direction.

Our first task, then, in Community Outreach is to find out what those needs or interests are. One means of doing this is to run a community health interest survey. In surveys conducted in six different areas it has been found that this is a form of missionary activity that church members feel comfortable in doing. Because it is a community service, it is quite easy for them to make the initial contact with people in their homes.

The first step in formulating a community health interest survey is to decide what kinds of activities the church members are interested in offering to the community and feel they have expertise in delivering. It is also important to know what other agencies are doing, so as not to compete with them or unnecessarily duplicate services.

After the church has been organized into working bands, you will undoubtedly have groups that have decided to hold Five-Day Plans, Wa-Rite Weight

## Step 2 - Community Outreach

Control programs, and vegetarian cooking schools. Materials and kits for these are available from the General Conference Temperance and Health departments (see Figure 2). Other offerings might include the Heartbeat program developed by John Scharffenberg and available through the School of Health at Loma Linda, stress control clinics, water seminars, physical fitness classes, 4DK alcoholism seminars, or whatever other community interest programs your church members may be able to provide. The health interest survey offers all of these, briefly explaining what they are all about. Some of the topics that are to be included in the follow-up public meetings might also be listed on the survey and thus tested for popular interest in your area.

Obviously, responses to this kind of community survey not only indicate areas of interest and preference on topics but provide a mailing list that can be used to invite people to those programs you know they're interested in. It is very important to learn which nights of the week and at what time people are most likely to attend a class or lecture series. Sample surveys are available through the Ministerial Association, or the General Conference Department of Health or Lay Activities.

Fig. 2

Church members have found it easy to work with this survey. People respond to it favorably, since it is a community service; very few refuse to participate in filling it out when asked to. The community health interest survey can be used quite effectively in several ways. One is by setting up a table or booth with health displays in a shopping center. People going by are asked to stop for a moment and complete the questionnaire. Of course, its greatest usefulness is in home-to-home contact.

Several months before beginning a Better Living Institute, health-centered programs in which the community has expressed interest should be started. Obviously, the more of these that can be held the larger your potential audience for the follow-up meetings. Contacts with community health agencies can contribute much to the support of your program. Demonstrate your desire to cooperate with them and go out of your way to show an interest in what they are doing. If possible, local church members should volunteer as helpers in the programs of community health agencies in order to build good and lasting relationships.



The book *Evangelism* has the following to say about a quiet and efficient way of preparing the field for an effort: "The work is to commence quietly without noise or trumpeting. It is to commence by giving Bible readings and

Experience with the Better Living evangelism approach has taught us that there is a definite gap between health programs such as Five-Day Plans, weight-control programs, and other efforts to meet needs in the area of health, on the one hand, and Adventist evangelistic and doctrinal presentations on the other. Some have expressed a feeling that the basic health programs are effective as a public relations medium in developing an image of community concern, but that they have not produced enough converts to warrant continued emphasis. They feel that these programs need to be followed up with some kind of a "bridge" that will eventually lead many of those attending into the more conventional type of evangelistic program.

The value of such a "bridge" is that it becomes the means of establishing confidence in Adventists and their philosophy on the part of those who are interested in health problems but not necessarily in religious programs. This "bridge" should present the concept of a way of life that includes the physical, mental, social, and spiritual dimensions. But it should not be directly associated in the minds of those attending with a completely religious orientation.

Such an approach must also continue to meet the interests and needs in the area of health of those attending. But it must be developed in such a way that the participants will catch a vision of a much broader and deeper significance in the realm of health than they probably had in mind initially. They need to be led in a perfectly natural and unforced way to include the concept of the spiritual dimension as part of the holistic approach to real health.

It is exciting to note that long ago the Lord anticipated our need for the development of such a program and gave us a key to building the kind of "bridge" that we now recognize we must use. The servant of God has outlined an approach to health evangelism that is

thus educating people. This plan will be far more efficient than starting in with sermons."—Page 445. Organizing medical missionary bands to introduce community health programs, followed by Bible studies, fits this blueprint.

### **Step 3— Bridge- building**

built around the basic philosophy and principles that underlie man's health needs. Various terms are used to describe these underlying principles, but we choose here to use the expression "laws of life and health."

Concerning these laws of life and health we read: "Health, strength, and happiness depend upon immutable laws. . . . The same law obtains in the spiritual as in the natural world. . . . The transgression of the physical law is transgression of God's law. . . . God's law is written by His own finger upon every nerve, every muscle, every faculty which has been entrusted to man. . . . The laws governing the physical nature are as truly divine in their origin and character as the law of the ten commandments. . . . Every 'Thou shalt not,' whether in physical or moral law, contains or implies a promise. If it is obeyed, blessings will attend our steps." —ELLEN G. WHITE, *Healthful Living*, pp. 18-23.

Notice the following concerning the above quotations. These laws are described as "immutable." They are not, then, mere applications that depend on changing circumstances, but are basic principles that apply everywhere with equal force. They also apply across the board in the spiritual as well as the natural world. In order to be actually a law of this kind, then, it must be applicable to the physical, mental, social, and spiritual dimensions of life. They "imply a promise." That is, when followed in our lives, their sure results will be better health and relationships in all areas of life.

Not only does it become essential for us to understand the laws of health, but there is the accompanying responsibility of teaching them to others: "Educate people in the laws of life so that they may know how to preserve health. The efforts actually put forth at present are not meeting the mind of God."—*Medical Ministry*, p. 259. "To make plain natural law, and urge obedience of it, is

the work that accompanies the third angel's message to prepare a people for the coming of the Lord."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 161.

A program that we are developing here in the Ministerial Association and Health Department of the General Conference, designed to meet the specifications outlined above, is called The Golden Eight series. It will soon be available for field testing. The schedule that follows demonstrates how the title of each of the eight programs in the series incorporates the laws of life and health indicated in parentheses.

"Banquet of Consequences" (Cause and effect)

"Use It or Lose It" (Activity)

"Take It Easy—You'll Last Longer" (Rest and restoration)

"Balancing Act" (Balance and regularity)

"When It's Clean, It's Clean" (Order and cleanliness)

"Lifestakes" (Temperance and self-control)

"Give and Live" (Mutual dependence)

"Wrapping Up the Health Package" (Positive living)

Several other programs are now being conducted in the field that hold promise of being the bridge between health programs and the study of doctrinal truths. These range from stress-management courses to built-in bridges that are incorporated directly into the conventional evangelistic series.

One of the most interesting of the stress-management courses is that used

by Vernon Rees, chaplain at Loma Linda University Medical Center. It develops a bridge between a number of the health plans and Bible studies. Result? Baptisms!

Dr. Charles Ricks, a dentist in the Florida Conference, is using much of the material in the Better Living Breakthrough series mentioned in this article under Step 1. Although it is intended exclusively for church members, he has discovered that there is no way they can keep our non-Adventist friends away who wish to attend.

The Better Living Center in Philadelphia is building bridges directly from some of its health features to the study of the Bible by making the Bible feature an optional choice for the participants. This is also the method promoted by Roger Morton, of Porter Memorial Hospital, in Denver.

In any or all of these efforts there must be a team concept, the doctor and minister working together. Obviously, either a physician or a minister can conduct these steps to Better Living evangelism. If there is not sufficient help available the manuals point out what portions may be curtailed.

Those programs specializing in incorporating into the evangelistic effort the bridges that will bring people to a decision must last over a period of several months or longer. Reuben Hubbard, at the School of Public Health of Loma Linda University, and Merrill Enright, evangelist in the Southeastern California Conference, are conducting such evangelistic thrusts.

For years ministers and doctors, spurred by such statements as the following, have been urging the General Conference to prepare a better-living approach to evangelism that can be used around the world: "Medical missionary work is in no case to be divorced from the gospel ministry. The Lord has specified that the two shall be as closely connected as the arm is with the body. Without this union neither part of the work is complete."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 240, 241. "As physicians unite with ministers in proclaiming the gospel in the great cities of the land, their combined labors will result in influencing many minds in favor of the truth for this time."—*Medical Ministry*, p. 248.

## **Step 4— The Century 21 Better Living Ecangel- ism Institute**

In response to this demand, the Century 21 Better Living Institute has been developed. It is designed to introduce the twenty-first century way of life (which we anticipate will be experienced in heaven itself) to people living in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Its format is more typical of adult education programs than of the usual evangelistic presentation, and it blends the health message with the doctrinal presentations.

In the Philippines where J. R. Spangler and Wilbur K. Nelson held the first major blended ministry campaign hundreds have been baptized through Better Living evangelism, and evangelists throughout the Far Eastern Division

have been stimulated to adopt this approach.

After McFarland and Spangler had completed their successful pilot program in Portland, Oregon, a Bible instructor asked church leaders to hurry and begin another Century 21 Institute. When pressed to explain her reason for this request she indicated that three families she had been studying with from the first Better Living evangelism series held there were ready for baptism, and she wanted more such outstanding interests with whom to study.

A minister in Mississippi enthusiastically reports that he has been given use of a splendid auditorium free of charge, plus free newspaper advertising, because he and a local doctor are using the Better Living approach for their evangelistic series.

Dr. Wayne McFarland received a letter from a doctor who has cooperated with a Century 21 Better Living Institute in Stoneham, Massachusetts, commending the program as the best ever presented there. Many other such glowing reports have been received along with some very helpful suggestions for improving the program as it is revised.

The rationale behind this better-living approach is found in the fact that Seventh-day Adventists aren't commissioned to make healthy sinners out of people. We exist for one purpose alone, that of leading people to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

The reason for spending several years in developing and testing the health evangelism approach outlined in this article is to draw people who would never otherwise come to Adventist meetings, not only to attend but to hear and accept the three angels' messages in all their fullness.

The Century 21 Better Living Institute has been prepared by the cooperative efforts of several General Conference departments. The basic plan for this series consists of a doctor's presentation and a minister's presentation, using a beautifully illustrated syllabus and overhead projection slides.

A notebook cover and first syllabus section are distributed the opening night and a registration fee is charged to cover the cost of the materials and to avoid the necessity of taking offerings. Each subsequent night as people arrive they receive the respective section of the printed syllabus materials.

There are twenty-one presentations

in this series. The topics are arranged in the following sequence, but the lesson materials are not numbered. Those using this program can rearrange the lectures as circumstances indicate.

## Century 21 Better Living Institute Topics

Titles	Health Topic	Doctrine
1. Strategy for Stress Control	Stress	Faith
2. How to Get Along With Your Family	Posture	Fall, Sinner's Need
3. How to Be Positively Electrifying	Air, Breathing	Origin of Sin, Repentance
4. How to Cope With Fear, Worry, and Resentment	Emotions and Disease	Confession and Justification
5. A Simple Solution for Drowning Troubles	Water	Justification and Restitution
6. You Lose What You Don't Use	Exercise	Sanctification
7. Sex, Saints, and Sinners	Sex	Marriage and Home
8. Cancer—Physical, Mental, and Moral	Cancer	Law and Victory Over Sin
9. A New Tonic for Better Living	Water (Outside)	Baptism
10. Diets, Dreams, Prophets, and Astrology	Diet (Dan. 1)	Dan. 2, Gift of Prophecy
11. Your Diet and Your Disposition	Food and Personality (Sugar)	Second Coming
12. Give Your Heart a Chance	Fats (Cholesterol)	Eternal Life
13. The 21st-Century Diet and Your Destiny	Protein	Three Angels' Messages
14. Facts, Fats, and Figures	Overweight	Judgment, 2300 Days
15. How to Stop Smoking and Drinking	Tobacco, Alcohol	Sanctuary, Judgment
16. How to Be Good and Good-looking	Sunshine	Creation and Sabbath
17. "Doctor, I'm Always Tired!"	Rest, Fatigue	Sabbath and Worship of God
18. The Substitutes That Don't Satisfy	Tea, Coffee, Drugs	Change of Sabbath
19. Miracles, Magic, and the Occult	Hypnosis, Will	Spiritism, Babylon
20. Stop Cheating Yourself	Glorifying God	Standards, Tithing
21. A Temple for Time and Eternity	Body Temple, SDA Advantage	Decision, Membership



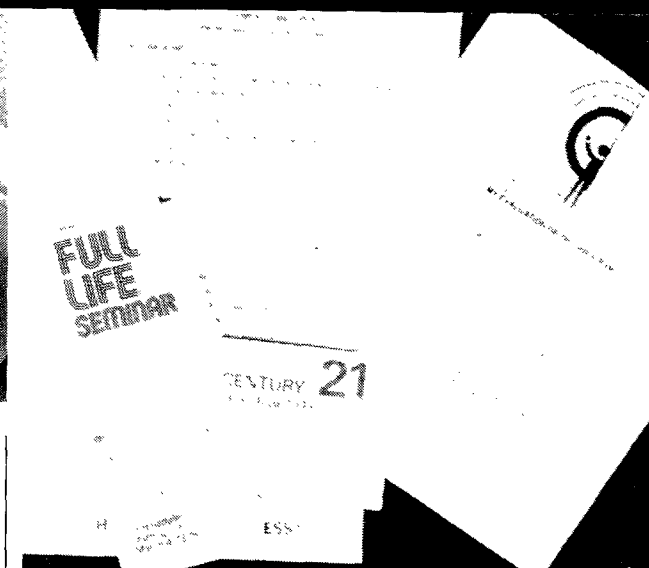
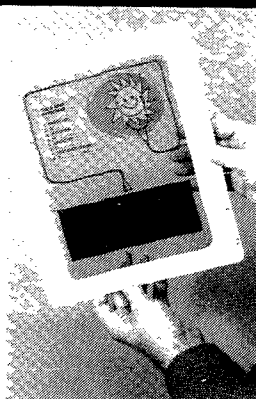
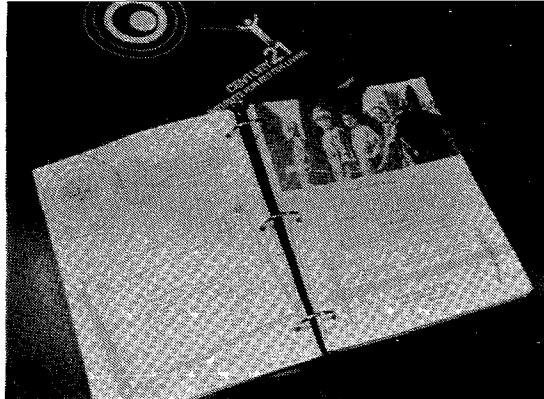


Fig. 3

Materials, instruction manuals, visual aids, and details on advertising and presenting this health-evangelism series can be secured through your local Adventist Book Center (see Fig. 3).

It is important that the interest created during this series be followed up with a gift Bible and Bible-marking series, for experience has demonstrated that many who attend this kind of evangelistic program do not have adequate enough background in the Bible or Christianity to be able to make a full decision, during the brief period of the Century 21 Institute presentations, to unite with the church in baptism. However, reports coming in to us from around the world field indicate that when there is careful follow-up of the large numbers of non-Adventists who have attended the Century 21 Institutes a large percentage are baptized.

Because the way of living presented takes time to adopt, we have discovered that it is best to run the series over a longer period of time—eight weeks being the ideal. This means running three lectures a week for seven weeks, and then beginning a full-scale Bible-marking class during the eighth week. The Bible-marking class can be tied in with a cooking school, using the *Century 21 Cookbook*, or with Loma Linda School of Health slide-tape programs.

However, the health part should, at this juncture, be kept short, as far as time is concerned, and a larger proportion of time given to Bible study.

We do have samples of a Bible-marking series of 30 lessons available in the General Conference Ministerial Association. It is divided into three sets of ten lessons each. The first is a Bible presentation of the topics covered in *Steps to Christ* and it can be introduced during the first week of the Better Living Institute. Doing so makes it possible

## Step 5— Follow-up

to cover the first set of ten lessons in the eight-week series by studying one lesson per week during the Institute and using one lesson each night through the eighth week.

The first ten-lesson set leads to a faith experience. The subsequent two sets develop hope and love. The second coming of Christ and the prophecies (including the sanctuary, 2300 days, and judgment) are included in the Hope series, and the Love series covers the testing truths that demonstrate our love for Christ in practical terms. These lessons can be used either for group or for individual study and cover the basics of the three angels' messages.

Ministers, doctors, and lay evangelists who have a love for souls and who have been successful in bringing people into a relationship with Christ and into fellowship with the church can bring into their program a strength that adds to the quality and quantity of conversions through the Better Living evangelism approach. We need to remember, however, that simply by advertising health lectures we may fill the seats but not the baptistry. We are still dependent upon the preaching of the Word and the power of the Holy Spirit to lead men and women to Christ. There is no totally sure-fire way to evangelistic success. But experience clearly demonstrates that if conducted properly the Better Living evangelism approach can add a new element to our traditional evangelistic program. In using it we are presenting a more complete message in the pattern of Jesus as we develop a balanced and well-integrated health component. **62**

Adapted from *Healthy, Happy, Holy*, Washington, D.C., Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1975.

During the month of July, R. H. Pierson, president of the General Conference, J. Wayne McFarland, associate Health director, and W. W. Fordham, director of Regional Affairs, teamed up with K. S. Wiggins, Caribbean Union Ministerial Secretary, and Steven Purcell, South Caribbean Conference evangelist, for a rather unique experience in public evangelism. R. L. Hoyte, East Caribbean Conference president, with his staff and area pastors, spent several weeks formulating plans for this crusade, which included strong support of laymen. Wide coverage by the media alerted the public to the approach of the meetings.

Beginning on Friday, July 2, when Pastor Pierson began the series, until the close on July 31, the attendance averaged from 1,000 to 1,500 nightly. The uniqueness of this crusade was seen in the method in which the Holy Spirit guided the four evangelists in presenting the testing truths in such a unified way that 210 persons were baptized.

Participation by those of us from the General Conference proved to be a wonderful experi-

## World Report

### Unique Barbados Evangelistic Crusade

W. W. Fordham

ence and one that I think should be duplicated. It was a wonderful example for the leadership of this church for the president of the General Conference, in spite of his heavy responsibilities, to spend two weeks in evangelism preaching every night to capacity crowds, leading out each morning in the workers' meetings, with radio and TV appointments sandwiched in between, visiting and encouraging Barbadians to attend the meetings, and keeping up with his official duties via mail and telephone. He also counseled throughout the day with the immediate members of the staff. In the evening, just prior to the evangelistic session, he would have a special prayer period with

those of us who were closely associated with him. In the first baptism of the campaign Elder Pierson examined the 87 candidates and then led out in conducting the baptismal service. If the president of the General Conference could find time to do this what excuse do the rest of us have for not holding evangelistic series?

I referred to Dr. McFarland as an evangelist. I have never had a deeper appreciation for the right arm of the message than I had in associating with him. Indeed, he is not only a doctor but an evangelist-preacher. His gift was demonstrated nightly in the health lectures, which were very effective in helping to bring the people out and at the same time prepare the way for the reception of truth. Again we realized the importance of, and the successful results to be expected from, a team made up of a doctor and pastors working together in evangelism. It was my privilege to join Elder Pierson and Dr. McFarland during the second week, and then I continued the third week. The final week, the meetings were conducted by Elder Purcell.

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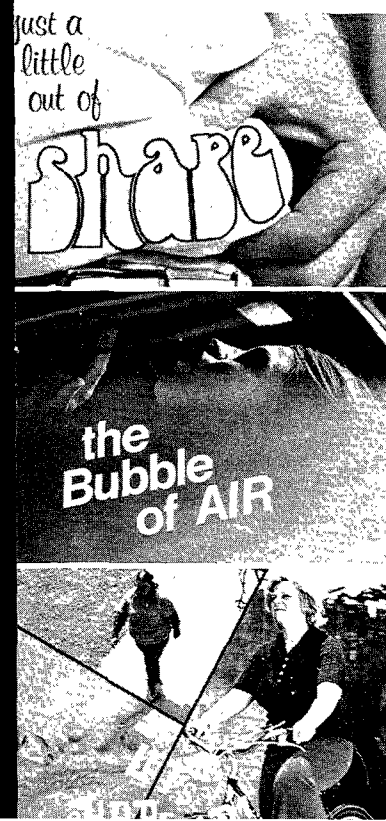
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# *How to Preach the Word*

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MANY OF OUR local church elders are called upon at times to preach in their churches, particularly in those areas where the pastor has other churches to serve in a district. Yet, very few elders have ever taken any kind of a course in how to construct and deliver a sermon. Some have a special talent and speak well, even without training, but an effective message must have vital and correct substance as well as the best possible delivery.

No one can condense a good course in preaching into two pages, but the following pointers may help to make you a better preacher. Having taught homiletics for sixteen years, I find these suggestions to be of great importance and value.

First, we must accept the fact that the lasting impact of any sermon comes from letting God speak from His Word. A great weakness in today's preaching is that the speaker so often gives the audience *his* best ideas on a chosen topic, *his* solutions to a problem, what he *thinks* about a certain situation, with the Bible consigned to a place of insignificance in the over-all sermon. Too often we only tack on a text superficially so that we may call it a "sermon."

A sermon, to be truly such, must involve God speaking through the chosen instrument. This demands that we read from, and correctly explain the Bible, and make it relevant to the needs of our audience. When we speak from the Bible, we must tell our audience what God is saying in the passage or passages used. This demands study. We should use a good commentary and the Spirit of Prophecy until we know what God is actually saying in the text. To be relevant, it is not enough for our audience to hear about Abraham offering Isaac on the mount. They must become Abrahams and Isaacs that day.

As a lay preacher, you will find it greatly satisfying to base your sermon on only one passage of Scripture. First,

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CARL COFFMAN

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explain the true meaning of the verses in light of the times in which they were written. *The SDA Bible Commentary* nicely supplies both the background and the meaning. Then draw the most important lessons from the passage and drive them home to your listeners, using illustrations if necessary. The Ellen G. White books draw out many vital and relevant points that can be used. But rephrase these in your own words. Don't just read them.

## **Two Approaches Illustrated**

The real secret is to work outward from the text rather than just thinking up a topic and sprinkling it with some Bible verses here and there. Actually, the Bible passages, carefully studied, all reveal a subject or theme that is important today as well as back then. Let's illustrate by showing how a sermon may be developed in these two different ways.

Today there is much discussion in our church on righteousness by faith. Many people struggle to find certainty in their relationship to Christ. And so we choose to speak on the topic, "The Certainty of God's Acceptance of a Sinner." Having decided that, we begin to think of the different points that we will bring into our sermon. Then we try to think of some passages of Scripture that could be used to build up our different sections. It should be clarified that a very good sermon could result from this approach if adequate study is involved. It must also be stressed that topical preaching as such is not "wrong." There will always be topics that need to be presented in a sermon. It is how they are developed and how much God actually speaks that determines their lasting value.

We decide on the following basic points for our sermon:

1. The problem—our uncertainty of God's full acceptance of the repenting sinner.

*Carl Coffman is chairman of the Department of Religion, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.*

2. What is it that leaves us uncertain, even though we have asked for God's forgiveness?

3. Bible examples of certainty.

4. Spirit of Prophecy comments that show us that we can be certain.

5. Appeal to believe more fully in God's promises.

Again, we surely could present a worthwhile sermon. But a basic potential weakness is that we choose texts to support *our* outline. And many times we use the texts for what they seem to say without being sure of what they mean. We work *from* our outline *into* Scripture.

### Exposition of Zechariah 3

Try another way with me. From a reading of the Scriptures in our devotions or from the study of a chapter in *Prophets and Kings* (pp. 582-592) or *Christ's Object Lessons* (pp. 166-170), we become interested in Zechariah. To understand the chapter better, we study it verse by verse from volume four of *The SDA Bible Commentary*. We are surprised at two things: (1) that it is not difficult to understand, and (2) that it contains a message that our audience badly needs in regard to developing and preserving an unfailing confidence in our Lord, His forgiveness, and His acceptance.

The *Commentary* furnishes us with a simple historical background for the book. A few years had elapsed since the Babylonian captivity; many of the Jewish people had returned to their homeland from exile. They started the rebuilding of the Temple, then stopped to take care of themselves, and now God was speaking through Haggai and Zechariah, encouraging the Jews to finish God's work.

In verse one there are three characters: "Joshua the high priest," "the angel of the Lord," and "Satan," the accuser. Your study tools tell you that we see here a high priest, representing repentant sinners, standing before Christ, but with Satan there to accuse him. The evil one desires to whisper hopelessness in every ear, attempting to discourage the repentant with the overwhelming quantity of their sins, and the futility of hoping for God's full acceptance.

But note verse two. The Lord rebukes Satan, for He has taken His people's guilt upon His own soul. A believing and repentant sinner has been snatched by Christ as a brand from the fire. The be-

***There are hungry congregations, everywhere, waiting to receive what the Lord has to say.***

liever does not have to listen to the attempted discouragements from the accuser. Christ is fully able to rescue and release him from guilt and doom.


Verse three admits fully that all men are sinners, clothed in filthy garments.

But now read verse four. Christ speaks, especially to the accuser, "Take away the filthy garments from him." Then He adds, "I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." Can I be certain, absolutely certain, of what Christ does for me when I repent? From now on, I will believe Him. And the voice of the accuser falls upon deaf ears.

I could add a text or two to amplify the point—such as Isaiah 61:10; 55:6, 7; and others. What certainty there is! There are also excellent and encouraging quotations that can be used from *Prophets and Kings* and *Christ's Object Lessons*.

### God Has Spoken

My theme is the same, but the Word has spoken, God has spoken, of His own guarantee of His acceptance of all who hear and believe. Not only does my audience have a new love for the Word; they have a new measure of faith; and go out to praise His name.

The speaker can amplify, illustrate, apply. But through it all he *must* let his Lord speak to hearts. He is simply the servant of the Lord. Is Zechariah too difficult for the lay preacher? I doubt it. But if it is, there are hundreds of wonderful passages throughout the Bible, waiting to be used. God waits to speak to us and through us. There are hungry congregations, everywhere, waiting to receive what the Lord will say. Could the most hungry people be in your church? 

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# Basic Bible Evangelism

Being scheduled to preach one Sabbath morning in a small church, I arrived on time for Sabbath school, but as my custom is, turned down the invitation to teach the Sabbath school lesson—not because I was not prepared but because I need some time in which to be fed spiritually, too. Our Sabbath school teachers do a good job. Often-times I receive ideas in the Sabbath school class that are worth further development. And that is exactly what happened during this particular Sabbath school class.

The teacher asked, "Why aren't we willing to become involved in doing more witnessing for Christ? Why don't we share what we believe with others more than we do?" He then answered his own questions when he said, "I'll tell you why we are afraid to become involved, it is because we are not sure we can turn in the Bible to substantiate the truths we believe. We are afraid we will be embarrassed, so we hesitate to witness."

The idea flashed across my mind—Why can't we prepare a series of short Bible studies dealing with all of the great Bible truths and make them a permanent part of the Bible so that a layman can feel comfortable in his witnessing program? During the next few months I shared this idea with many individuals and groups. Finally, it was agreed that we prepare these studies and the decision was made to use the gift Bible, presently being used across America in the Gift Bible Plan, for two reasons: First, it would preserve the present loose-leaf les-

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HAROLD  
METCALF

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*Harold Metcalf  
is Ministerial  
secretary of the  
Southern Union  
Conference.*

sons being used. Second, the pagination would be the same. We decided to produce the Basic Bible in two covers, one for adult and the other for youth. This we have done, and the first 50,000 copies have been used for the most part in the Southern Union territory. Eighty thousand more were printed in the second printing. A third printing is anticipated before the end of this year. These helps are also available in the Heritage Reference Bible, with concordance, #874A and can be secured from the Adventist Book Center.

There is a ready response on the part of our laymen wherever it has been presented. We have promoted the plan of every Seventh-day Adventist having the Basic Bible in the glove compartment of each automobile, a Basic Bible on the job where he works, and a Basic Bible at home. The reason for this is to give each layman the assurance when he becomes involved in witnessing that he has a ready answer for questions that may be asked.

The studies are short and designed so that a layman can give the study with little or no preparation. In each study the introduction and the conclusion are both written out, making it possible to get into and out of the study easily. Just about every topic or question a person might be confronted with is included.

These Bible studies were edited by two college religion department teachers, F. B. Holbrook and E. E. Rogers. They deal tactfully with each topic, and are designed to make truth clear. Being a part of the Bible, these studies have one great advantage—they cannot be lost. The study format has been developed for easy reading. The introduction, the questions, the Bible answers, the notes in which explanations are made, and the conclusion are all set apart. In many of the studies the conclusion is designed to help a person to see the need of and to direct him in making a decision. These helps have gone through the proper committees and have been approved by the General Conference.

Some pastors and evangelists are using

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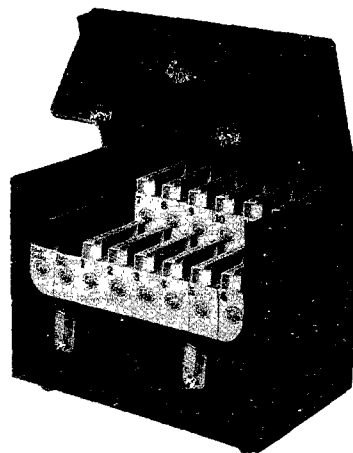
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the Basic Bible in their Bible-marking classes or in the Gift Bible Plan. It is also being used by some in the Pastor's Bible Class. There is one distinct advantage in the use of this Bible in any award program. Many who receive the thousands of Bibles given away in these various plans do not make decisions. When the Basic Bible is in the home, however, there is always the possibility of a person reading the Bible studies, and he may thus be led to accept the great truths of God's Word.

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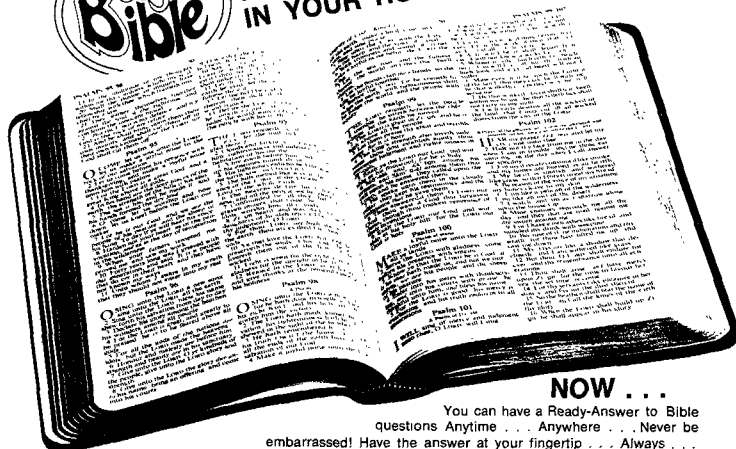
The Basic Bible audio-visual system is so versatile and complete that it can be used for large gatherings, with all the sophistication demanded, or a child can take it into a small cottage. Each program is packaged in a compact cartridge with filmstrip and sound track, synchronized and programmed for automatic instant changes. Several types of projector-style or television play-

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## news briefs

### Spiritual Upsurge Is Reported in Midst of Political Upheaval

DALLAS—Political upheavals in countries of the world such as Angola and Chile have resulted in a great spiritual upsurge in those strife-torn lands, according to Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) officials.

Dr. Pieter Swanepoel, moderator of the Church of God in South Africa, reported that the Angolan civil war has generated a religious revival, with more than 3,000 church members meeting regularly for worship in southern Angola.

The Angolan political situation is still unsettled, but some new believers walk 60 miles to attend services, said Dr. Swanepoel, one of the Church of God leaders from war-torn areas attending the denomination's 56th General Assembly here.

### Minister Talks With His Congregation About Floccinaucinihilipilification

MINNEAPOLIS—Dr. W. Leslie Pugh, minister of the Mayflower Congregational church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, used a 29-letter word as his sermon topic one slow summer Sunday.

It was *floccinaucinihilipilification*.

The word is in the Oxford English Dictionary and has been used three times in literature, Dr. Pugh said. It means "the habit of estimating as worthless."

"The easy days of August are perfect for a series of sermons that enjoy the meanderings that strange words enable," Dr. Pugh said.

The rest of the series? There's *gallimaufry*, meaning "an assorted jumble of this and that." A novelist's made-up words to describe different life-styles gave him *cronopios*, *famas*, and *esper-*

*ansas*. Two other topics are based on *Aporia* and *Palindrome*, both of which are in the dictionary.

### "A Pope for All Christians?"

PARAMUS, N.J.—Seven Protestant, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic theologians, writing in a book published by Paulist Press here, envision the possibility of the reunion of Christian churches that acknowledges the pope as its chief leader.

Of the eight theologians writing on the subject of the book, "A Pope for All Christians?" only one—Dr. C. Brownlow Hastings, assistant director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's Department of Interfaith Witness—said his tradition definitely could not accept reunion with a pope or any centralized authority.

The book, believed to be the first volume in which representatives of more than two Christian denominations offered an opinion on papal authority, was compiled and edited by a Catholic layman, Peter J. McCord, a former Jesuit seminarian who now lives in Greenville, S.C.

The six non-Catholic contributors who believe their churches could accept the papacy in a modified form—a papacy which places strong emphasis on "servanthood" and on service—are the Rev. Joseph Burgess of the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa.; the Rev. J. Ross Mackenzie, a Presbyterian who teaches at Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va.; Father John Meyendorff, an Orthodox priest who teaches at St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, N.Y.; the Rev. J. Robert Nelson, a Methodist who teaches at Boston University School of Theology; and Father J. Robert Wright, an Episcopal priest who teaches at General Theological Seminary, New York.

The Catholic contributor to the

book is Father Avery Dulles, S.J., of the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

Dr. Robert McAfee Brown, a Presbyterian who teaches theology at Stanford University, Palo Alto, Calif., wrote the introduction.

### Mormon World Membership Up Almost 50% in Decade

SALT LAKE CITY—World membership of the Mormon Church increased by almost 50 per cent over a 10-year period, from 2,395,932 in 1965 to 3,572,202 in 1975.

According to the latest statistics released here by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) the number of stakes (dioceses) increased from 414 to 737 in the same period. The number of wards (parishes) increased from 3,301 to 5,095, and the number of full-time missions increased from 74 to 134.

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