

Ministry

A Magazine for Clergy/August 1984



Is public evangelism obsolete?

Did Ellen White follow Ussher?

Any position with respect to chronological constraints imposed by the Bible should be based solely on the Biblical text. In seeking to evaluate the compatibility of Ellen White's testimony regarding chronology with the specifications given by Moses, we run into the hazard that our biases may lead us to read into her available statements views that she would reject if given opportunity to explain herself further.

In "Ellen G. White and Biblical Chronology" (April, 1984), Warren Johns says, "For her as for Ussher there were *exactly* 4,000 years between the creation of man and the birth of Christ." (Italics mine.) Since Mrs. White frequently qualified her use of 6,000 years as an approximate, rounded estimate by use of the terms "about," "almost," "nearly," "more than," and "over," is it justified to insist that she intended her 4,000-year statements to mean *exactly* 4,000 years? In *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 269, she specifically used the expression "more than four thousand years." The 4,000-year statements refer to the time span from Creation to the Nativity (*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 49, 117), Creation to Calvary (*The Great Controversy*, p. 328; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 652, 759), and Creation to Paul (*The Great Controversy*, p. 546); and she specified 4,100 years (2,500 plus 1,600) from Creation to the apostle John (*ibid.*, p. v).

Since she used the expressions "more than six thousand" (*Historical Sketches*, p. 133; *Signs of the Times*, Sept. 29, 1887) and "over six thousand" (*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 154) in 1886, 1887, and 1890, is it appropriate to insist that "her consistent position was that the earth was less than 6,000 years old"? Would it not be more appropriate to say that her final-position statement, "nearly six thousand years" (*Counsels to Parents and Teachers*, p. 467), should be consistently interpreted as an approximate rounding from the viewpoint of her 1886, 1887, and 1890 statements?

Prior to 1890 all of Mrs. White's statements agreed with Ussher's position

that the Hebrew residence in Egypt was 215 years. From 1890 to 1896 she had five statements in favor of 215 years and three in favor of 430 years. All of her published statements (five) after 1896 affirmed 430 years. Is it then appropriate to say that from the total perspective of her life and witness "she sided with him [Ussher] on the short sojourn view"?—R. H. Brown, Loma Linda, California.

Ellen White made two statements (Signs of the Times, May 8, 1884; The Great Controversy, p. v.) that unambiguously support a date of Creation less than 6,000 years ago, and three statements, as noted in the above letter, that unequivocally support a time frame of more than 6,000 years. One can line up mutually exclusive statements on both sides of a chronological issue, whether the age of the earth or the length of the Egyptian sojourn. The determining factor, then, must be the overall patterns, rather than exceptions to those patterns. For those wishing to examine firsthand all 38 E. G. White statements on the length of the sojourn and all 89 statements on the age of the earth, please send \$1.00 to: MINISTRY, 6840 Eastern Ave., NW., Washington, D.C. 20012. Ask for the paper "Ellen G. White and Chronology."—Editors.

An immortal soul, evolution, and Creation

You are to be commended for your May, 1984, issue, which highlights the Creation-evolution debate. It is well done, reasonable, and in the main acceptable. The one article to which I take exception is "Evolution Confronts Christianity," by Warren H. Johns and David C. Jarnes.

My objection concerns the authors' denial that man is a dichotomous being. I recognize that it is not a doctrine held by your communion, but when it is used to support a Creation; it weakens the whole argument to those of us who accept man's dichotomy. Although your book *Questions on Doctrine* makes a fairly strong case for conditional immortality, a stronger case can be made for an immortal soul. I have read many volumes of the early Church Fathers and do not

recollect any teaching such as you hold. Surely the Greek and new Jewish concept could not fully account for what they wrote. They constitute the best reference to what Jesus, the apostles, and the Bible taught.—Everett I. Carver, Houston, Texas.

I am writing you to let you know of my disappointment with your magazine. You're becoming more and more fundamental and illogical. (The problem in Iran is rooted in extreme fundamentalism among Moslems.) The last straw is your issue of May, 1984. I can't believe, with all your knowledge of literary genre, that you can continue with such an un scholarly approach to Genesis 1-11. Were you to read the Scriptures correctly, Creation-evolution would not pose a problem for you. And they certainly are not mutually exclusive of each other. Evolution does not deny creation. "Creationism" denies creating because it stops after six days; yet God is still creating in 1984. Evolution is possible; when the spirit of man comes into being, God continues to give life through direct creation. (He didn't just do this on the sixth day.)—William J. Deering, Evansville, Indiana.

We do not find anything in Scripture from which we can infer that God is creating in 1984. The creation of a "new heavens and a new earth" (2 Peter 3:13; cf. Isa. 66:22) is yet future and cannot be taking place at present. At the end of the sixth day God's creative activities ceased and were complete—stated as being "very good" (Gen. 1:31). If His "works were finished from the foundation of the world" (Heb. 4:3), how can it be said that creation is still continuing today? Those who believe that the soul is a distinct entity from the body have a problem; they need to postulate that at the conception of each child a new soul is created. Thus God's creative activities must occur thousands of times each hour and millions of times each month. As Seventh-day Adventists, we take the alternate view that the soul is simply the person who comes into existence through the act of procreation, not creation.—Editors.

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A Magazine for Clergy/August 1984/Volume 57/Number 8



COVER: HARRY ANDERSON

Is Public Evangelism Obsolete?/4. No, it's not, argues John W. Fowler. His reasons include not only the needs of the listeners but also the needs of the preacher.

Narrative Preaching/7. Des Cummings, Jr., continues our Toward Better Preaching series by describing a plan for making narrative preaching much more than just storytelling.

Family Life Ministry That Works!/10. Monte Sahlin provides more than just ideas and motivation for effective family ministry. His concluding article includes a list of resources and where to get them.

Creation, a Pillar of the Faith/16. Belief in a literal six-day Creation week is not a peripheral issue in Adventism, says scientist Ariel A. Roth. Rather, it lies at the very roots of our relationship to God.

1985 World Ministers Council/22. Editor J. R. Spangler shares some of the exciting plans that are shaping up for General Conference pre-session at New Orleans.

Ellen G. White and Epilepsy/24. Report of the Ellen G. White Health Committee on their investigation into recent allegations brought against her by a pediatrician.

Hire a Nursery Worker on Sabbath?/26. Is hiring someone to watch the children during worship service doing business on the Sabbath? Pastors and one pastor's wife share their sentiments and some good solutions to the perennial "noise in the sanctuary" problem.

Who, Me? Overseas?/28. How should you react to a call to overseas mission service? What sort of problems might you encounter? Should you accept? Returned missionary wife Madeline S. Johnston provides a personal checklist for prospective missionaries.

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Is public evangelism obsolete?

It is often said that new converts go out the back door of the church as quickly as they enter the front door. Public evangelism then becomes the scapegoat for this mass exodus, and the church-growth movement is offered as a ready-made cure for this serious problem. Here the author tackles the difficult question, Has the church-growth movement rendered public evangelism obsolete? □ by John W. Fowler



Public evangelism has in the past been a powerful and effective outreach activity responsible for bringing hundreds of thousands to a decision for Christ and into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Possibly because of its effectiveness, public evangelism seems to have been the primary outreach activity sponsored by

Adventists.

Today new winds are blowing within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This visible and welcome shift of emphasis focuses on a perennial program of evangelism in the personal lives of the members and in the corporate life and worship of the church. This movement, called the "Church Growth Movement,"¹ is characterized by the work of Donald McGavran, Peter Wagner, Win Arn, and others. This new concept

emphasizes church growth through "body-life." It compares the church to the human organism and emphasizes the growth of the church through the same types of processes responsible for the growth of the human body. Rather than focusing upon decisions for Christ, it accents making disciples.

Its modus operandi seems to be a variety of small homogenous groups within the church—young singles, older adults, recently married, youth, children, musical, ethnic, linguistic, et cetera.² The groups provide a support system that seeks to meet the sociological and spiritual needs of their members,

which consist of both Christians and non-Christians. The group then becomes a pathway into the church for the group's non-Adventist members.

As important as this development is, we must not allow any new emphasis to eclipse the place and purpose of public evangelism. Public evangelism is still a powerful and effective agency of church growth and continues to be used effectively by Christian groups throughout the world. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association is a class A exhibit proving that public evangelism is still a very viable agency of church growth not made obsolete by the church growth

John W. Fowler is president of the Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Public meetings answer the ultimate questions of life by focusing on the great doctrinal truths of the church, often neglected in the regular worship services of our churches.

movement of the 1980s.

The fact that public evangelism, and specifically itinerant public evangelism, is alive and well was uniquely demonstrated by the International Conference for Itinerant Evangelists ("Amsterdam '83") conducted in the Netherlands during July of 1983.³ Almost four thousand itinerant evangelists from 133 countries came to Amsterdam to learn to do what Billy Graham does best. The conference plan was to limit the participants to 3,500. However, because of the great interest and unexpected applications, the number of itinerant evangelists requesting attendance grew to almost four thousand. According to a report in *Christianity Today*, "Amsterdam '83 was an event that caught fire from the ground up. The crush of Third World participants radiated a vigor and freshness for their calling that ignited their more sophisticated brethren from the West, as well as the conference staff. The fire was sparked from a thousand tiny tails of poignance and spiritual fortitude."⁴

The participants came from almost every denomination in the world. "Even the Soviet Union permitted a seven-member delegation of observers to go, and it included two Orthodox metropolitans [equivalent to Roman Catholic cardinals]."⁵ Amsterdam '83 made it clear that there is a growing interest in and support for public evangelism throughout the Christian churches of the world.

One church that has always used public evangelism most effectively is the Seventh-day Adventist Church. While some feel this approach to evangelism is on the wane in North America, and possibly in Western Europe, the rest of the Adventist world clearly makes large use of public evangelistic meetings.

This emphasis on public evangelistic meetings is accented by active support in public evangelism by the General Conference president, Neal C. Wilson, who conducted a meeting in Manila prior to the 1982 Annual Council, where more than a thousand were baptized. He just completed another crusade this year in

Panama City with more than six hundred baptisms. Elder Charles Bradford, president of the North American Division, is an experienced hand on the public evangelistic trail. He recently completed a meeting in Toronto with more than 147 baptisms. A number of outstanding evangelists in North America are still baptizing three hundred to five hundred persons per year.

At its best, public evangelism provides Christianity with a unique forum in which the Christian message functions most effectively. Religion is most effective when it brings meaning and purpose to the life of an individual or to the lives in a group. It does this by helping them answer the ultimate questions of life. Paul Tillich said that religion has to do with the ultimate questions we have. Dean Kelley identified some of those ultimate questions and states that reli-

gion solutions that transcend the wisdom of science, sociology, government, and politics. While sociologists, scientists, environmentalists, and a host of other concerned groups join with the public evangelist in an unprecedented emphasis on the time of the end, only the evangelist sees clearly beyond the imminent threat of nuclear war, environmental chaos, and the destruction of the species. He is divinely endowed to unravel the crises of our age, bringing hope and assurance to the masses. The evangelistic messages when presented clearly and forcefully enable the hearers to see beyond destruction and death to a bright new world without the blight of war or the senseless suffering and loss of death. As the crisis thickens, without doubt the need for greater public outreach will continually increase.

During public meetings the ultimate

Evangalistic messages enable hearers to see beyond destruction. As the crisis thickens, the need for greater public outreach will continually increase.

gion functions effectively in the life of an individual by answering them. Those questions have to do with: (1) "the purpose of his existence, (2) the nature of reality, (3) the fate of the world, (4) the character of the beings or forces that determine his destiny, and (5) how he can relate to them."⁶ Public evangelism is uniquely designed to address those ultimate questions, thus bringing meaning and purpose to those who attend.

The public meeting does this first by preaching to the times. The masses question the meaning of the thickening world crisis and are depressed by the incessant bombardment of bad news. The news media does not know how to sell good news; only the preacher can do that. However, God uses the bad news to prepare the way for the public evangelist. The evangelist not only speaks to the crises of our day but presents to a nuclear

questions of one's personal life—Who am I? Where did I come from? What of my future?—are addressed. The crucified, risen, and soon-coming Christ provides the answer to all those questions. When Christ is uplifted and His saving work explained with invitations to come to Him five nights a week for four to twelve weeks, marvelous are the results. E. Stanley Jones characterized this result. "Whenever," he said, "in the history of the Christian church there has been a new emphasis upon Jesus Christ, there has always been an outbreak of vitality and virility in the churches."⁷ Lifting up Christ is the preeminent work of the evangelist. Christ is the Evangel, and it is the function of the evangelist to "lift Him up, the risen Saviour, Let the dying look and live; To all weary, thirsting sinners, living waters will He give." When Christ is lifted up, He does

There is no greater joy than the joy of preaching God's Word and seeing souls saved. If a man will give himself to this work, whatever doubts and perplexities he may have will quickly vanish.

draw men and women to Him. Their questions are answered. Their hearts are changed. They find meaning and purpose in God's saving work and enter joyfully into the spiritual kingdom of God.

Public meetings answer the ultimate questions of life by focusing on the great doctrinal truths of the church, often neglected in the regular worship services of our churches. In a public evangelistic series the great Biblical doctrines are developed and linked together in such a way that the deepest questions of life are answered. If the great doctrines of Scripture—the Sabbath and Creation, the origin of evil and the Fall of man, the cross and the assurance of salvation, the state of the dead and the resurrection, the sanctuary doctrine and the investigative judgment, the second coming of Christ and the creation of a new heaven and a new earth—are all presented in such a way that the hearers understand God's work to redeem man and restore His dominion on this planet, the evangelist will have a hearing, and success will be guaranteed.

Also often neglected in the regular worship services, Biblical eschatology, a study of final events, functions very effectively to explain the crisis of history, thus bringing meaning and purpose. Indeed, it does take a series of sermons to help people really grasp the great prophetic and eschatological truths of God's Word. Beginning with a simple view of history in Daniel 2, the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation are unfolded, giving a clear and concise picture of the history of the world from the time of Daniel all the way down to the second coming of Christ and the establishment of new heavens and a new earth. Prophecy answers some of the basic questions identified by Dean Kelley: the origin of evil and the nature of the cosmic forces that affect our destiny. Prophetic presentations develop a sacred cosmos in which both the powers of good and evil can be identified clearly, helping us to see more fully not only God's love for us and the work of Christ in saving us but a very clear chronology of

events that give meaning and purpose to history. Probably the greatest question of every individual is how to find inner peace and true rest. Our problem is a spiritual one, and acknowledgment of sin, genuine repentance, and a change of heart are the only way to become healthy spiritual beings.

Public meetings provide a perfect opportunity to woo an audience night after night, leading them closer to Christ until they fall at the foot of the cross and surrender to His love and converting power. Effective public meetings focus every night on conversion with marvelous results. E. G. White eloquently states: "When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and

himself to this work, whatever doubts and perplexities he may have will quickly vanish. He will find faith, meaning, and fulfillment again in his ministry.

Public evangelism is alive and well. We must listen to criticism and learn from our critics, but not let irresponsible criticism detain us. The idea that greater apostasies take place from public evangelistic converts has never been clearly established in Adventism. In fact, a recent study in the Upper Columbia Conference done by Des Cummings, Jr., and Roger Dudley indicates that almost one out of every two apostasies in the Adventist Church is a person raised within the Adventist Church itself.⁹ It appears, in fact, that the new converts to the church are the ones responsible for bringing not only new spiritual life but also new growth within our churches.

Hardly a church exists in North

Public meetings provide a perfect opportunity to woo an audience, leading the people closer to Christ until they fall at the foot of the cross and surrender.

the countenance reflects the light of heaven."⁸ Those who experience true conversion will find lasting peace and genuine rest.

Some do not realize that the preacher himself often has doubts and must constantly renew his understanding of the ultimate questions of life. Public meetings can be the source of renewal and revival for the evangelist. No man can stand in the public night after night for four to twelve weeks, uplifting the Christ of Scripture, without himself being changed by that Word he preaches. I know of a number of administrators who conduct public meetings at least once a year just to clean out their clogged spiritual wells, enabling heaven's healing waters to flow freely within them again. There is no greater joy than the joy of preaching God's Word and seeing souls saved. If a man will give

America today that could not experience a 10 percent growth through one well-planned and adequately funded public evangelistic meeting. If the church has a healthy and balanced program of pastoral evangelism, public evangelism can play a powerful role in bringing both spiritual and numerical growth. The prosperity of the church will become obvious, and Christ's work will surely be advanced.

¹ Peter Wagner, "Church Growth," *Christianity Today*, Dec. 7, 1973, p. 11.

² *Admistry*, Autumn, 1983, p. 15.

³ *Christianity Today*, Sept. 2, 1983, p. 42.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁶ Dean Kelley, *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 38.

⁷ *Decision*, March, 1972, p. 13.

⁸ E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 173.

⁹ Des Cummings, Jr., and Roger Dudley, *Adventures in Church Growth* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 1983), p. 146.

Narrative preaching

Many preachers feel that giving a narrative sermon is simply telling a story, but much more is involved than that. Seven simple steps are outlined here in developing a narrative sermon to its fullest potential. One step is to fill out the dynamics of the story—immersing yourself completely into the Biblical life situation, so that you are able to “walk your character around.” You will be interested to discover the other six steps.

Toward Better Preaching □ 8 Des Cummings, Jr.



o preaching succeeds so well as that which treats some Biblical story. . . . Reality and revelation can join in the Biblical narratives, and from them we gain a certain understanding of God and a crucial understanding of ourselves.”¹ James Massey’s assertion signals the reason for the renewed emphasis

on narrative preaching in the seminaries and pulpits of America.

This article introduces the seven-step system that I utilize in preparing a narrative sermon. I have used the word *system* to indicate that while there is a progression in developing the sermon, the progression involves interaction among all the elements. Thus, my own sermon development is more akin to conducting a symphony than to building a house in a precisely ordered sequence.

Powerful preaching begins and ends with powerful praying. So if this system can be thought of as a symphony, then prayer is the overture. Scripture asserts that understanding God’s Word is directly related to prayer and meditation. “I have more insight than all my

teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation” (Ps. 119:99, R.S.V.).* Helmut Thielicke boldly states: “All our libraries and studies are mere emptiness compared with our closets. We grow, we wax mighty, we prevail in private prayer. *Your prayers will be your ablest assistants while your discourses are yet upon the anvil.* . . . Texts will often refuse to reveal their treasures till you open them with the key of prayer.”² Rather than being one aspect of narrative preaching, prayer is the atmosphere in which the sermon is born and incubated. This atmosphere allows revelation to illuminate modern reality and the old stories to become fresh with relevance.

What is narrative preaching?

When I use the term *narrative preaching*, I am referring to preaching the story passages of Scripture. The narrative sermon focuses on revealing to the hearer the truth about life contained in the interactions between God and man

and fellow human beings. Thus, it is a form of Biblical preaching.

Narrative preaching can be presented in one of two ways: first, the storytelling mode; second, the introduction, body, conclusion mode. Each can be illustrated graphically.

The storytelling mode can be visualized as loops where the storyteller passes over his main points two or three times, building the focus and tension (Figure 1). This process can be repeated for each major point. In this case the story carries the message and the points are emphasized through repetition.

The introduction-body-conclusion method allows the preacher to point out the significant elements in the study. These points become the peaks of the sermon. They are what Milton Crum calls the “holy points.” The preacher takes the hearer at the point of need (life situation) and moves into the theology of the narrative, asserting that “this story answers your needs.” Together the

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If we have not identified how a truth can be utilized for dynamic living, it is doubtful that the listener will see its application. Pray for application, study for application, structure for application.

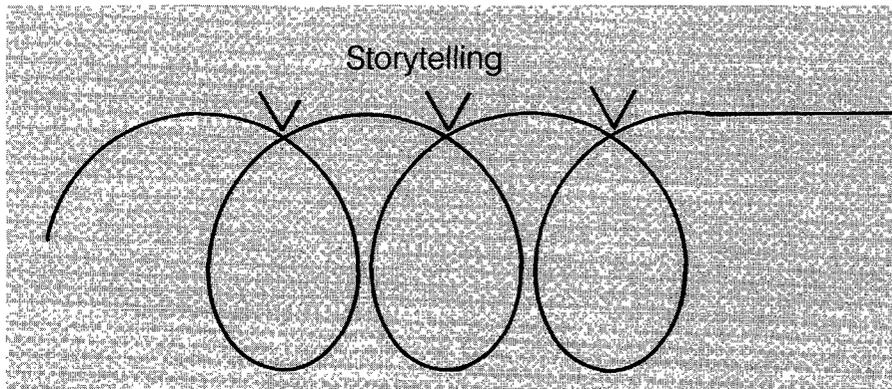


Figure 1

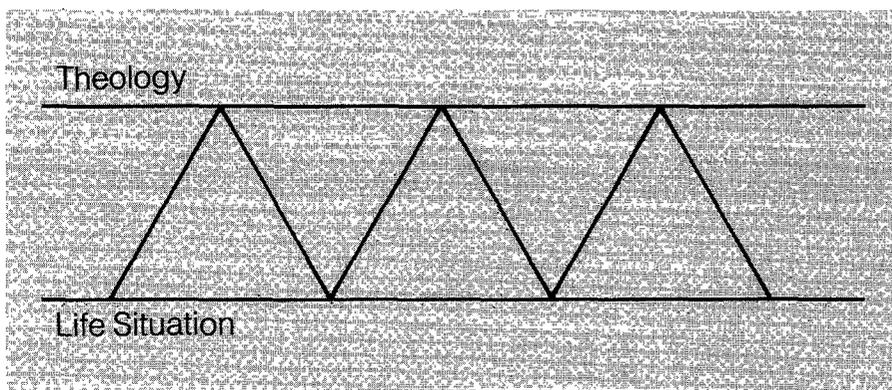


Figure 2

hearer and the preacher climb to God's vantage point to find an answer. The preacher may tell part of the story to show the answer, then he descends the mount to demonstrate how this truth will work in life. Next, he ascends the second mountain, or point, and repeats the process. This method allows for storytelling, word studies, and deductive teaching, and therefore is more eclectic.

I would encourage you to experiment and develop your own variation or combination of these methods of presentation. Then practice, pray, and plead that God will be glorified.

I would suggest three process goals if you choose to preach a narrative passage, such as Mark 1:40-45: first, experiencing the story; second, interpreting the story; and third, relating the story. Each of these three goals is achieved by one or more procedural steps.

Experiencing the story

Step 1: Identify the dynamics. The power of a story is experienced through identifying the dynamic factors that provide a systematic way of approaching any narrative passage. Milton Crum has developed five dynamic factors of change that I have found very helpful.³ After reading the passage, you can identify the factors by answering the following questions: a. What actions/words are involved in the story? b. What motivations prompt these actions/words? c. What is the result of these actions/words? d. What is the "gospel content," or truth about God, revealed in this story? e. If this truth was lived out by the characters, what was the result? If the truth were lived out today, what effect would it have on our lives?

I have found that it is helpful to go through this list of questions for each major character in the story. For exam-

ple, in Mark 1:40-45, the major characters are the leper and Jesus. The actions/words of the leper are: he comes, he beseeches, he falls on his knees, he says, "If You are willing, You can make me clean," and he proclaims. The actions/words of Jesus are: He comes to Galilee, He allows the leper to approach Him, He touches the leper, He heals, He says, "I am willing, be cleansed," and He warns the leper.

Jesus' motivation, as stated by Mark, was compassion. But what moved or motivated the leper? Mark does not state explicitly. However, we are given clues in the leper's words.

Practice this procedure by using Mark 1:40-45 to answer all five of the questions as they relate to Jesus and the leper.

Step 2: Fill out the dynamics. This step focuses on gaining Biblical insights to add depth to the dynamic factors. It involves the following techniques: a. Using only the concordance, identify and study the key words or symbols (e.g., leper). b. Describe the situation and its context, using sanctified imagination. For example, we know that leprosy meant leaving church, family, job, and community. Imagine yourself going through that experience and how you would leave. Describe your last farewell—what you would say to your family members. Imagine hearing that Jesus is in Galilee. Describe your feelings as you approach Him, and your return home. I call this "walking your character around." c. Look for personality clues to help identify the natural makeup of the person. This will prevent foisting your personality upon his actions. d. Gather historical data from Scripture that will indicate the historical setting when the event took place.

Interpreting the story

The goal of this process is to understand the gospel content of the story. This is accomplished by utilizing sound principles of interpretation that will allow the passage to speak. Haddon Robinson describes the process well: "An expositor pulls up his chair to where the Biblical authors sat. He attempts to

I f I choose my illustrations prior to clarifying my theology, I run the risk of making the text fit the illustration as opposed to making the illustration fit the text.

work his way back into the world of the Scriptures to understand the message. Though he need not master all the languages, history, and literary forms of Biblical writers, an expositor should appreciate the contribution of each of these disciplines."⁴

Step 3: Biblical research is a procedural step that is essential. It is sweeping in scope and consumes about half of the sermon development time. Since other articles in this series have dealt with interpretation, I will not review this subject (MINISTRY, April, May, 1984). In addition to employing classical hermeneutical principles, I have found the following techniques helpful:

a. Interaction analysis is a technique that aids the expositor in thinking theologically. It involves contrasting divine action with human tendency. This is facilitated by asking the question "If I were in Christ's/God's place, how would I respond under these circumstances?" For example, would I touch a leper? Why did Jesus touch him? The great paradox between God's nature and man's is upheld as we understand the beauty of His responses. This beauty is often magnified by identifying how humans would respond to particular circumstances. For example, if I had been in Christ's stead, how would I have looked at Peter when he denied that he knew me? Humans realize all the more their need of God when His glorious character is upheld in contrast to human nature.

b. Check conclusions. It is vital that the passage determine the message. Thus all insights gained through the process of experiencing the story must be checked by asking the question "Are my personal insights supported by Biblical research?" One of the most exciting moments in sermon preparation occurs when we find that Biblical research confirms insights gained through personal study. On the other hand, the preacher is put to the test when he discovers that a cherished concept is not supported by Biblical research. This is the point at which personal insights must be overruled by Scripture.

c. Record the sources. Research reveals that the average Adventist pastor spends only ten hours per week in all sermon preparation.⁵ Thus it is vital to manage those ten hours well. Since I find that I often need to hear a concept several times before I own it, I read some of my sources into a tape recorder. Then I listen to the tape while I am driving or jogging, thus maximizing my time.

Relating the story

The goal of the process is to prepare the sermon for preaching by relating the story to the life issues of our hearers. It involves four procedural steps.

Step 4: Construct a logical flow. Constructing the logical flow of the narrative sermon begins by determining the plot. The plot is the theme or thesis—the glasses through which the story will be viewed. In a symphony the plot is the

process of interpreting the story places emphasis on what is the truth in the story. This process places emphasis on how we live this truth. You have completed the logical flow procedure when you have identified the plot (theme), the main points, and the supporting material (secondary points). The entire procedure is focused on application.

Step 5: Design the bonding. Bonding is the "amen" of preaching. It is the point at which the hearer makes a conscious choice to allow God to live out this truth through him/her. My primary problem with bonding is that I once had a limited repertoire of methods. Thus, I sensed the need for choice-making but was limited to an altar call, a raised-hand response, or simply a concluding prayer of commitment. Convicted by the knowledge that the power of truth is limited or released

Bonding is the "amen" of preaching. It is the point at which the hearer makes a conscious decision to allow God to live out this truth through him/her.

theme music. To identify the plot, first ask yourself, "What human needs does this story meet?" Brainstorm a list of human needs and then identify the need that is most relevant to your congregation at this time.

After selecting the plot, you can proceed to identify the major points of the sermon by asking, "What are the specific insights about God and man that my listeners must understand to realize God's answer to this need?" The key word is *specific*. The preacher must focus the structure of the sermon on application. If we have not identified how a truth can be utilized for dynamic living, it is doubtful that the listener will see its application. Pray for application, study for application, structure for application. The art of matching life issues with scriptural truth is at the heart of the power of the gospel. The previous

by human choice, I set out to expand my repertoire. This has been a rewarding experience. To date, the Lord has led me to discover twenty-three different methods. Several are listed below:

a. Generational call. This method focuses on inviting the older generation to affirm (by standing or coming forward) their commitment to a Christian ideal or practice. Then invite the next generation to join the older, and finally, the youth are invited to join. It is especially effective when related to Christian family values. I utilized this method with my Mother's Day sermon. The theme of the sermon was the power of praying mothers. At the close of the service I told the young people that they were going to see God's support system for their lives. Then I invited the grandmothers and mothers to stand in a

(Continued on page 30)

Family life ministry that works!

In the first article in this two-part series (MINISTRY, June, 1984), Monte Sahlin indicated how to define the needs and do the kind of planning that careful development of a family life ministry requires. In this article he discusses how to communicate well with the target audience, points out the skills the program personnel need, and shows how family life programs may be made to contribute to the total church program. □ by Monte Sahlin



You have presented a document describing the needs, the target audience, the program design and curriculum, the specific objectives of the project, and its working team, budget, and schedule to the church board. After the board has voted approval, you have introduced the working team during a

Sabbath morning worship and in prayer set them aside to their new ministry. Now they must begin to communicate with the target audience.

The team has many mediums of communication from which to select—they must choose carefully which to use. The situation in a specific local community, the kind of people they are trying to reach, and financial considerations all come into play. In any case they will have to pay for some of the publicity. They cannot rely on free advertising to produce results, although they should use free publicity in community newspapers and public-service announcements on radio and television stations to

Monte Sahlin, a pastor and formerly the chairman of the Pennsylvania Conference's Family Ministries Committee, writes from Worthington, Ohio.

supplement the major advertising items.

The available mediums for communication can be divided into three major categories: relational media, which feature person-to-person contact; formal media, such as direct mail; and public media, such as the newspapers and broadcasting facilities. Both small towns and communities with low levels of education can best be reached through relational communication. Suburban areas, especially white-collar communities, are best contacted through formal means. And the public media most effectively penetrate the highly urbanized areas. The level of education, lifestyle, and residential area of the target audience will indicate what choices must be made in designing the advertising campaign for a family ministry.

Relational media are simply organized

ways of using word of mouth. Of course, word-of-mouth advertising is always helpful and not very costly. One can initiate an informal advertising effort simply by, during Sabbath worship, carefully informing the congregation's active members about the upcoming program and urging them to tell their friends, neighbors, and working associates. Better organized and more effective means include setting up telephone committees, going door-to-door to distribute information in housing developments with high concentrations of the target audience, and arranging to make in-person announcements at community meetings of various kinds (civic clubs, PTA, et cetera). Relational media will be much more effective if one reinforces them with a well-done brochure of some kind—a handout to back up the word-of-mouth communication.¹ Relational

Successful advertising uses a mix of several media. When a church is communicating with an audience outside its congregation, it will need to put out a minimum of six kinds of advertising.

media cost little in terms of money but much in volunteer hours. Boards sometimes too easily decide to "save money" by relying on relational media while taking no responsibility for providing the many volunteer hours necessary to implement their decision.

Formal media are probably the most cost-effective forms of advertising available to local churches. Of these, mass mailings—the kind of mailing addressed to "Resident" and usually done by a professional mail advertising company—are more costly and less effective than other types of mailing. However, they can be useful in starting public ministries in a community where the church has not developed much contact over the years, or when the target audience is a group that has been unreached in the past. Since the response rate is usually about 1 percent, one must mail many thousands of pieces; and this can be very costly.

Direct mail differs from mass mailing in that it is sent to specific addressees by name. These names may be obtained from an advertising agency according to specification (they will match your target audience), or from lists of people the church has contacted in one way or another over the years. For example, *It Is Written*, *Faith for Today*, and *the Voice of Prophecy* can supply the names and addresses of people in specified zip-code areas who have requested booklets on the family over the past three or four years. If the interest coordinator in a local church has been systematically keeping a file of interested persons, this becomes a gold mine for advertising new outreaches, such as a family ministry. Steve Dunkin has developed an effective, simple manual of procedures for local churches who want to do their own direct-mail advertising at low cost.²

Public media are the most expensive forms of communication and the most difficult to utilize. When a program committee decides to purchase ads in a newspaper or spots on a radio station, they should also seek professional counsel from someone other than the sales people at the publishing or broadcasting

company; otherwise they risk wasting large sums of money. Public advertising is so highly complex that even professionals fail more often than they succeed, especially in the marketing of services or entertainment. And few advertising professionals understand the unique factors involved in marketing church-related events.

Where can local church members get good advice without spending money on consulting fees? First, try to set up an appointment with one of the best public relations firms in the area. These professionals often are willing to give one or two consultations at no charge for a volunteer, community service effort with a very small budget. Second, see if the United Way or a major local nonprofit institution has a professional public relations director. This individual would not charge a fee for some advice and is often extremely knowledgeable. Finally, perhaps the church can find and obtain the aid of an Adventist public relations professional. These people are often willing to assist local churches that want to do something creative in the public media.

Perhaps one of the greatest misunderstandings concerning advertising involves searching for "the best method." All communication experts agree that there is no *one* best method of advertising. Successful advertising always uses a mix of several media. When a local church is communicating with a target audience outside its congregation, it will need to put out a minimum of six different kinds of advertising. For example, the family-life committee at your church might choose to utilize: (1) word of mouth by the congregation; (2) a telephone committee to contact those the media ministries (*Faith for Today*, et cetera) indicate have requested booklets on the family; (3) door-to-door distribution of a printed flyer in several apartment complexes with high concentrations of the target audience; (4) a mailing to the names in the interest file; (5) a mailing to the pediatricians, PTA presidents, school principals, social-work agencies, pas-

sors, and family counselors in the area; and (6) posters in supermarkets and laundromats. Of course, the specific mix used in each local situation must be based on the nature of the target audience, the funds available, the volunteer manpower available, and local ways of doing things.

You have not completed the public relations task when the first public program has been held and a crowd has come out. You must utilize continuing, supportive advertising to keep those who have responded coming back. For instance, you might use a telephone committee to remind participants of each session in an ongoing class, or regular mailings encouraging those who responded to the initial advertising to keep coming and reminding them of the topics and benefits available at each session. Again, you must decide how you will do the continued advertising on the basis of the target audience and local conditions.

The most important dimension of public programs

You have a group of thirty-five enthusiastic people attending your Family Life Seminar each week. They regularly make appreciative comments during the question-and-answer period. You've been receiving phone calls from people who want to know if it is too late to join the class. In short, the new family ministry seems like a success. But is it? Not if close, personal relationships are not being built between the people attending and the ministry team.

Your family ministry may miss out on this most important dimension of its program even when the team includes outgoing, naturally friendly people who are enthusiastic and "bubbly." Exciting, entertaining public relationships and rewarding, meaningful personal relationships are two different things. In order to minister effectively to people, one must get beyond superficial, friendly contacts and hear their deep, inner concerns. Only at this intimate level can spiritual needs be identified and met. The relational skills necessary to reach

Small Bible study and support groups afford effective pathways to church fellowship. In congregations of more than 350 members, almost all new members come into active fellowship through small groups.

people in this interior, spiritual sphere of their lives are the skills that give appropriate experiential reality to the intellectual content of a family ministry program.

If a family life program is going to be family *ministry*, then one or more individuals on the working team must have the depth listening skills to work with people at the level of their spiritual needs. Ideally the entire team should have this kind of training and awareness. The "Lab I in Parish Visitation Skills," developed by Dr. John Savage, is perhaps the best training experience currently available for the development of these skills. Many Seventh-day Adventists have been equipped to teach this forty-hour course, and Dr. Savage's office has a toll-free number from which the names of qualified Adventist trainers can be obtained (800-828-6556). Pastors who want to enable their people to minister effectively but who cannot set up a "Lab I" can use one of the other curricula offering training in relational skills.³

Creating pathways into church fellowship

Conducting family ministries simply as "bait" to lure people into church membership is manipulative and unChristlike. But it is equally irresponsible and sub-Christian to conduct family life education in such a way as to create barriers for participants who want to satisfy their spiritual needs by participating in the religious activities of the sponsoring church. The church should open clear pathways for those who wish to move from the family life event into closer fellowship with the congregation. Availability, accessibility, genuine caring, and an effective family outreach will lead to voluntary contacts by individuals and families interested in sampling the religious activities of the church.

Michael J. Coyner, a United Methodist researcher, has demonstrated that unchurched people decide to make a first visit to a church when motivated by such occurrences as a divorce, birth of a child, change of residence, marriage, or thirty-

seven other similar "life events."⁴ An effective family outreach touches many unchurched people who are experiencing these life events, and some of these people will think about visiting the church that has demonstrated its concern about their needs. If members of the outreach team are using depth listening skills, they will hear these spiritual needs being expressed and will be able to refer people to appropriate religious activities which the church offers.

Small Bible study and support groups afford one of the most effective pathways to church fellowship for unchurched people. Church development consultant Lyle Schaller says that in congregations of more than 350 members, almost all new members come into active fellowship through small groups.⁵ Any congregation that has a singles group, a parent-exchange group, a couples group, a women's group, and so forth, has potential to grow simply because it has "doors" through which new people can find entrance into its social fabric. Interested participants in a family outreach can be referred to these groups for further growth and spiritual nurture.⁶

Some personalities do not feel comfortable in groups, preferring the same kind of ongoing fellowship and nurturing in the form of one-to-one contact. Every congregation has members who are gifted in maintaining these kinds of relationships. In order to effectively follow through, these members will need some orientation to the family outreach activities with which these individuals have been involved. Depth listening skills will, of course, enhance their ministry. Members of the family ministry team should set up these kinds of contacts through introductions and gentle steering.

A congregation can enhance the urge to visit their worship services on the part of unchurched participants in their family life programs by having periodic special events during Sabbath worship. One church held a "Rededication to Fathering," which thirty-two non-member fathers attended. A Mother's Day event is a natural. Or a "Singles

Weekend" might be cosponsored with Adventist Singles Ministries. The church could invite qualified guest speakers for the worship hour and then conduct a two- or three-hour seminar after lunch. By mailing an appropriate invitation to all previous participants in family outreaches, and putting a telephone committee to work, the church can ensure a significant number of visitors on special Sabbaths.

The same principle applies to public evangelistic meetings. If some sessions are devoted to family-related topics and the church invites family outreach participants, some unchurched people will attend. The skill of the evangelist in relating family needs to Bible doctrines will determine whether or not these people come back to hear more of the doctrinal presentations.

Unfortunately, churches can be very effective at screening out people they do not want as part of their fellowship. Unchurched people who visit church because of a family outreach are likely to be turned away on their first visit *unless* the congregation has made specific preparations to prevent this. Is your church "user friendly" to the target audience? For example, if your church is offering a parent education class to the public, do parents who visit find easily accessible child-care facilities? Does the congregation accept noisy, untrained preschoolers? If the church is conducting a singles ministry, do single adults who visit find a couple-oriented set of announcements in the bulletin? The church board needs carefully to think through what a target-audience person would find during a first visit to the church, and clear the "mine field" in advance.

The ministry of hospitality as exercised by the greeters, ushers, and other lay leaders helps determine whether or not first-time visitors come a second time. Other key considerations include these: Is the building accessible? Is ample parking available close to the entrance? Are the people warm and open? Does the style of worship fit the cognitive style of the visitor? (For example, will highly

People who come into contact with the church because of family crisis will leave the church if family crises are not being adequately dealt with in members' households.

kinesthetic people find opportunity to shake hands during the worship service and interact with the pastor? Will highly visual people find visual aids used in worship?) Is there a comfortable visitors' class for the first-time attendee at Sabbath school? Do parents find the kind of children's program they want in Sabbath school? Are people invited to dinner, either in a home or at the church? New people should not get a visit or telephone call until they have attended worship two or three times. Making contact sooner will usually be seen as being too aggressive, unless the person is a former Adventist or an Adventist who has recently moved into the area.

One of its basic contributions to the church's growth lies in what family ministries are doing for the families already in the church. Are they being sustained, strengthened, enriched, and nurtured by their church membership? People who come into contact with the church because of family crisis will leave the church if family crises are not being adequately dealt with in members' households. Every church will experience some family conflict and breakups, and churches that reach out to families in need may even experience a larger number than congregations that ignore family needs. The "bottom line" is not

the divorce rate in a particular congregation as compared to others but the climate for healing.

Do the pastor's sermons speak to the needs of couples, parents, and singles? Do the Sabbath school and the Bible study program teach people how to apply Biblical principles to everyday problems and questions? Are there opportunities to discuss openly frustrations, concerns, and decisions in confidential, supportive groups? Will church friends stick with the potential member through crisis and misconduct, through pain and joy? Is the possibility of God's being present, loving, and meaningful in his life apparent because of the way He is shared, pictured, and spoken of by church friends? Is faith sustained through the struggles of life; does this "family of faith" help its people cope with life? These critical questions make the difference between a church that ministers to families and a church that does not.

Thousands of local churches of all denominations are discovering that a ministry to families means growth. Millions of "Sunday School dropouts" are now parents and beginning to think about spiritual things in a serious way for the first time in their lives. Millions of their generational cohorts have chosen a single lifestyle and are grappling with

loneliness. Millions of others are facing the pain of divorce or worrying about how to make marriage a long-term commitment. Will your congregation reach out to these people, and make a spiritual home for them within its fellowship? Choosing to do it is important; choosing to do it right is crucial.

¹ Two Seventh-day Adventist firms that can help you are Media, Inc. (402 Edwardia Dr., Greensboro, North Carolina 27409) and Nash Printing Company (670 Andrews Dr., Harleysville, Pennsylvania 19438).

² Steve Dunkin, *Church Advertising: A Practical Guide* (Abingdon, Nashville, 1982).

³ H. Norman Wright, *Training Christians to Counsel: A Resource and Training Manual* (Christian Marriage Enrichment, Denver, 1977); Gary R. Collins, *How to Be a People Helper* (Vision House, Santa Ana, California, 1976); Paul Welter, *How to Help a Friend* (Tyndale House, Wheaton, Illinois, 1978); Charles A. Ver Straten, *How to Start Lay-shepherding Ministries* (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1983).

⁴ Lab Manual for Lab I in Parish Visitation Skills, p. 65 (LEAD Consultants, Pittsford, New York); cf. Flavil Yeakley, "A Profile of the New Convert: Change in Life Situation" in *Church Growth: America*, November-December, 1980; Win Arn, *The Pastor's Church Growth Handbook* (Church Growth Press, Pasadena, California, 1979) pp. 142-144.

⁵ Lyle E. Schaller, *Growing Plans* (Abingdon, Nashville, 1983) pp. 94, 95.

⁶ For materials that have been developed for small groups that focus on family life topics, see Monte Sahlin, Clarence Schilt, Patricia Habada and Kevin Howse, *Evenings for Families* (Seventh-day Adventist Urban Ministry Resources Center, Box 287, Worthington, Ohio 43085).

Curriculum resources for family ministries

Now that you have read the article by Monte Sahlin, you will want to ensure that your own family life ministry program will be a success.

Take the time to look through the list of resources and to order the ones most helpful to you.

Adventist Life Seminars, Route 1, Box 248, Crystal Springs, Mississippi 39059. Phone: (601) 892-5559. (Communicate with them about textbook, facilitator's guide, and advertising packet, which are apparently also available with each of their video seminars.)

Grief Recovery Seminar. A five-week (225-minute) video seminar by Larry Yeagley aimed at helping people who have experienced major loss by death or divorce. Purchase price: \$179.50.

Understanding Children. A weekend, or five-week (240-minute), video seminar by Dr. Kay Kuzma, Loma Linda University, discussing children's basic needs and emotions, successful methods of discipline, and how to build self-worth. Purchase price: \$199.50.

Adventist Life Seminars also hopes to make available in 1984 video seminars on stress control and marriage.

(Continued on next page)

You will notice that a wide variety of family life resources is available, some dealing with successful parenting, and others with being a successful spouse. There's even one listed here for singles.

Curriculum Resources for Family Ministries (cont.)

American Guidance Services, Inc., Publishers' Building, Circle Pines, Minnesota 55014. Phone: (800) 328-2560; in Minnesota, call collect (612) 786-4343. This company offers low-cost sample packets of each of their programs. A catalog is available.

STEP—Systematic Training for Effective Parenting. This group discussion program covers how to encourage children, be an effective listener, get them to assume responsibility, identify the goals of their misbehavior and redirect them toward positive ends, and discipline with natural and logical consequences. Complete kit: \$89.50 (includes parent handbook, leader's manual, five audiocassettes, ten charts, nine posters, discussion-guide cards, publicity aids, and more); parents' handbooks: 1, \$7.95; 2-4, \$6.95; 5 or more, \$5.50. *This program is also available in Spanish (as PECES—Padres Eficaces con Entrenamiento Sistemático).*

STEP/Teen. A similar program to the one above, but aimed at junior- and senior-high-age youth. The materials offered and the prices are also comparable to those above.

TIME—Training in Marriage Enrichment. A ten-part marriage enrichment program using group discussion to help a couple achieve a more intimate, honest, cooperative relationship while experiencing greater joy and love. The materials offered and the prices are comparable to those of the STEP program above.

This company also offers the following programs: *Responsive Parenting*, based on the book *Parent Awareness*, by Saf Lerman; and *Aging: A New Look*.

Better Living Programs, 366 North Lind Ave., Fresno, California 93727. Phone: (209) 251-9790. The materials available were prepared for use in seminars conducted by the author, Nancy Van Pelt, and no directions are offered for those who conduct their own. But the author suggests that a person could put a seminar together with the aid of the cassette recordings of her seminars available through Better Living Programs. The textbooks and workbooks are generally available at Adventist Book Centers. (The author and her husband are available to conduct seminars for those who would prefer their services.)

The Compleat Marriage Seminar. Love, appreciation, acceptance, communication, understanding, roles, sexual fulfillment, and having fun with your mate. Textbooks: \$6.00; workbooks: \$5.00.

The Compleat Parent Workshop. Self-respect, communication, discipline, character and responsibility, parent-teenager relationships, sibling rivalry, and sex education. Textbooks: \$6.00; workbooks: \$5.00.

The Compleat Courtship Seminar. For single adults who wish

to relate to the other sex more effectively. Textbooks: \$6.00; workbooks: \$5.00.

The Fulfilled Womanhood Seminar. Designed for women (married or single) only. Self-acceptance, love, acceptance of husband, appreciation, understanding men, roles, and sexual fulfillment. (Uses portions of *Compleat Marriage* text and workbooks.)

Concerned Communications, Box 700 Arroyo Grande, California 93420. Phone: (805) 489-4848. Concerned Communications has designed their seminars as bridges to lead the participant from a physical or emotional felt need to an awareness of his need of a Saviour.

Eight Days to Resolving Stress. A newly prepared, carefully researched, professional and reliable stress-control seminar. Instructor's kit (includes 110 overhead transparencies, publicity material, pastor's guide, complete set of word-for-word lectures, and one set of participant's materials): \$147.50. Participant's materials: \$6.95 per person.

Time and Priority Management: A ten-session program sharing principles and techniques of managing time and making correct decisions. Instructor's kit (includes instructor's materials, one set of participant's materials, publicity material, and pastor's guide on seminar methods): \$47.50. Participant's materials: \$6.95 per person.

This company also offers seminar materials for cooking schools, weight-control classes, study of Daniel and Revelation, and more.

David C. Cook Publishing Co., 850 North Grove Ave., Elgin, Illinois 60120. Phone: (312) 741-2400. A catalog is available.

How to Discipline and Build Self-esteem in Your Child. Presents models of obedience and adequacy, positive methods for child discipline, and building the child's self-esteem. Designed for thirteen weekly one-hour sessions, or seven weekly two-hour sessions. Kit containing teacher's guide, 16 duplicator masters for handouts, and 16 overhead transparencies: \$19.95.

Home and Family Service, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 6840 Eastern Ave., NW., Washington, D.C. 20012. Phone: (202) 722-6357.

Children/Parenting, Adventist Life Series, Volume IV. Seminar materials (ten sessions, two hours each) to strengthen the parent-child relationship. Such concepts as self-worth, family management, and correction are taught while skills in communication, problem-solving, and relationship building are developed. Instructor's materials (including one copy of participant's materials): \$10.50. Participant's handbook: \$3.75 each.

Also you will find that the resources come in a variety of media—overhead transparencies, cassettes, charts, exercises, testing materials, and workbooks. Several are available in Spanish.

You Are Not Alone. A resource for family life ministry to singles and single parents. Includes three seminar formats with program outlines, camera-ready handouts, background material, cassettes, and twenty reprinted articles on such topics as self-concept, sexuality, intimacy, grief, forgiveness, and ministry to families of divorce. \$25.00.

The Home and Family Service also is developing a marriage enrichment program and hopes to have it available late in 1984. Nonseminar type materials available through them include *Marriage Education*, a kit of materials for use by pastors/counselors preparing couples for marriage. Includes articles, exercises, cassettes, and testing materials, and may be used as a structured program or as resource material. \$25.25. (Also available in Spanish as *Educación Para el Matrimonio.*) Other group discussion or program materials on the family: *What Is a Family?* (\$3.00 per packet); *When God Says Remember*—focuses on the tie between the Sabbath and the family (\$4.50 per set); and *Bible Families*—parenting principles from Bible families (\$4.25 per packet).

Life Video Gospel Association, P.O. Box 395, College Place, Washington 99324. Representative: Don M. Vories. Phone: (509) 522-0784. The materials listed here are videocassette programs (five 30-minute videocassettes per program) prepared and offered under the auspices of the Youth Ministries Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Making Choices About Relationships. Julliette M. Van Putten, a health education specialist, discusses dating. Especially targeted for ethnic youth.

Marriage Anyone? Features Betty and Delmer Holbrook, of the Home and Family Service.

Sexuality. Features Alberta Mazat, Loma Linda University.

Marriage and Family Commitment, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104. Phone: (616) 471-3477.

Marriage Commitment: Curriculum Resources for Marriage Enrichment Seminars. Christ-centered, audience-ready, how-to manual for a preventive rather than a remedial approach. Contains 44 lecturettes, 97 group exercises, 121 masters for handouts, 60 masters for overhead transparencies, and planning and instructor's guides. Here is enough material for a weekend, six to twenty weekly sessions, or even a group that meets weekly all year. The suggested program combines experimental sharing, dyad dynamics, group dynamics, and dialogue, and it has been found to be readily acceptable in different cultures. Instructor's manual: \$15.00; Participant's manual: 1-9, \$2.75; 10 or more, \$2.25. (Also available in Spanish.)

North American Division, Health Temperance Ministries. Order from: Central Departmental Services, 7112 Willow Ave., Takoma Park, Maryland 20912. Phone: (202) 722-6736.

Handling Stress Creatively. Lecture notes, handout masters, and overhead transparency masters for a single-session (90-minute) workshop on stress management. Suggestions for four additional sessions. Booklet: \$1.50.

The Parent Scene, Box 2222 Redlands, California 92373. Phone: (714) 792-2412. Dr. Kay Kuzma, of Loma Linda University, developed these seminars. A catalog is available, as are cassette recordings of her conducting the seminars.

Filling Your Love Cup Seminar. Deals with love and discipline through caring, respect, acceptance, forgiveness, and trust. Textbook: \$5.95; 110 visual masters: \$29.95; both: \$32.95.

Understanding Children Seminar. Their needs, individual characteristics, emotions, discipline, self-worth. Designed for ten weekly sessions. Textbook: \$4.95; study guide: \$2.95; 280 visual masters: \$32.95; instructor's manual (includes written text, illustrations, and resource material available): \$24.95. (Discounts are available when various combinations are ordered.)

Working Mothers Seminar. Discusses finding time, sharing child-care responsibilities, guilt, illness and fatigue, meeting personal and family needs. Textbook: \$14.95; workbook: \$7.95; 254 visual masters: \$49.95; complete set (text, workbook, and visuals): \$69.95.

Standard Publishing, 8121 Hamilton Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio 45231. Phone: (513) 931-4050.

Christian Ways to Date, Go Steady, and Break Up. Aimed at teenagers; designed for five weekly sessions. Textbook: \$1.95; instructor's guide: \$2.50.

Victor Books, SP Publications, Inc., 1825 College Ave., Wheaton, Illinois 60187. A catalog is available. (The reader may be interested in the many other courses made available here, including some based on the fine books by Dr. Ross Campbell: *How to Really Love Your Child*, and *How to Really Love Your Teenager*.) Note that the leader's guides in all the courses listed here include masters for visual aids.

A Christian's Guide to Family Finances. Deals with money management, borrowing, credit, record keeping, insurance, et cetera. Textbook: \$6.95; leader's guide: \$3.95.

Conquering Family Stress. How to deal with the common crises of the family—from problems of early marriage to old age and death. Textbook: \$4.50; leader's guide: \$3.95.

One Is a Whole Number. How to deal with problems of the single lifestyle. Textbook: \$4.50; leader's guide: \$3.95.

Creation, a pillar of the faith

The Called Church series has been designed to highlight some of the unique aspects of Seventh-day Adventist theology and to demonstrate how each position is faithful to Scripture. Many churches incorporate creationism into their teachings, but few are the churches that still hold to a literal creation occupying six twenty-four-hour days. The author, who is an accomplished scientist, explains why creationism is still fundamental to Adventism.

The Called Church □ 9 Ariel A. Roth



n 1859 Charles Darwin published his famous book on the origin of species. This treatise proposed both a general theory and specific mechanisms for the evolution of life. While the controversial idea of development of advanced life-forms from simple forms was initially challenged by both scientists and

theologians, it was only a few decades later that evolution gained wide acceptance by the academic community in the Western world. Likewise many Christian churches condoned, accepted, and even endorsed this theory that stands in stark contrast to the account of beginnings given in Genesis. While evolution was gaining popularity, the incipient Seventh-day Adventist Church was spreading a message with strong empha-

sis on the truthfulness of God's Word. Although there is no compelling evidence, it is intriguing to consider the possibility that this message came into being specifically to counteract the resulting spread of secularism. Regardless of this, the rational approach of Adventism to the Bible and the study of nature has been a meaningful argumentation to counteract the strong emphasis on evolution prevalent in contemporary intellectual circles.

To Adventism, Creation is more than a deterrent to evolution, important as that role may be. It is also the basis of some of the most fundamental and

unique beliefs of the church. Our acceptance of the seventh-day Sabbath and our belief in the inspiration of Scripture and of Ellen G. White are intimately associated with the concept of Creation. The authority of God, including His authority in the three angels' messages of Revelation 14, has its basis in creatorship. Creation is an integral part of the message of the called church.

Creatorship as a sign of God's authority

Many factors can engender respect for authority. These may include physical strength, intellectual ability, self-con-

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I have difficulty relegating the Genesis account of Creation to an allegory, not only because many leading Biblical personalities refer to it as factual but also because the Bible is highly authenticated.

trol, possessions, or even such less awesome qualities as compassion and beauty. In the Bible, God's authority is claimed at a higher level. He is not just operating parts of a universe; He made all of it. He is the Creator of *all*, and no one else can claim this. For Adventism the teaching of Creation has more than academic significance. It emphasizes respect for God's authority.

Many passages in the Bible inform us that God is Creator of all, e.g., Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 33:6; 146:6; Acts 4:24; and Revelation 14:7. Other passages deserve special mention. Foremost is the account of beginnings in Genesis 1 and 2. Here God creates all—this world and the life it supports, including man—in six days. The Decalogue contains a record of words written by God Himself explaining His reason for asking us to keep the Sabbath holy. It commemorates His unique creative acts that He accomplished in six days. His creation was "very good," and He rested on the seventh day (see Ex. 20:11; 31:17).

The conversation between Job and God as recorded in Job 38 to 41 contains probably the most magnificent description of God's creatorship. God asks Job such provocative questions as where he was when the foundations of the earth were laid, and if he could loose the bands of Orion. Isaiah 40 again stresses God's incomparableness, presenting Him as the Creator in verses 12 and 28. Verses 25 and 26 further emphasize the link between God's importance and His being the Creator: "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth."

The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that it has been especially called to give the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (verse 6). In this final message to the world God's authority is based on His creatorship. We are enjoined to "worship him

that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (verse 7).

Because the Bible emphasizes creatorship as the sign of God's authority, it would seem that Creation would be important to any church that wishes to place a proper perspective on God's greatness. To the Seventh-day Adventist Church, He is the Creator of all and He alone can claim this basis for authority.

The Sabbath and Creation

The observance of the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath is a distinctive pillar of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The inclusion of "Seventh-day" in its name testifies to the importance of this doctrine. The mandate for Sabbath observance comes primarily from the Decalogue. However, the Sabbath is more than a memorial of God's Creation week. Mark 2:27 states that it was made for man, which implies that it has some usefulness. As Ezekiel 20 emphasizes, it provides a day to remember the Creator and rest from secular duties. Both verses 12 and 20 label the Sabbath as a sign that mankind might know that "I am the Lord." This chapter also points out that the desecration of the Sabbath (verses 13 and 16) was one of the factors that delayed Israel from entering the promised land (verse 15).

Many deny the historicity of the Creation account in Genesis. One cannot do this without bringing into question the reliability of the most important authorities in Scripture, since they refer to the Genesis account of beginnings as fact. These include God (Ex. 20:11 and 31:17), Christ (Matt. 19:4-6), Paul (Rom. 5:12-14; 1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 11:3), and Peter (2 Peter 3:3-6). To deny the validity of the Genesis creation account tends to challenge the reliability of Scripture as a whole.

Alternatives to the Creation account

A number of alternative concepts to the Creation account of Genesis have been suggested. Most propose a long

period for the gradual development of life on earth, thus accommodating to evolutionary thought. Many of these concepts also include a form of God's participation, preserving the concept of a God capable of being active in nature. Three examples will serve to illustrate: (1) progressive creation proposes that God's creative acts occurred in successive episodes, usually distributed over millions of years; (2) theistic evolution proposes a God who helps in the gradual progression of a continuous evolutionary process; (3) a third model proposes that God started simple life, which then developed into advanced forms by the purely naturalistic processes of evolution.

Many major Christian denominations accept or tolerate these or similar alternatives. In this context the Genesis account is considered allegorical, simply conveying the message that God is Creator with metaphorical details having no factual significance. While one can choose to believe the message of an allegory, it would seem that conclusions based upon facts have more authority. Belief in God as Creator is strengthened when based upon an actual account of His creation rather than an allegory. The Seventh-day Adventist Church fulfills a special mission in strengthening belief in the Creator through its belief in the truthfulness of the Genesis account of a literal six-day creation. Truth concerning God's creatorship is not based on myth or metaphor.

I have difficulty relegating the Genesis account of Creation to an allegory, not only because many leading Biblical personalities refer to it as factual, but also because: 1. The Bible is highly authenticated. The Creation account has not been verified scientifically; however, one's confidence in the historical reality of the rest of the Bible can logically be extrapolated to the Creation account. It is neither presented nor interpreted in the Bible in any other way. 2. The Bible authorities who refer to the Creation account were men of integrity willing to risk their own lives for what they believed to be true. Their personal

I am sympathetic to those who see a real conflict between some scientific conclusions and Genesis, but recognition of points of apparent dissonance is not sufficient ground for denying the Biblical account.

integrity lends confidence to their witness for the Creation account. 3. The present denial of a literal six-day creation was predicted in the Bible almost two millennia ago in 2 Peter 3:3-5. This suggests that the Bible is no ordinary book. Peter could have predicted a thousand other ideas that would be denied in the last days. He mentions specifically Creation and the Flood—the two main Biblical concepts that are now vigorously denied by modern scientific interpretations—a remarkable fulfillment of his predictions.

Ellen G. White and the Creation concept

God's messenger Ellen G. White made some direct statements supporting the Creation account. While she does give some details regarding Creation that are not found in the Bible, her numerous references, descriptions, and inferences agree with a direct reading of Scripture.

In addition to agreeing with the Biblical account of Creation, Ellen G. White gives special warning regarding any deviation from that account, especially the common practice of reinterpreting the amount of time for Creation. She states, "But the assumption that the events of the first week required thousands upon thousands of years, strikes directly at the foundation of the fourth commandment. It represents the Creator as commanding men to observe the week of literal days in commemoration of vast, indefinite periods. This is unlike His method of dealing with His creatures. It makes indefinite and obscure that which He has made very plain. It is infidelity in its most insidious and hence most dangerous form; its real character is so disguised that it is held and taught by many who profess to believe the Bible."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 111.

People seldom appreciate that one of Ellen G. White's major contributions to the philosophy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a wholistic approach to reality. This is manifest in many concepts including the unity of the soul and the body, the effect of mind on physiology, and the agreement of Bible

and science. She states, "All truth, whether in nature or in revelation, is consistent with itself in all its manifestations."—*Ibid.*, p. 114. This wholistic approach to truth is not as manifest in traditional scholarly disciplines where the limitations of specialization and dissonance are more acceptable. Our wholistic view demands that the Bible and science agree. Ellen G. White does not allow for a dichotomy of thought here. She states, "Since the book of nature and the book of revelation bear the impress of the same master mind, they cannot but speak in harmony."—*Education*, p. 128.

The Creation account and scientific inference

Many contemporary scientific interpretations disagree with the Genesis account of Creation. While space does

taken cognizance of the controversy between some scientific information and Genesis and has established the Genesis Research Institute that consists of a small group of scientists pursuing research in the questions posed by a broad approach to the study of origins. While working for this institute, my personal experience with the study of science has strengthened my belief in Creation as well as the Genesis account of a worldwide flood. Not all questions that scientific interpretations pose to Genesis are answered, and I am sympathetic to those who see a real conflict between some scientific conclusions and Genesis. Because of this conflict, many individuals recommend that the factual details of the Genesis creation account be discarded, but I do not believe that recognition of points of apparent dissonance is sufficient ground for denying the

To demand that the complex integrated physiological and biochemical systems of living forms developed spontaneously seems almost beyond belief.

not permit elaboration of details, which have filled many volumes, a few points must be emphasized. In my opinion the strongest scientific evidence supporting the idea of Creation lies in the evidence for intelligent design. To demand that the numerous complex integrated physical, physiological, and biochemical systems of living forms developed spontaneously seems almost beyond belief. The concept of Creation provides a plausible alternative.

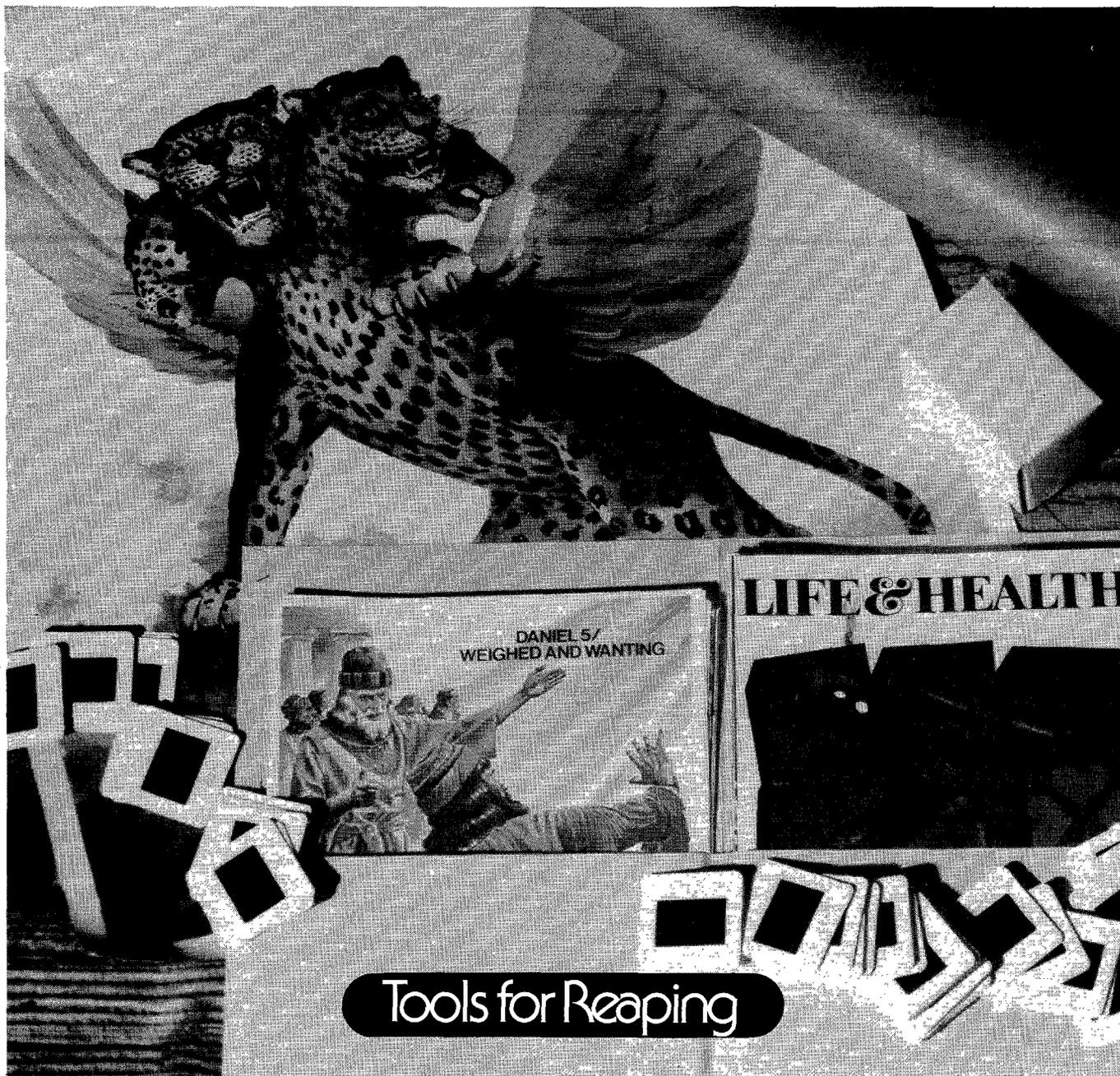
Some scientific interpretations that include God as the originator and maintainer of the universe disagree with the Biblical specifications, especially in the area of time relationships. These interpretations, as is the case with most broad scientific concepts, are challenged on scientific grounds.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church with its wholistic approach to truth has

Biblical account. Before discarding Genesis one must take a comprehensive view and come up with an alternative that is more reliable and has greater explanatory value. Until this challenge is met, it seems reasonable to believe the Biblical account of origins because it explains more.

Conclusion

The called church believes that it has a special message for the world at this time. A fundamental pillar of this message is the account of Creation as given in the book of Genesis. Creation serves as a basis for God's authority and power. Creation is important to a belief in the reliability of the Bible as a whole and is the main basis for keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. For the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Creation is a most fundamental belief.



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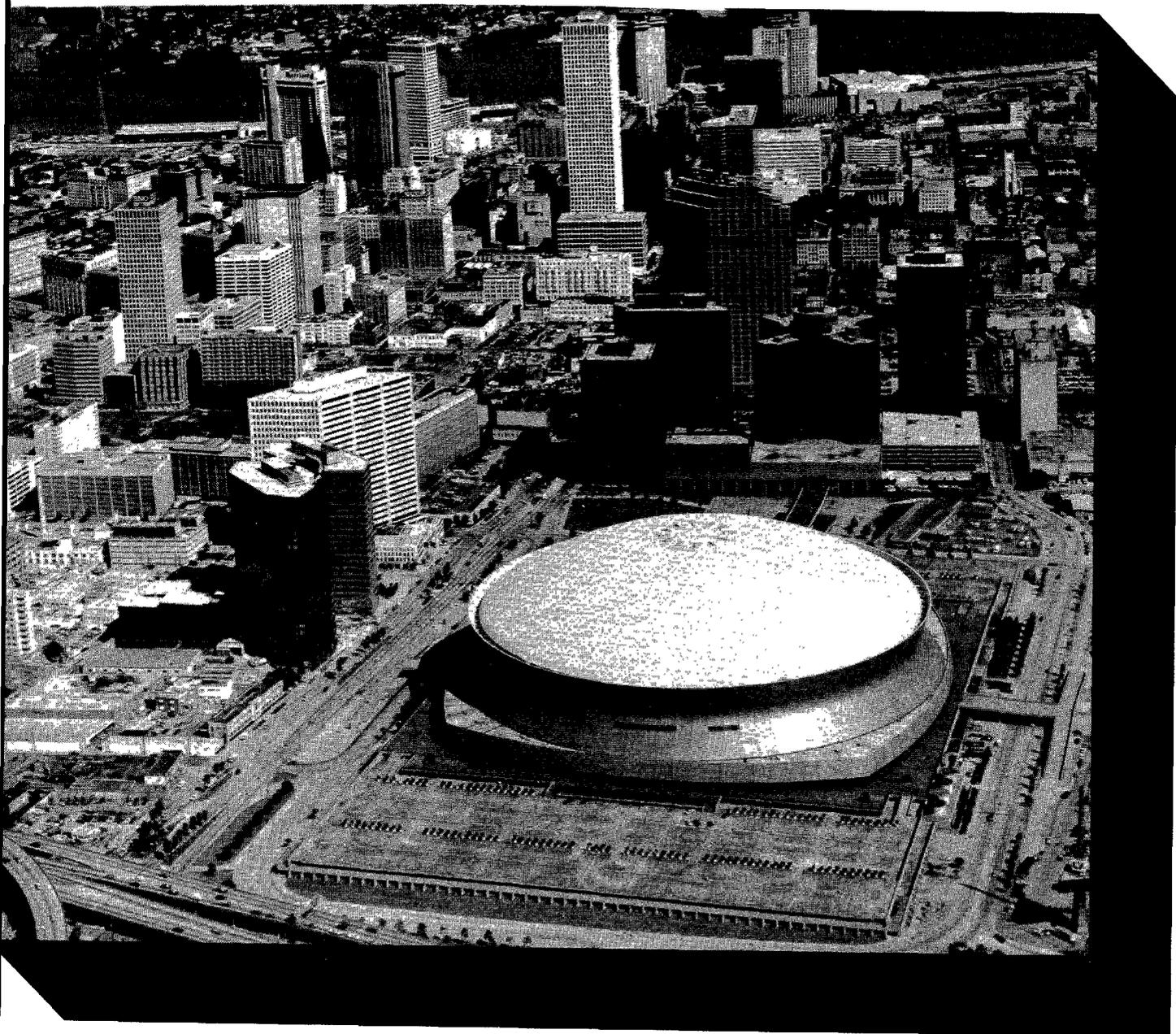
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—W. B. Quigley

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1985 World Ministers Council

Presession for ministers is a tradition for General Conference time. Next year's meeting promises to be an educational and inspirational event no pastor, evangelist, administrator, or minister's wife should miss.

When God called His people out of ancient Egypt, He considered it important to keep them unified in worship. So He provided several annual gatherings when the whole nation was to come together to worship. Passover in Jesus' day saw Jerusalem crowded with believers from all over the known world.

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church we hold various annual gatherings, but the closest equivalent to the ancient feasts would have to be our quinquennial General Conference sessions, for it is then that delegates and believers from all over the world come together.

The 1985 General Conference session will be held in the Louisiana Superdome—the world's largest auditorium—beginning June 27. In keeping with a long tradition, the Ministerial/Stewardship Association of the General Conference is planning a major meeting especially for leaders in the church just prior to the General Conference session. This World Ministers Council will begin Sunday evening, June 23, and will conclude on Wednesday evening, June 26.

Hundreds of hours and numerous prayer sessions have been invested in planning for this General Conference presession, and now each piece of the planning puzzle is rapidly falling into place. And we are so excited about developments that we want to alert you to this powerful, important meeting far in advance so that you can begin to plan to attend. Not only delegates but all pastors, pastors' wives, evangelists, administrators, and departmental directors from the world field are invited.

It is not our intention to plan for some dazzling, sparkling personality popularity contest. Far from it! We are pleading with the Lord to pour out His Holy Spirit on this entire council and General Conference session in a most marked manner. We urge you to join us in prayer for the outpouring of His Spirit during the entire convocation.

The presession will feature ten plenary sessions, plus thirty-two seminars from which attendees can choose several to attend. The plenary sessions will focus in the early morning on *The Minister: The Person*. Late-morning sessions will explore doctrinal and prophetic issues under the heading *The Minister: The Message*, and the evening sessions, *The Minister: The Mission*, will ring with the evangelistic mission of the great Advent Movement.

Overall coordinator for the council is W. B. Quigley. I know that his sense of the urgency of the times we live in will ring through every aspect of the meetings.

Under Floyd Bresee's leadership, thirty-two afternoon seminars will be held in various rooms of the Superdome and Hyatt Regency Hotel. These seminars have been designed to meet worldwide needs, not just those of any particular division. Our staff has actively sought and received guidance from every division in the world as we planned seminar topics and presenters. Running translation will be available where needed, and some instruction will be given in Spanish.

Seminar topics will range from Evangelizing Non-Christian Religions to

Pastor-Spouse Team Ministry, from Health Evangelism to Computers in the Church, and from Ecclesiology to The Role of the Minister's Wife. Watch coming issues of *MINISTRY* for further information regarding seminar topics and registration procedures. Continuing education units (CEUs) will be offered for all seminars.

We especially hope that many ministers and administrators will bring their wives with them. Shepherdess International, a fledgling organization under the leadership of Marie Spangler and Ellen Bresee, has helped plan seminars and will be holding four ladies' meetings during the General Conference session.

Why are we expending so much time and energy in planning for this World Ministers Council?

We hope to see five thousand or more of our pastoral, administrative, and departmental workers and their spouses in attendance. But the real reason for all this is our great need of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will bring a new spirit of unity of belief and mission. The world lies in fearful darkness. The only answer to the needs of the human race now and forever is in a knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ within the context of the three angels' messages.—J.R.S.

The privilege of preaching

Friday morning, and no sermon to work on! I hadn't started preparations for one or even thought about what to preach! I faced a real crisis last week.

I'm a preacher. Have been for most of my adult life. I can't even remember taking a vacation recently when I didn't preach at least once. Last year on vacation in Israel I preached twice to our tiny congregation in Jerusalem.

But this Friday was different. Not only

did I lack a sermon, I lacked a pulpit. And I had to face the reality that I had accepted a call to be an editor instead of a preacher. You can say what you want about an expanded pulpit, but what happens on a printed page is not what happens in a pulpit. God spent aeons giving us the printed page to reveal Himself. But when He wanted us to really know Him in full, He came in person in Christ.

I was about 13 years old when Elder Robert Pierson came to preach in my home church in Salem, Oregon. What an exciting day! They even had speakers set up in the junior room so that the overflow crowd could come and hear this great man of God preach.

I was at another crisis point right then, trying to decide between God and the world. I wish I could remember what Elder Pierson said that day, but I don't even remember his topic. All I know is that something in his demeanor and message made a deep impression that gave my life direction that has lasted until now.

It is a tremendous privilege to stand in the pulpit not only to preach but to show what it means to be a Christian. Some of the sermons that had the greatest effect on me as a boy were sermons without words. Oregon camp meeting was always a highlight of my summer. I don't remember anything that the preachers said, but I can remember leaning over to my sister once and saying, "You know, the happiest-looking people I see around here are the pastors. There must be something to being a Christian."

When God wants to make sure His message comes across right, He sends it

in flesh and blood. And I'm thankful for those pastors who had gotten the message right—who preached from the pulpit and from their very lives.

The real privilege of preaching is the privilege of living what you preach before a congregation of people who see not only the man behind the pulpit but the husband, father, committee member, counselor, and friend. We've all heard the maxim "Practice what you preach." The tired old phrase can be revived by reversing it to read "Preach what you practice." When you turn it that way, you see that the minutes spent in the pulpit each week are a very small part of your preaching ministry.

The local pastor has one tremendous advantage over the electronic ministries, which reach people via television, radio, cassettes, videocassettes, and even computer networks. No fleeting image on a phosphorescent screen, no voice no matter how often replayed, will ever model Christ to a man or woman as meaningfully as a pastor whose godly life preaches a sermon every day.

The privilege of preaching. It's still with me twenty-four hours every day.

And don't worry. I'll find a pulpit now and then, too!—K.R.W.

Pastor Ken Mittleider, our newest General Conference vice president, that Debby and her family joined the church.

Ken was reared in Oregon by parents who united with the church through the work of a colporteur and a layman who brought Bible studies to their home. He graduated in 1973 from Walla Walla College with majors in theology and Biblical languages, plus a minor in biology. Before and after earning his Master of Divinity degree in 1976, Ken labored in the Wisconsin Conference, as associate pastor of the Madison district, and pastor of three churches in southern Wisconsin. After ordination in 1979 he accepted a four-church district in the same conference. By March of this year the district had expanded to four and one-half churches. The half church is a fine study group on its way to becoming a full-grown church.

Ken and Debby worked as a team, with Debby holding vegetarian cooking classes, which was quite in line with her home economics major from Walla Walla College, where they first met.

We know that Ken's contribution to our magazine will be most practical and helpful. Shortly after he accepted the call to join our staff he gave himself a homework assignment. "I decided I ought to know just what MINISTRY is all about—I mean what type of articles we publish, what the major emphases are, and how much space goes to practices, how much to theology, how much to the other types of articles," he declared.

So he sat down with a ruler and his personal computer and began to measure (right down to the half inch) how much space was given to eight different categories of articles. Plugging the results into a spreadsheet-analysis program, he discovered that article balance in the past year was slightly different from what he might have guessed from only casual reading.

Here's what he found in the issues from May, 1983, to April, 1984: practical articles, 34 percent; theological, 29 percent; scholarly nontheological, 11 percent; program promotion, 9 percent; devotional, 6 percent; family, 5 percent; news, 5 percent; health, 1 percent.

If any in the field wish to comment on this particular percentage spread, please do so. If you think we ought to have more in one area than others, let us know.

Back to our subject. Welcome to Ken, Debby, Adam, Seth, and Kaypro!—J.R.S.

Editor and computer join *Ministry* staff



When you walk past his office you usually see his back, since his attention is focused on a Kaypro computer behind his desk. His name, in its longest form, is Kenneth Robert Wade. We welcome Ken as the new assistant editor of our journal. (Attention, treasurers—we are not adding a budget, but rather using the one vacated by Russell Holt.) Not only does Ken come to us fresh from pastoral experience but he brings with him his personal computer and printer, which have already been used to good advantage. Please be on the lookout for articles from his pen relative to the use of computers and other valuable tools in your pastoral work.

More important than his computer is the family he brought with him. He has a lovely wife, the former Debby Shabo, originally from Alaska, and two delightful, spunky Bible-named boys, Adam and Seth. It was through the efforts of

Was Ellen G. White an epileptic?

The attempt to explain supernatural phenomena exclusively on the basis of natural events is nothing new. The supernatural endowment of the gift of tongues at Pentecost was attributed by skeptic onlookers to the imbibing of too much alcohol (Acts 2:13). Seventh-day Adventists take literally the promise in Joel 2:28, 29, fulfilled in part in Acts 2, that the last days would be characterized by the gift of prophecy. The prophetic gift was bestowed upon Ellen G. White (1827-1915) as a partial fulfillment, we believe, of God's promise through Joel. The Spirit's outpouring in the first century is considered to be the early rain, and the greater outpouring that began in the nineteenth century and will continue on into the future is described as the latter rain. If the supernatural aspects of the early rain came under sharp attack, should it be any wonder to SDAs that similar attacks should be launched against the supernaturalism of the latter rain?

In November, 1981, the journal *Evangelica* published the article "Visions or Partial-Complex Seizures?" by Dr. Delbert Hodder, a pediatrician living in Connecticut. His answer to the title's question is that Ellen White's visions were not visions but can be explained as a unique form of epilepsy known as complex partial seizure. More recently a committee of nine professionals has

carefully analyzed this explanation and now has rendered its report (see the next page). Dr. Hodder's charges are actually a resurrection and a reclothing of an old charge made by Dudley M. Canright, who left the SDA ministry and shortly thereafter wrote the book *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*. Canright diagnosed Ellen White's vision experiences as a type of hysteria (epilepsy) resulting from a blow to the head at age 9. Dr. Hodder likewise links her visions and supposed epileptic seizures to the same childhood injury.

Francis D. Nichol, a longtime editor of the *Review and Herald*, in his book *Ellen G. White and Her Critics* (1951) devoted four chapters to answering charges originally raised by Canright. Dr. Hodder takes exception to Nichol's analysis by arguing that her seizures were neither grand mal nor petit mal types (the only kinds known in Nichol's day), but a form more recently identified and given the name complex partial seizure, which can result only from an injury to the brain, and not from heredity. Essentially what Dr. Hodder has done is to refine and expand D. M. Canright's original hypothesis.

According to Dr. Hodder, one characteristic of those suffering from this type of epilepsy is the use of repetitive phrases, so he seizes upon Ellen White's uttering the words "Glory, glory, glory"

while in vision as an example of epileptic behavior. However, he fails to realize that the threefold use of "glory" was a common characteristic of the Wesleyan holiness movement. For example, this expression appears on page 43 of the revivalist book *A Memoir of Mr. William Carvossa* (New York: 1856), a book that Ellen White once had in her private library. To suggest that her use of this threefold expression was a diagnostic feature of this type of epilepsy is to forget that she was simply drawing upon her Methodist heritage! Likewise, to assert that the repetitive use of "glory" was indicative of epilepsy is tantamount to saying that the early Methodist revivalists were all epileptics!

Those advocating the epileptic hypothesis to account for Ellen White's visions have utterly failed in explaining how epileptic seizures can result in the guidance of a whole church through crisis after crisis. True, some great men and women of the past have been epileptics, but their success has been achieved *in spite of* their infirmity, not *because of* it. A recent trend of medical science has been to exhume the records of great men and attempt to diagnose posthumously their precise ailments, whether physical or psychological. Recently scientists have postulated that Sir Isaac Newton's erratic behavior, especially evident in his later years, was owing to his having too much mercury on the brain, while others have diagnosed him as a manic-depressive. But no one is suggesting that Newton's laws of planetary motion were the product of mercury on the brain or of having a psychological disorder!—W.H.J.

Ellen G. White and epilepsy

Three years ago a pediatrician in Connecticut circulated a paper in which he intimated that Ellen White probably had temporal-lobe epilepsy and that this disease was the cause of her visions. This paper published in North

America and in West Germany also received publicity in Australia and elsewhere.

Since the continued circulation of these allegations has raised questions in the minds of some Adventists, the White Estate trustees felt that a competent committee should investigate the matter and provide the church with a statement that is both factual and trustworthy. On September 1, 1983, the trustees appointed the Ellen G. White Health Committee, composed of eight professors in the Loma Linda University Schools of Medicine and Nursing and a well-known psychiatrist from northern California. All members of the committee are Seventh-day Adventists except Kenneth Jordan.

The committee was provided with all available materials pertinent to their investigation and asked to evaluate the evidence. Their report, sent to the White Estate on May 10, 1984, appears below.—Robert W. Olson, secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate.

Did Ellen White have complex partial seizures?

A committee report

The diagnosis of a complex partial seizure disorder (temporal-lobe or psychomotor epilepsy) is often difficult even with the help of modern techniques such as electroencephalography and videorecording. Thus, the establishment of such a diagnosis retrospectively in a person who died almost seventy years ago, and concerning whom no medical records exist, can be, at best, only speculative, tenuous, and controversial.

The recent articles and presentation that suggest that Ellen White's visions and writings were the result of a complex partial seizure disorder contain many inaccuracies. Ambiguous reasoning and misapplication of facts have

resulted in misleading conclusions.

This committee was appointed to evaluate the hypothesis that Ellen G. White had complex partial seizures. After a careful review of the autobiographical and biographical material available, considered in the light of the present knowledge of this type of seizure, it is our opinion that (1) there is no convincing evidence that Ellen G. White suffered from any type of epilepsy, and (2) there is no possibility that complex partial seizures could account for Mrs. White's visions or for her role in the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Respectfully submitted,

Guy M. Hunt, M.D., Chairman
Professor of Neurology
Loma Linda University

Charles Anderson, M.D.
Lake County Mental Health Clinic
Lakeport, California

Donald Anderson, M.D.
Assistant Professor of Psychiatry
Loma Linda University

L. Harold Caviness, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry
Loma Linda University

Harrison Evans, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry
Vice President of Medical Affairs
Loma Linda University

Albert Hirst, M.D.
Professor of Pathology
Loma Linda University

Bernadine Irwin, R.N., Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Nursing
Loma Linda University

Kenneth Jordan, M.D.
Assistant Professor of Neurology
Loma Linda University

Donald Miller, M.D.
Associate Professor of Neurology
Chief, Neurology Sections
Loma Linda University and Veterans
Administration Hospital

Hire a nursery worker on Sabbath?

Our church wants to make it possible for those of our members with young children to participate meaningfully in our worship services. We tried running a nursery staffed by volunteers from our church during the worship hour, but that didn't work out at all. Recently, on an experimental basis, we hired a nursery worker to attend the children aged birth through 5 years. We handle her salary like our other bills, paying her through the mail at the end of the month.

This new program is working well. But some of our members are troubled because it seems to endorse "business dealings" on the Sabbath. Help! Have any of you out there encountered such a dilemma? How did you deal with it?

Ask these questions

As a denomination, we seem to have little problem theologically with renting large arenas for our convocations and congresses on the Sabbath. Often this entails the hiring of dozens of people for services ranging from operating the sound system to maintaining security, directing the parking, and even limited janitorial services. On the local church level, I have served in several churches that hired church organists either on a regular basis or to fill in when our volunteer organists could not be there. And I am not so sure that these situations are very different from the sometimes-mundane duties that were required of the Levites on the Sabbath and for which they received their sustenance.

The position seems to be that it is permissible to pay for services on the Sabbath that are needed to allow the church to carry out its divine purpose if these services cannot be performed by volunteers and cannot be performed on days other than the Sabbath.

This would leave me with two questions regarding the problem: (1) Is this a service that is truly required on the Sabbath if the church is to fulfill its purpose? (2) Is the pastor certain that it cannot adequately be performed by volunteers?

Regarding the first question, I still see value in the traditional Seventh-day Adventist practice of encouraging families to participate together in the worship service. I think the local church must

arrive at some consensus on the issue before the problem can be solved.

As to the second, each local church situation is unique, but in most churches it would seem that with the right leadership, some type of rotational system could be developed so that the children could be cared for by volunteers without anyone missing many worship services.

I would urge the pastor to reevaluate with local church leaders whether the church really needs the service. If the leaders are in some agreement that it is needed, they should reevaluate what went wrong with the attempts to use volunteers to care for the children and try to brainstorm new approaches. If no new approaches are satisfactory, the pastor may need to (1) lead the church in a discussion of the purpose of church and the meaning and purpose of the Sabbath to facilitate the members' reaching a greater consensus, (2) ignore opposition to the plan, or (3) drop the plan if negatives outweigh positives.—George Boundey, Santa Barbara, California.

From a mother's perspective

I know a Seventh-day Adventist woman who wants to attend church but has several elderly people living in her home. She hires a sitter. I see no difference between that and hiring a nursery worker, except the ages of the

ones being sat.

Sometimes a deaconess, teen, or a grandparently person can be terrific help to one whose hands and lap are full of "squiggles." We have been foster parents for up to five children, and practically none of these children had any concept of sitting still or being quiet in church. Of course, my husband was no help with the five children while he was preaching. As we had many of the children on a short-term basis, it didn't seem worth it to work toward proper church behavior with them. A bigger need was to teach them that there is a God who loves and cares for them.

I often came home after the first service to put them down for naps so I could listen to church on the radio without distraction. This was a temporary answer for me. In many places the church service isn't broadcast.

Occasionally I would sit in a Sabbath school classroom and let the children play while I tried to listen on the intercom speaker, but the feeling of fellowship certainly wasn't there, and the distractions were abundant. The mothers' room is little different. I find that very unsatisfactory.

A mother of preschoolers seldom gets enough spiritual diet time, and each opportunity needs to be guarded. I might take issue with the age limit that was set and suggest up to 18 or 24 months. However, I would allow for exceptions on the basis of individual needs—for example, the single parent who has

several children. The goal in working with the children should be to get them into the church service.

If a helper such as a deaconess or a teenager cannot be assigned, if there are more children than hands, if no volunteers willing to work on a rotational basis can be located, if the congregation is not tolerant of youngsters (which is sad)—then I think a hired nursery attendant may be a very wonderful alternative.—Elaine Huey, Walla Walla, Washington.

Work through the deaconesses

We have tried several things in our church. The most effective that we've found has been to assign deaconesses to be available to assist parents. A deaconess would approach parents who were obviously having trouble, offering to take the children so the parents could listen. (We had the deaconesses who were assigned to this duty wear labels so that the parents would know who they were.) We also stationed a deaconess in the mothers' room, which contains a mothers' chapel as well as a changing room.

I would have some concern regarding hiring someone who is not a Seventh-day Adventist to take care of the children. She would probably run sort of a little nursery school, and I would be concerned that the content wouldn't be "Adventist."

I do not have a problem with the aspect of "business dealings" on the Sabbath. I know that the parents need the worship experience. Controlling little children in church is always difficult, and newer members especially need the benefit of the services. I suggest working through the deaconesses, although I know that doesn't solve all the problems.—John Neff, Rockford, Illinois.

Use cradle roll teachers

We're facing this problem too. Our church is growing, and consequently we also have an increased attendance of little children. We've found it difficult to find a suitable person capable of handling this task. And the fact that whoever takes it on must miss the church service

adds to the difficulty.

While I particularly like to see children in the sanctuary, being trained, we have new people coming to church who have no experience with Adventism or churchgoing. It is a difficult matter for them to educate their children into Sabbath observance and keeping quiet in the pews.

A few of our church officers feel that hiring someone to baby-sit the children of those attending our services and paying them on a monthly basis is comparable to our use of other support systems (utilities, et cetera). But most of them believe that this would infringe on our Sabbath observance, and strongly oppose this idea.

At the moment we feel the best approach is to ask some of the cradle roll Sabbath school teachers to take these little children into the nursery and provide a kind of second Sabbath school for them—with supervised activities and games that have a spiritual focus. With the number of new people we're adding, however, we may have to reconsider professional help.—Trevor MacGowan, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Training children—a principle

I recognize that my advice might not be helpful to this particular pastor because I'm not involved with his unique problem. However, for me it involves the principle of training the children. As Adventists, through the years we have had our children (from birth on) with us in the eleven o'clock service as a part of their training. They learned that this was a time of special importance. They learned that the Sabbath services were intended for them. Admittedly, they don't understand everything. Nevertheless, what happens there, as well as the attitudes of the worshipers and the attitudes of the parents toward their children, instills in them certain principles of worship.

This being the case, I think that most people would feel that was important. However, I can see that there might be circumstances in which people would feel that they would get more out of the service if someone else were taking care of the children. Under these circumstances I believe I would take a "small

(Continued on page 30)

Violating the sanctuary?

How do I give our worship service a warmer and more informal atmosphere without losing the reverence and awareness of the transcendency of God that twentieth-century worshipers need? In some churches pastors have the congregation welcome each other at some point during the service. Others feel this too disruptive, that it violates the reverence associated with the church sanctuary and worship. What do you feel about this, and what other suggestions do you have to help me?

If you have some ideas as to how a pastor might successfully handle this situation, please sit right down, put your suggestions on paper, and send them to us. The lead time required for the publication of *MINISTRY* means that we need your response right away.

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Who, me? Overseas?

A call to mission service can be a call to drastic changes of lifestyle, some negative, some positive. Madeline Johnston has been through the experience, and suggests some pointers for deciding how well you might cope.

As one who has spent time in overseas service with my family, I assure you that Madeline has dealt realistically with the challenges and opportunities of those who devote time to foreign mission service. I choked up a bit because her remarks awakened vivid memories related to my own experience. I too dreaded leaving loved ones and homeland to face the unknown. But our eight years in the Far Eastern Division were unique and incomparable. Although only a fortunate few will have the honor of serving overseas, yet most of the principles our author sets forth also apply to those of you who are laboring exclusively in the homeland.—Marie Spangler.

Ministers, especially in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, frequently receive calls to move from one church or conference to another. Ministers' wives, of course, are inextricably involved in responding to the call. Dedicated Christian couples may vary greatly in their understanding of how to determine God's will in a call to a new field. Some always accept, considering a call to be direct from God, while others consider all the advantages and disadvantages from a human standpoint—use of talents, proximity to schools for the children, career advancement, et cetera. No less pious than the first group, they believe intelligence is a God-given gift for decision-making. Those in a third group pray and weigh. They, too, balance advantages against disadvantages, but after making a decision based on all the evidence, they ask God to open or close doors as necessary to keep them in the center of His will. God can

Madeline S. Johnston is the secretary to the Department of World Mission, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. She recently completed a major research project surveying 559 SDA returned missionaries to determine why they stayed overseas only one term or less.

and does work through all of these who sincerely seek His will in decision-making.

A call to foreign mission service often presents greater difficulty—stakes are higher, changes more drastic, effects on the whole family's future more far-reaching. How should a couple respond? For some it's easy because they have dreamed of overseas service since childhood. Every mission story has reinforced that desire, and adulthood has only intensified it. Now at last when the call comes, there's no problem.

For others, perhaps an increasing number today, a call to overseas service comes as a total surprise. Such was our case, some twenty-six years ago. Sometimes the counsel of friends may be of help. However, we learned more about our friends than about the mission field. One told us earnestly, "Don't accept the call. You'll be forgotten over there and never get to the GC." Since our main goal in life was not getting to the General Conference, we didn't weigh that advice very heavily. Besides, General Conference officers need overseas experience!

How should you respond, then, to a mission call if one should come your direction? You should find a consideration of the following seven factors helpful:

1. *The wife's work.* Does the call specify a mission job for you also, or only for your husband? If the latter, does that bother you? Do you wish to work outside the home? If so, you should investigate job possibilities before you go, because government regulations or job availability may preclude it. Although changes are coming gradually, our church generally expects a wife to consider her husband's call primary. But you must feel that it is your call too, whether or not officially acknowledged.

2. *Your marriage.* In an overseas move the whole family must confront adjustments to new sights, sounds, smells, speech, and surroundings. The change

in lifestyle may include a lack of privacy in your own home, a change of diet, different modes of transportation (or lack of it), strange tools for routine tasks, and a total change of daily schedule and pace (with accompanying frustration over others' lack of schedule).

Your husband's new work may encompass heavier responsibilities than his present job—further complicated by the language barrier.

Your role as wife brings new demands—coping with a servant, cooking from scratch, perhaps using a kerosene stove for the first time. You also must bear the brunt of the children's adjustment problems.

So, at the very time when both of you feel desperate to play the missionary role well, you may feel inadequate to perform your routine daily functions. You may react to the increased pressures either by drawing closer to each other in mutual support and understanding or by criticizing each other. Mission service actually can exacerbate existing marital problems, draw out latent problems never noticed before, or cause new ones, but it can also strengthen marital bonds. You need to be aware of this beforehand.

3. *Your children.* While you as parents are facing major adjustments, your children must adjust to a new school, separation from friends and relatives back home, and the unique experience of suddenly standing out in every crowd. Some quickly learn to enjoy being placed on a pedestal, bringing its own set of problems! Others find it very unpleasant to be stared at, touched, and perhaps laughed at by people in the marketplace.

One principal reason why SDA missionaries come home after only a few years is the children's education. You must consider what will be available for them in the mission field—a home study program, an American school, or a national school? Are you able and willing to teach them if necessary?

On the other hand, think also of the

advantages to your children. Travel does more for their general education than many books could do. Especially geography and history come alive. With parental encouragement they can learn a second language. The understanding they gain of other people and cultures will give them a breadth and depth of character that will later make them the envy of their peers at home. Additional unique opportunities abound, such as traveling with an itinerating father, or maybe an opportunity to watch surgery at the mission hospital.

4. *Your environment.* Do you need the latest in home furnishings and appliances, or can you live simply? Can you, if necessary, adjust your own tastes to accommodate the concerns of a more conservative church body?

Can you make creative plans and provide your own entertainment—read, write letters, do hobbies, play music? Maybe your overseas situation would not require this, but in many positions a husband travels extensively. Can you handle loneliness and isolation? In any case, you will be separated from your parental family and friends. In general, do you take things in stride, or are you anxious and excitable?

5. *Fellow missionaries.* You may live in close proximity to other missionaries, perhaps in a compound setting, who are not friends of your own choosing. Some may even irritate you at times. The closeness of your lives and work gives you an intimate knowledge of both the good and bad in others. Since it's like a big family, you may fight sometimes, but underneath you realize it's because you really care. Besides, you would defend the other from outside attack. Go prepared for give and take, ready to put the best interpretation on motives. And remember that other missionaries are particularly defensive about their children and their dogs.

Inevitably you will confront inequities within the mission. Of course, one finds those in the homeland too, but overseas they can be more annoying. For example, our house had not been painted for ten years when the mission president's home got a new coat after two years, just for a change of color, justified on the basis of the General Conference president's upcoming visit. This may seem a petty thing, but it can be more difficult to cope with overseas.

6. *Job satisfactions.* In considering a call, be aware of the numerous rewards of

overseas service. Except for a few very difficult fields, you will see tangible results of your work, even relatively quick returns. In a number of areas our church is now growing much faster than within North America. It is exciting to be part of this frontline work!

Lifelong friendships develop from mission service. Fellow former missionaries still seem like family members after a separation of many miles and years, and the less pleasant aspects of that closeness fade into the background. Nationals with whom and for whom you worked overseas become like sons and daughters. Watching them take leadership roles in the church provides deep satisfaction.

When you return to the homeland, you will perceive your own country and even your fellow church members in a new light—not always a favorable one, as contrasts sharpen. Then you will know that your cross-cultural experience has broadened your understanding, so that you are better fitted to minister in the homeland as well.

7. *God's will.* The most important consideration in answering a mission call—whether with a Yes or a No—is a certainty of God's will for your life. As my husband and I agonized over our surprise call to Korea, we visited Theo-

dora Wangerin, who had served there for forty years. She had buried an infant there, brought her husband home on furlough with tuberculosis, buried him here, and then returned with two little girls to Korea. The ripple effect of her work there is still widening and multiplying. "Many times," she said, "I would have packed my bags and come home if it weren't for one thing—I knew God wanted me there."

Those words have echoed encouragingly in my mind many times through unpainted walls, bouts with hepatitis, and minor tensions with fellow missionaries. I was always humbled as I compared my lot with hers. After taking two months to consider the call, we, too, had been clearly convicted against our own wills of God's leading. In retrospect, we praise Him for that guidance into some of the best years of our lives.

Occasionally God calls even those who may not, humanly speaking, seem qualified. Having helped train new missionaries, I can recall a few very "risky" prospects. Ann (that's not her real name) dragged her feet in passive resistance all the way, because her husband had accepted the call in response to his lifelong dream without
(Continued on page 30)

Prayers from the parsonage

Amman, Jordan

We have arrived during the ninth month of the Moslem year. Trade and public affairs are slow during the day as Moslems pray, meditate, and rest, for this is the fast of Ramadan, the month in which the Koran was revealed. Our Moslem hosts graciously serve us breakfast, though they themselves are forbidden to eat between dawn and dusk.

Our Moslem guide takes us through the city in the morning and then north to Jerash in the afternoon. While we stop for lunch he patiently waits and sips only water or a soft drink. The following day he and the bus driver again fast on the long desert trip to Petra. As we descend the canyon the teenager leading my

horse walks along steadily under the blazing sun. "I am hungry," he later confides. "Ramadan is hard."

I'm impressed by their devotion to Islam! Yet, no matter how strict their religious beliefs, they do not require us to observe them. Instead, they work to make our visit enjoyable.

Perhaps my witness lies, then, not in convincing someone else that he is wrong and I am right, but in willingly meeting his needs. My best testimony might be to give my elderly neighbor a ride to her own church, or to refuse to mow my lawn on Sunday morning.

Bless these Moslem people, great God whom they worship. Speak to each honest heart and guide them into a full knowledge of You. May I never forget their example. In this Moslem country I am the "unbeliever," but I have been accepted and treated kindly!

Cherry B. Habenicht

Hire a nursery

From page 27

group" approach. I would try to find four individuals in my congregation who would consider taking care of these little children a ministry. Rather than tying them down for the whole year, I would ask each individual to be responsible for a three-month period and let this be her ministry for those three months. The last thing I would do is hire somebody to do it.—Ralph Darrough, Hartford, Michigan.

Try a baby-sitting co-op

I know of one pastor's wife who stayed home Sabbaths the year after her first child was born! She felt she got nothing from the service and was more of a distraction than a help to others.

Why not try a Sabbath morning baby-sitting co-op in the church nursery or some other suitable room? Set whatever age limit you feel desirable. (I believe children should start learning to sit in church at a fairly early age.) Access to the baby-sitting service would be on the basis of service in exchange. For example, one Sabbath morning's baby-sitting would entitle a family to three Sabbaths of child care.

This approach offers several advantages. It avoids the problem of hiring someone on the Sabbath. It also avoids asking other church members to miss the Sabbath services. It involves the parents in the solution to their problem. And it contributes to their being motivated to move their children into the worship service as soon as possible (they likely will not want to baby-sit any longer than necessary).—David C. Jarnes, Beltsville, Maryland.

Who? Me?

From page 29

consulting her feelings. She worried about obtaining food for her baby, complained about every inconvenience, and seemed somewhat crude and unkempt personally. We predicted she would not last long overseas, but she served more than one term, faithfully supporting her husband's work and finding her own niche as well.

If you are considering an overseas call, discuss all these seven factors together as a family. Keep open the lines of communication, share concerns, and pray together. Prepare and include the children. Adopt an attitude of adventure, making this a special, exciting challenge for the whole family. Then your adjustments will be minimal, your rewards maximal.

Narrative preaching

From page 9

reaffirmation of their commitment to pray for their children. Next I asked the fathers to stand as a symbol of their support both in prayer for the grandmothers and mothers and in prayer support of the children. Next I invited the single adults to stand in commitment to praying for the children as Paul had joined Timothy's mother and grandmother in prayer support. Finally I invited the youth to stand and commit themselves to praying for their mothers. The Lord used this method to begin a spiritual healing among some families, refocus the spiritual goals of others, and celebrate the existing spiritual commitment in a third group. One caution when using this method—be sure to make single-parent families and single adults a part of the sermon and the call.

b. *Written responses.* There are many variations on this method. The one I like is a letter written at the close of the service. Theme music can be played while the worshipers write. Then invite them to place their name and address on an envelope and seal the letter inside. Tell them that the letters will not be

opened but that you and your family will pray over the letters every week for the next quarter and select a few letters to return to them. The letters will serve to remind them of their covenant and often come with the exquisiteness of divine timing. Furthermore, it is a blessing to your family to hear of the way God uses these letters to encourage and strengthen faith. Don't forget to include the children in this method. Invite them to draw a picture if they cannot write. Other written responses include: keeping a spiritual journal for a period of time, a bulletin insert with the sermon outline, room for notes and a covenant, a symbolic commitment certificate to sign (i.e., a Declaration of Dependence on Jesus can be used when preaching John 21).

Other bonding methods include symbolic responses, verbal responses, musical responses, silent responses, and action responses.

I would encourage you to plan for choice-making opportunities and enlarge your repertoire of bonding methods. It will equip you with the dynamic of decision-making without the limits of predictable stereotyped methods.

Step 6: Select the illustrations. In some cases, a narrative is so rich with dialogue and dynamics that illustrations are not needed. Other stories are more skeletal and need illustration. The selection

of illustrations is purposely delayed to this step in the sermon development because theology and application have now been clarified. Thus, the illustrations can be chosen to visualize the theology and/or application. If I choose my illustrations prior to clarifying my theology, I run the risk of making the text fit the illustration as opposed to making the illustration fit the text. A pitfall of good storytellers is to rely on the illustrations to carry the sermon, thus giving center stage to the illustrations versus the text. My criteria for a good illustration is that it rationalizes, emotionalizes, and spiritualizes the theological point.

Step 7: Write out the sermon. The choice of writing a manuscript or an outline is a function of one's time, skill, and personality. Therefore, I will leave that decision to you.

¹ J. E. Massey, *Designing the Sermon* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), pp. 35, 36.

² Helmut Thielicke, *Encounter With Spurgeon*, trans. by John W. Doberstein (Philadelphia, 1963), p. 17.

³ Milton Crum, *Manual on Preaching* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1977), pp. 111-127.

⁴ H. W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), p. 23.

⁵ Roger L. Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr., *A Study of Factors Relating to Church Growth in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Institute of Church Ministry, April, 1981).

* From the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1946, 1952 © 1971, 1973.

Shop talk

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The Academy of Parish Clergy, a 15-year-old organization for fostering continuing education among those engaged in parish ministry, provides members with the stimulus of contact with other parish ministers who take their task seriously. Like other professional societies for ministers, the Academy provides opportunities for continuing education, certification in selected areas of pastoral practice, and the possibility of becoming a "fellow" of the Academy. Yet, it differs from other ministerial organizations in that the only requirement for membership is that the prospective member be engaged in parish ministry as priest, minister, or rabbi. No basic educational requirements exist, although there are requirements that demand a demonstrated commitment to continuing education under the supervision of one's peers.

The Academy publishes a quarterly journal and holds an annual meeting. State chapters and colleague groups provide for further interaction. Membership is currently around 500, and annual dues are modest. For more information regarding membership, write: Dr. Roger I. Perks, 12604 Britton Dr., Cleveland, Ohio 44120.

Sunday—to keep or not to keep?

The forty-six-page booklet *Why I Go to Church on Sunday* was written by a Seventh-day Adventist evangelist to answer ques-

tions about the Sabbath. The introduction points out the scriptural evidence for the seventh-day Sabbath. The following chapters answer the arguments people commonly give in support of keeping Sunday. The booklet concludes with an appeal to the reader to join with those who are observing the seventh-day Sabbath.

The price for the booklet is \$1 per copy; ten or more, 75 cents each, plus 10 percent postage. The author is willing to send an inspection copy that may be kept, free, if ten or more copies are subsequently ordered. The inspection copy should be

returned if the pastor does not find the booklet useful. Write: David Merling, 420 College Ave., Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103.

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Recommended reading

Getting Through to God

Glenn A. Coon, *Review and Herald*, 1980, 126 pages, \$4.95. Reviewed by N. R. Dower, *Laurel, Maryland*.

This is one in a series of books on prayer by a man who has done much in recent years to stimulate interest in prayer and study groups. It will prove a valuable aid to anyone interested in forming an effective, lasting prayer group.

Each of the fourteen chapters includes a study guide and helpful suggestions on how the study group can become a vibrant agency for the salvation of family, friends, and neighbors. The book probes such questions as, "Does God really care?" "Why do I have so many troubles?" and "Why are answers to my prayers so often delayed?" Coon points up the principles of communication with God, cooperating with God, and communicating with our neighbor. His special emphasis is on relating to God in order to be effective in redemptively relating to others.

Contemporary American Theologies: A Book of Readings

Deane William Ferm, ed., *Seabury Press, New York*, 1982, 374 pages, \$15.95. Reviewed by Barry L. Casey, assistant professor of religion, *Columbia Union College*.

In his critical survey Ferm provides an introductory chapter on Protestant theology from the turn of the century to the early 1960s that puts contemporary theology in its historical and sociological perspectives. He then turns to chapters on secular theology, black theology, South American liberation theology, feminist theology, evangelical theology, and Roman Catholic theology. He concludes with a chapter on the future of American theology in which he critiques the various theologies for contributing to the fragmenting of theological discussion and for failing to grasp the wider implications of the theological task.

While he is critical of their shortcomings in not adequately addressing

questions of epistemology, Christian anthropology, and the doctrine of God, Ferm lauds the contemporary theologies for making clear the "inner history" of blacks, women, and other minorities.

Ferm's companion book of readings does an admirable job of covering the major figures and literature from the various theologies, although the omission of any discussion and literature of both process theology and the theology of hope is a serious lacuna.

For the busy pastor these books are helpful in summarizing the major trends in contemporary theology, providing a bibliography of significant literature in the field, and suggesting ways that American theology can meet the challenges of society.

Love Must Be Tough

Dr. James C. Dobson, *Waco, Texas*, *Word Books*, 1983, \$10.95. Reviewed by Roger H. Ferris, pastor, *Volunteer Park Seventh-day Adventist church, Seattle, Washington*.

James Dobson has done it again! In the first eight short chapters he has conceptualized, organized, and crystallized the very intuitive ideas experienced counselors and pastors have fleetingly perceived in dealing with disintegrating marriages.

Dobson proposes a sequence of events that includes the discovery of a partner's unfaithfulness to the marriage vows: disbelief, grief, feelings of rejection, panic, anger, blaming, appeasement, clinging, begging, pleading, bargaining, and servility. Pastor, counselor, and friends quote scripture and offer advice that one should pray, hold steady, obey, submit, remain silent, and anticipate a miracle: These actions strip dignity and self-respect from the giver.

It won't work, Dobson declares—at least in most cases. Such a "grabbing" approach creates an atmosphere of suffocating entrapment for the deviant partner. Love is reduced to an obligation. Giving everything and requiring nothing encourages the deviance. He proposes "tough love" instead. God

requires something in return for His love extended to repentant sinners: accountability.

"Tough love" pulls back from the deviant partner. It says, "You have the freedom to act as you wish. I respect your freedom, and I respect myself too." It places the responsibility for behavioral accountability with the deviant partner. Respect is reconstructed by "opening the cage door and letting the trapped partner out!" Dobson admits that this makes the "innocent" spouse vulnerable and there is no guarantee of success. But in his experience it avoids strangling the last bit of life from a relationship that still has a spark of love. "Genuine love demands toughness in moments of crisis," and more often than not, love wins!

You may not agree, you may not have the courage to carry the risk of failure, but you ought to read Dobson's description of the problem, hear his response, and then evaluate his method—tough love, accountability, mutual respect, forgiveness, and tender love!

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