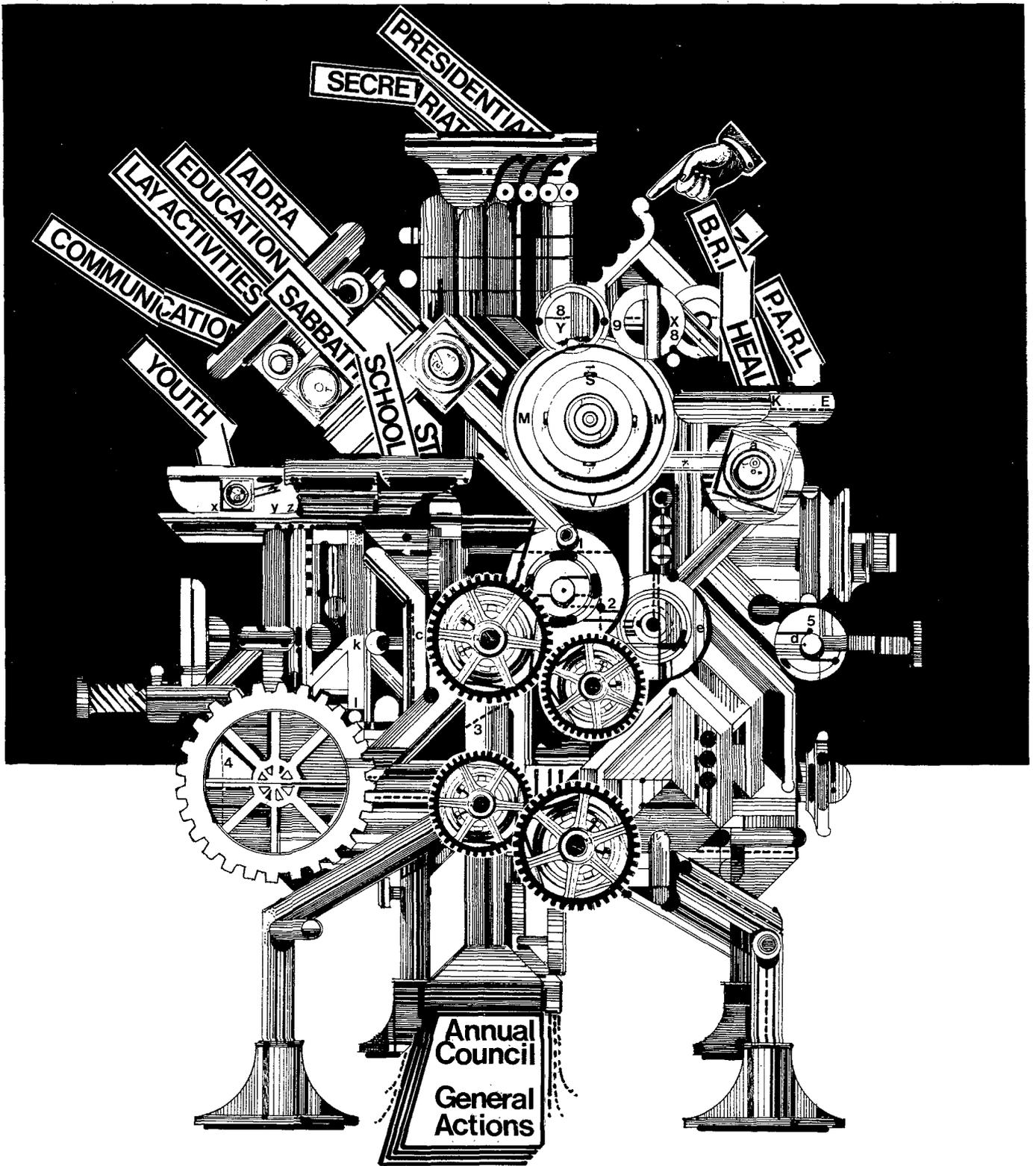


# Ministry

A Magazine for Clergy/December 1984



1984 Annual Council Report

# Letters

## Appreciates theology

I have very much appreciated receiving your publication *MINISTRY* and wish to thank you for including me in mailings.

I have found it most helpful to receive your interesting and profound articles on straight theology. The work has always been most profound and the study scholarly. I find all your presentations most interesting and helpful. Please accept my thanks for everything.—Pastor, British Columbia.

## No bigotry, please!

Someone asked you to send me your magazine. I wish I knew who! I surely didn't ask for it myself.

Ever since you printed the article "Washington for Jesus—Really?" (September, 1980), even making it a cover story, I asked you to please take my name off your list, for I do not subscribe to your kind of bigotry and prejudice, and never shall.—Pastor, Cleveland, Tennessee.

## Thanks, but no thanks!

The article "After Death: Resurrection or Immortality?" (September, 1983) is so full of heretical holes that most novice evangelical Christians are able to discern it.

It is a shame that our denominational biases blind our eyes to what the Holy Spirit wishes to teach us from the Scriptures.

Thank you for your act of kindness in sending your magazine at no cost; however, because of its Adventist bent to incorrect theology, you can render me another kindness by removing my name from your list of potential proselytes.—Pastor, Brownsville, Texas.

## A word of thanks

This word of profound thanks for *MINISTRY*—month after month—is certainly overdue from me!

I was particularly motivated to write this time because of Pastor Morris Chalfant's article "Say It With a Prayer!" (July, 1984). That article provides a much-needed message for the church. Far too many saints have been hood-

winked by that ol' serpent the devil into not recognizing the awesome power of continuous and fervent prayer! It continues to be my prayer that committed pastors will continue to bring forth this kind of sobering word sorely needed by the body of Christ.

May God continue to enable and encourage you in this great service you provide! Surely you are admonishing, you are edifying.—Philadelphia.

I am writing to thank you for the complimentary subscription to *MINISTRY* I have been receiving for about two years. Just this past week I attended a conference where I met a wonderful Seventh-day Adventist pastor from Canada. I thanked him for the generosity of the denomination and asked him the same question that begins the article on page 20 in the July edition, entitled "Why *MINISTRY* Is Our Gift to You."

I always read the magazine and often share articles with my staff.

I appreciate what you are doing. Keep up the good work. God bless you.—Pastor, Chesterfield, Missouri.

## Please, don't need it yesterday!

I thought the article "Your Secretary: A Partner in Ministry," which appeared in the July, 1984, issue, was very well done.

I am a church secretary and have been for years, for several different pastors and denominations. From the viewpoint of a secretary, I have felt that I was sharing in the work of the Lord, when I have been paid and when I haven't been paid, and therefore being a church secretary has been for me a rewarding job.

However, I might make one suggestion to all the ministers out there:

Try to be careful not to take advantage of your secretary's spirituality. To be more specific, I have found one fault in all the ministers I have worked for (isn't that great—just one fault!). I have found them all to be *procrastinators*.

My experience has been that the minister will hand me articles to be included in the newsletter or bulletin or whatever with an "I'm sorry this is late

again." And then expect me to do the miraculous—get out a neat, good-looking paper on time and with everything in order. And to do it patiently (like a good Christian).

So one thing that all of us partners in ministry would ask is "Please, partner, don't procrastinate."—Church secretary, Passaic, New Jersey.

## Him or her?

I appreciate receiving *MINISTRY* very much. You present many fine articles and have supplied me with ideas and inspiration that I have been able to incorporate into my ministry.

However, I was distressed when I discovered that your lead article on the important role of the church secretary ("Your Secretary: A Partner in Ministry," July, 1984) consistently referred to the pastor as male and the secretary as female. I am one of a dozen or more female pastors in my immediate area. At least one Presbyterian church secretary that I know is male. Language that fails to acknowledge these realities only underscores old, unhealthy stereotypes about who does what in the kingdom of God.

I look forward to seeing more sensitive attention to inclusiveness in future articles.—Pastor, Plainfield, New Jersey.

*We're trying! And we hope you've noticed some of the articles where we've made a wholehearted effort to avoid sexist terminology. But the English language being what it is, and editors being what they are, we'll no doubt have to plead for patience and understanding from time to time.*—Editors.

## Stimulating and helpful

Allow me to say Thank you for making *MINISTRY* available to me. I find the articles to be Biblically based, interesting, and always stimulating. The carefully written book reviews are a good aid in selecting materials on a limited educational budget.—Pastor, Inman, Kansas.

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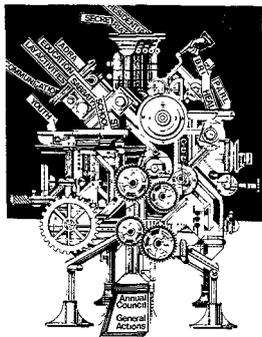
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# Ministry

A Magazine for Clergy/December 1984/Volume 57/Number 12



**Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries/4.** B. Russell Holt, James H. Harris, and Charles D. Martin. There are very few Adventists filling chaplaincy roles at institutions outside our church organization. MINISTRY interviewed the director and associate director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries to find out what this new agency's role is and how the church can begin to place interested ministers in chaplaincies.

**Practical Application in Preaching/9.** What's the best way to tell whether you're a good preacher or not? Floyd Bresee suggests that it's not what people say on the way out the door, but what they do on the outside that's the true test. Our Toward Better Preaching series concludes on a very practical note.

**Annual Council—1984/16.** Our ten-page report goes behind the scenes at Annual Council and not only reports what happened but examines the how and why of several important decisions.

**Role and Function Commission Report/17.**  
**Role of Women/20.**

**Our Work in the Soviet Union/22.**

**Administration and Use of Tithe Funds/22.**

**Association of Adventist Forums Report/23.**

**Schism/24.**

**A Statement on Theological Freedom and  
Accountability/24.**

**Family Worship—Pain and Joy/27.** If you've ever found it challenging to make worship meaningful, you'll find yourself sympathizing with Ginger Church. You'll also find good suggestions and encouragement to keep on trying.

**Ministry Reports/16**  
**Shepherdess/27**  
**1984 Index/29**

# Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries



*The 1983 Annual Council created Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries (ACM) with a mandate to coordinate placing Adventist chaplains in government and private institutions.*

*Former MINISTRY executive editor B. Russell Holt interviewed Charles D. Martin, director of ACM, and his associate, James H. Harris, both of whom have served with the National Service Organization at various levels since the 1950s, to find out how the new organization can serve ministers who have an interest in chaplaincy.*

**Ministry:** *What is Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries (ACM)—how did it come to be, what is it all about?*

**Martin:** The Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries came into being at the 1983 Annual Council. The council mandated ACM as “an umbrella-type chaplaincy organization” “to incorporate the present functions and services of the National Service Organization (NSO)” and to coordinate “chaplaincy services for the NSO, military/VA, health-care institutions, prisons, campuses, and other related areas served by chaplains both in and beyond the Seventh-day Adventist Church.”

That’s the overall description of the program. We have men and women who are serving in the chaplaincy in various areas, and the church’s purpose, I believe, is to try to pull this group together, coordinate their program, and provide a clearinghouse that can strengthen the operation.



**Charles D. Martin**

**Ministry:** *The National Service Organization has been operating a chaplaincy program for a number of years in our church. How does the ACM differ from what we have been doing in the past?*

**Harris:** We began by working with the military chaplaincy program, and later on we got into the Veterans Administration chaplaincy; but more recently the church has become aware of many other openings. The ACM will include the NSO work of helping prepare Adventist youth for the draft, and assisting Adventists in the military with Sabbath problems and related noncombatancy difficulties. And it will also broaden out to other types of chaplaincies.

**Ministry:** *What other types of chaplaincies are you thinking of?*

**Martin:** There is a tremendous potential for expansion. We have just touched

**W**e have only three Adventist prison chaplains. There are 456 State correctional institutions and forty-three Federal institutions. This is a tremendous field that we have hardly touched.

the surface. For instance, in 1982 there were 7,169 health-care institutions in the United States and adjoining territories. Adventists operate 99 hospitals—a little more than 1 percent of the hospitals in the United States. So far we have seven chaplains in non-Adventist hospitals.

**Ministry:** *We have only seven chaplains in non-Adventist hospitals?*

**Martin:** Yes, so far we have only one chaplain in a State hospital, and six others in general or community hospitals.

Then there are prisons. We have only three Adventist prison chaplains—Walter Horton, who serves full-time in Ionia, Michigan, and two others serving nearly full-time in two other States. There are 456 State correctional institutions and forty-three Federal institutions, and nearly every one has a chaplain. Add to that the county and city jails that have part-time or full-time chaplains, and you can see that this is a tremendous field that we have hardly touched. We feel that there is great room for expansion. We have contacted fifty State correctional institutions, letting them know about our organization, and we have had nearly forty responses already. They have been very positive and they will let us know when chaplaincy openings develop.

Another little-known area is the many chaplaincies available in industry and business.

**Ministry:** *This is an area that most of us don't think about—the chaplain in industry. Maybe you could explain this role a bit.*

**Harris:** Certain industries have a chaplain on their staff to help with counseling, to assist with morale building and with family problems, and to provide other services, enabling workers to increase production.

**Ministry:** *How would you rate our church*

*in relation to other churches in terms of the emphasis that we place on chaplaincy and the organization that we have—are other churches ahead of us, or is this a neglected area all around?*

**Harris:** As for the military, we are doing well in relation to the size of our church. At the present time we have thirty-six chaplains in the military, which more than fills our quota.

When it comes to prisons and non-Adventist hospitals, we are way behind and are just now trying to catch up. In industrial openings we are certainly way behind—we have none.

**W**e feel that there is a tremendous reservoir of talent lying dormant in the church. Many people have gone through seminary and have Master of Divinity degrees, but they are not utilizing that training or their calling.



**James H. Harris**

**Ministry:** *I understand that in recent years there has been some difficulty in placing all the ministerial graduates from our colleges in pastorates. Do you see the chaplaincy as one way of utilizing the commitment and the calling that these individuals have, in ways that would not be economically draining on the denomination? Are these young graduates qualified to be chaplains? Or do these institutions want someone with experience?*

**Martin:** We feel that there is a tremendous reservoir of talent lying dormant in the church. Many people have gone through seminary and have Master of Divinity degrees, but they are not

utilizing that training or their calling. We have not touched this potential. We believe that in these areas, many ordained ministers can readily serve the church in settings apart from the church.

Economically, solving the problem can work two ways. If we take into the chaplaincy work a group of older, experienced men who are ordained, we would open some pastoral budgets for seminary students to fill. On the other hand, we could develop a program with the conferences whereby someone who wants to be a chaplain serves the conference and gains pastoral experience until ordination, then goes into a chaplaincy. The difficulty there is that the more experience a person has as a pastor, the better chaplain he makes. We need to find a balance of youth and experience. We have to have high quality people to fill these positions. We don't want the chaplaincy to become a dumping ground for dissatisfied pastors.

Our hospital chaplains are dedicated

**W**e feel that we have the strongest group of military chaplains that we have ever had. We want to take pastors with a concern for prisoners or hospital patients and channel them into this ministry.

workers doing an excellent job. Right now we feel that we have the strongest group of military chaplains that we have ever had—soul winners, personal workers with a real pastoral instinct—and we want to keep that type. We want to take pastors with a concern for prisoners, the military, or hospital patients and channel them into this type of ministry.

I have always felt that pastors, evangelists, and teachers are called to their specific ministries. I believe that the Lord will call people to prison and institutional ministries that heretofore have not been open to them. Once it becomes known that there are openings in these areas, I believe that the Lord will call talented people to fill these needs.

We have a pastor whose church is near the military prison in Leavenworth, Kansas. He has worked into the prison with Bible classes. He called me recently and told me that he was having another baptism. The military people have asked him to extend his visits, to increase them, and he has an open door to that prison. I told him that he should think about going into the prison ministry, but he just laughed and said that he thought that he was too old. Here is a case of a man who has a real burden and a real skill. Others who are younger and have the same interest could qualify and go into the prison system.

**Ministry:** How will ACM be able to expand? How can it recruit and screen new chaplains?

**Martin:** We would hope that through MINISTRY we can alert the workers and ministers to the available openings. We had a letter from Ohio some time ago saying that some openings were developing. Now if we had a group who, ahead of time, had expressed an interest in the prison chaplaincy, we could have had them already screened and could have contacted them to see if they were interested. So through MINISTRY and possibly through the union papers we could occasionally let some word be sent

out regarding this.

**Ministry:** This is really like a new day—linking workers with needs. We have always done this on more of a word-of-mouth, who-knows-whom basis, but this is a real effort to prepare a group of workers for a specialized task and to match them with those roles when positions become available.

**Martin:** Of course, this may be some time yet, but I can envision keeping in our computer a record of workers who have an interest in a certain type of chaplaincy. Then as openings develop, they could be notified.

I don't think that we are going to be looked at as a placement agency. We will be more of a clearinghouse, letting folk

**F**or women with ministerial training who wish to enter the chaplaincy and who have been screened, the ACM provides a letter of endorsement that has been accepted by hospitals requiring ecclesiastical recognition.

know what is available, offering available openings to those interested.

**Ministry:** What sort of screening do you do on those who are interested in chaplaincy?

**Martin:** We have the individual fill out an application form and send it to our office. The form includes a list of references. We contact his conference president and get approval and then we send out evaluation forms to the references. Then we summarize these and take them to the ACM Committee. (Military chaplaincy applications will continue to be screened by the NSO Committee.) In addition an ACM staff member makes a personal visit to the husband and wife in the home.

**Ministry:** You take a careful look at these individuals.

**Harris:** A very careful look. We want the best quality possible to represent the church in these institutions.

Once the ACM Committee has taken action, the name goes to the General Conference Committee for approval.

**Ministry:** What opportunities do chaplaincies offer for women?

**Martin:** As far as the military is concerned, ordination is required; consequently Adventist women cannot be included as yet. There are excellent opportunities in the hospital chaplaincy service, however. Among the women

who have finished their ministerial training at Andrews University, several have become hospital chaplains.

**Ministry:** Is there any thought being given to some sort of classification short of ordination that gives ecclesiastical recognition that might satisfy some of these requirements?

**Martin:** Yes, provision has been made to supply commissioned minister credentials to those who qualify and are in such work as associates for pastoral care, hospital chaplains, and others.

Further, for women with ministerial training who wish to enter the chaplaincy and who have been screened, the ACM provides a letter of endorsement

**W**e want to develop a strong working relationship with the local conference to offer placement to those ministers who have the skill and concern for the chaplaincy ministry.

that has been accepted by hospitals requiring ecclesiastical recognition of some type.

**Ministry:** But this still is not adequate to get them into the military chaplaincy?

**Martin:** This is correct. Full ordination is required.

**Ministry:** But if a young lady feels that God has called her to this type of work, there are ways that she can find fulfillment, maybe not in all areas yet, but she shouldn't be discouraged from pursuing some form of ministry.

**Martin:** I feel that as we get further into this program, we are going to find other hospitals that will recognize this type of credential, perhaps some prisons, too. This will provide new opportunities for women to serve as chaplains.

**Ministry:** You mentioned cooperating with local conferences. How does a chaplain fit into the conference where he is assigned?

**Martin:** The Annual Council action indicates that those endorsed by ACM will normally continue to receive credentials from the conference. The credentialing conference will assist the ACM in monitoring the chaplain's work and strengthening his ministry as much as possible. As the church's nearest organization to the chaplain, the local conference is in an important position.

We want to develop a strong working relationship with the local conference, not to take away their best individuals, but to offer placement to those ministers who have the skill and concern for the chaplaincy ministry.

**Ministry:** How do you hope to overcome the idea that if a man puts his name in the hopper, perhaps his conference administration will immediately look upon him as

dissatisfied in his current responsibility and simply marking time waiting for a slot?

**Martin:** This further emphasizes the need of a good understanding between ACM and conference administrators. We plan to make clear to all applicants just what is included—certainty or uncertainty of the opening, time frame involved, et cetera—urging them to carry on effectively the work they are presently engaged in. As time goes along, I believe, by working closely with conference leadership, we can overcome this problem.

We hope that even when a young unordained pastor expresses an interest in the chaplaincy, the conference administration will work with him. They will obtain several years of service from him before he is ordained and qualified for entrance into the chaplaincy.

As they see possibilities of an expanded chaplaincy, I believe that our conference leaders will better understand our goals.

**Ministry:** And see this as an extension of pastoral ministry and a specialized form of it.

**Martin:** It may be that we will have to develop some new procedures to take seminarians with chaplaincy interests into conferences, permit them to do their internships and their pastoral duties, then have the opportunity to respond to chaplaincy calls as they appear. This is not going to take large numbers out of the worker group; only a small number will be involved.

**Ministry:** It seems that this is an opportunity for our church to have a ministerial presence beyond its organizational structure. And even from a financial standpoint it is advantageous because here are salaries that the church does not have to pay.

**Martin:** I hope we don't miss this point. To have Seventh-day Adventist ordained ministers serving in non-Adventist hospitals, the military, and in

prisons, at no cost to the church, is an open door we should have entered more actively long ago. Many other churches are far ahead of us in this area.

**Ministry:** What relationship will ACM have to the professional organizations of these various chaplaincy groups?

**Martin:** Each of these groups is tied to its own professional organizations. For instance, consider our hospital chaplains. The Seventh-day Adventist Chaplains' Association has a very close relationship with the College of Chaplains and regularly meets with the Protestant Health and Welfare Assembly. Such activities will continue. The ACM will not change the pattern of any chaplain group, and will coordinate the various chaplaincies.

For years we have had an annual conference for military and VA chaplains. This conference has served an extremely important purpose because these men are continually with non-Adventist chaplains and military personnel. It is good for them to get together once a year and fellowship with other Seventh-day Adventists. This will continue. Plans call for such meetings to be held for the various chaplain groups each year, and then one plenary session with all of them together every quinquennium. Our next military chaplains' meeting will be at the 1985 General Conference pre-session, when they will meet with the World Ministers Council.

The Annual Council's provision for all chaplain groups to meet together once every five years will enable ACM to serve as a bridge. It will provide for our chaplains what their professional training elsewhere cannot.

**Ministry:** This is important, I think, because these men are working outside the structure of the church, as you point out, and they need that tie-in to the church structure.

**Harris:** I might mention too that the

**I**t may be that we will have to develop some new procedures to take seminarians into conferences, permit them to do their internships, then have the opportunity to respond to chaplaincy calls.

chaplains appreciate it when local conferences invite them to workers' meetings, camp meetings, and similar meetings. It means a great deal to meet with their own Adventist people; they are isolated out there.

**Ministry:** *If a pastor in conference employ feels a call to chaplaincy, what steps should he take to make his interest known and to facilitate his moving into an area like this?*

**Martin:** We suggest that the first thing he do is write to us, the Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, at the General Conference. We also suggest that he contact his president at the very beginning so that he will understand.

**Ministry:** *So the pastor shouldn't try to go on the sly without his president knowing it, but should let him know from the beginning?*

**Harris:** We feel that this is how ACM should operate. All involved should know what is developing. Once a man has filled out an application, been screened, and approved, we will grant an ecclesiastical endorsement.

**Ministry:** *Will you give this endorsement before there is an actual opening, or will you hold it in abeyance until the man is actually being considered for a specific spot?*

**Harris:** We have missed several opportunities because we had nobody to suggest. I know of at least four prison openings that we have missed like this. Looking at all the chaplaincies, we suggest that we get these people processed and have them ready.

**Ministry:** *Carry them right up through General Conference Committee approval?*

**Martin:** Right, so that when an opening comes, they will be prepared and we will be able to present their names to be considered.

**Ministry:** *There are certain requisites—a person has to have certain training for the chaplaincy. What would you suggest for a pastor who has an interest in this field and who doesn't have any background or training? What basic steps should he take to prepare himself, to reach the point where he is qualified to send in an application?*

**Martin:** Being an ordained minister is basic. He should have a Master of Divinity degree. This is required for most chaplaincies, especially military. For hospital work, Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is essential, and a person should have as many quarters as possible.

**Ministry:** *I know that Kettering Medical Center offers CPE training; it even has certain stipends available.\**

**Harris:** Loma Linda University Medical Center and the Jerry L. Pettis Memorial Hospital (VA) also have established CPE training programs. This training and the Master of Divinity degree are key factors in entering the hospital chaplaincy. The military does not require the CPE, but prisons are giving preference to men with this training.

**Ministry:** *In summary, what do you see as the work of ACM?*

**W**e have missed several opportunities because we had nobody to suggest. I know of at least four prison openings we have missed. Our suggestion is that we get these people processed and have them ready.



**Martin:** It serves as an umbrella-type organization coordinating the work of the various chaplaincies of our church. As the Annual Council action states, the ACM is to "select, screen, endorse, and nurture persons in chaplaincy ministries in any organization requiring General Conference-level endorsement." And, also, to "serve as an active agent in discovering and circulating nontraditional service opportunities for ministry, and assist in filling positions according to the requirements of the employing organizations."

**Ministry:** *It leaves the door wide open, doesn't it?*

**Martin:** It does—it's nontraditional. There are many service opportunities. A tremendous field is open out there.

\* See Shop Talk, MINISTRY, November, 1984.

# Practical application in preaching

*How do you shape your sermons so they touch the lives of your people? This article, which concludes our series on preaching, not only tells why your sermons should be practical but suggests that by such methods as characterization and modernization you can really affect your listeners' lives. This is a practical article on practical application in preaching!*

Toward Better Preaching □ 12 W. Floyd Bresee



*When you preach, don't aim to lecture on the water of life, but to give your listeners a drink. Halford E. Luccock illustrates by postulating a scenario in which someone is "speaking to a man dying of thirst in the Sahara: 'Let us consider the properties of what we call water. Water is a colorless liquid which on being*

raised to a temperature of a hundred degrees Centigrade or two hundred and twelve degrees Fahrenheit . . . becomes what is called vapour. If, however, on the other hand, the temperature is lowered to no degrees Centigrade, or thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit, lo, it is ice! In the final analysis it is discovered to consist of two portions of hydrogen to one of oxygen, hence arises the name H<sub>2</sub>O.'

W. Floyd Bresee, Ph.D., is associate secretary for continuing education of the Ministerial Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

"The thirsty man interrupts, 'For the love of God, mister, a drink!'"<sup>1</sup>

When you preach, don't aim to lecture on the water of life, but to give your listeners a drink. Not only must you present truth but you must emphasize a practical application of that truth to daily living.

### **Preaching must be practical**

Let me give you four reasons why preaching must be practical.

1. *A change in everyday living affords the only positive proof of good preaching.* You can know that you have preached well not by how you feel after the service,

but by whether or not your sermon has helped people live well. Your effectual argument in the judgment will not be "Look at my sermons, look at the grand truths I presented, look at my beautiful organization, look at my polished delivery." It will be "Look at my people."

The preacher must love truth, but he must never love it more than he loves people. In fact, truth is of no value unless it helps people. When the disciples came to the Temple they said, "Look! What beautiful buildings!" When Jesus came to the Temple He said, "Look at that woman putting her money into the Temple treasury." The disciples saw

**Y**ou've heard of the preacher accused by his congregation of having foot and mouth disease—he wouldn't visit and he couldn't preach. The truth is that many a preacher can't preach because he won't visit.

things. Jesus saw people.

Matthew 5:1, 2 introduces the Sermon on the Mount: "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: . . . and he opened his mouth, and taught them." The greatest sermon ever preached resulted from the Preacher's seeing the needs of His people. Your best sermons will also come after seeing your people's needs.

Charles Reynolds Brown insisted: "Your business as preachers is not to lecture on botany but to raise flowers. Your thorough knowledge of botany will help. It is impossible to raise successfully a full measure of the finest flowers without a knowledge of botany. But in his use of that knowledge the eyes of the wise gardener are constantly upon the results to be achieved in the realm of life."<sup>2</sup>

The sermon is like a wagon wheel. Sermon ideas or lessons are the spokes. A spoke is useless unless it is fastened at both the hub and the rim. It makes no difference how securely it is attached at one end if it's loose at the other. It carries no weight, makes no contribution.

Like spokes, sermon ideas must be fastened at both ends. The hub of the wheel represents truth in Christ as found in Scripture. That is absolutely essential. But it is not enough. The rim of the wheel represents life as your listener lives it day by day—where the wheel meets the road.

No matter how true, Biblical, or Christ-centered your sermon may be, it has precious little value unless the listener sees how it can work in his life—where the rubber meets the road. Sermons are not preached to be heard or even to be understood. Sermons are preached to be lived. A sermon containing truth without a life-situation thrust answers questions nobody is asking. A sermon emphasizing life rather than Bible truth may be an excellent lecture, but it is not really a sermon at all. The spokes must be fastened at both ends.

2. *Practical application proves religion relevant.* Commenting on preaching, Harry Emerson Fosdick made one of the

most thought-provoking observations of recent times when he said that only a preacher would ever assume that people came to church desperately anxious to know what became of the Jebusites.

Now, there's nothing wrong with learning about the Jebusites. The preacher ought to know how people lived in Bible times. But the principal reason for knowing is so that he can better show how Bible truth applies to our time. He studies life in *Palestine* way back *then* so that he can better show his people how Bible truth can work in *their town—now*.

In preaching expository sermons, the preacher too often takes a passage of Scripture and proceeds on the assumption that his hearers are deeply concerned about its meaning. He picks it apart verse by verse, throws in a little historical context, and spices it all with dashes of original language. He enjoys doing it. That's why he became a preacher. But many of his people don't. That's why they didn't become preachers. Finally, the speaker shares a thought or two about how the passage still applies today—and sits down. Meanwhile the ladies in his congregation have used the time to plan their dinner menu, and the men their upcoming week.

The problem is not that the preacher knows the Bible too well. Nobody knows too much about the Bible. His problem is that he doesn't know his Bible well enough. Bible writers didn't approach religion this way. They invariably dealt with contemporary problems and needs. The Old Testament tells of God's attempt to lead His people through the practical problems of everyday living. Jesus taught in parables so that people could understand truth as it related to life. Paul wrote mostly as a pastor addressing himself to his people's specific needs and temptations. The Bible insists that religion be kept contemporary.

Grady Davis suggests: "If, in the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus had preached as many of his followers do, he would have talked first about Isaiah or about his book, about the situation at the

time when Isaiah spoke, about the office of prophecy. After that he would have argued about the faithfulness of God's covenant with Israel, about the unchangeable truth of God's Word. Then he would have asked what meaning Isaiah's words had for the people in the synagogue that day. . . .

"Jesus, however, began very differently. He began in the present tense. The first word he spoke was *today*. 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing'" (Luke 4:21).<sup>3</sup>

3. *Practical application improves audience rapport.* It proves to the man in the pew that the man in the pulpit has something in common with him—that he understands him.

Some preachers seem more at home with the twelve apostles than with their own church board, more interested in Paul than in their own people. The listener may feel separated from his preacher, whose theological background and Biblical knowledge so far surpass his own. But when the pastor talks about problems of everyday living, the listener realizes they stand on common ground.

When Jesus spoke to the woman of Samaria the two of them didn't seem to have much in common. They were strangers. He was a man, and she was a woman; in their society, that created a wide gulf. He was a Jew, she was a Samaritan; racial prejudice was evident. He was perfect, she was morally bankrupt. But Jesus found one practical need they shared. Both were thirsty. Jesus began His discourse by talking about water because that common need established a rapport with His listener.

4. *Practical application helps hold attention.* People are interested mostly in themselves. When your sermon talks about their needs, they'll be interested in your sermon.

Notice the postman going down the street. Door after door will open just behind him. Watch people quickly shuffle through the mail, looking for something personal. Life will always have zest as long as there is first-class mail. Oh, the letters may not be nearly so well written as those coming from

# **T**ry stepping into the shoes of a Bible character. What problem did he face? How does that problem manifest itself in contemporary society? Remember, the Bible was written to address practical problems.

gifted public-relations writers. They may not be nearly as beautiful as the four-color advertisements from somebody selling something. But they're a lot more interesting, because they show someone cared specifically about them, their feelings, their needs.

The sermon that most effectively holds the congregation's attention will not necessarily be the sermon by the preacher who seems most gifted, or the sermon most beautiful in form and polished in delivery. Rather, it will be the sermon that most effectively shows that the preacher cares about and addresses himself to the feelings and needs of his listeners.

As Paul preached, Agrippa cried out, "Almost thou persuadedest me to be a Christian" (Acts 26:28). Every sermon should attempt to elicit that same cry from every listener. "He's not talking about theory, he's talking about life, my life, my problems, my needs. He's talking to me." A good sermon leaves the listener wondering how the preacher knew all about him. And sermons like that always hold their hearers' attention.

## **How to make your preaching more practical**

If practical application is so important, how can I get more of it into my preaching?

*Emphasize visitation.* You've heard of the preacher accused by his congregation of having foot and mouth disease—he wouldn't visit and he couldn't preach. The truth is that many a preacher can't preach because he won't visit. The minister who is invisible six days of the week tends to be incomprehensible on the seventh.

One of the most outstanding preachers of our century was Charles Reynolds Brown. He shared what he believed to be one of the reasons for his success: "In my own ministry I have steadily emphasized the value of personal visitation. It was my custom for twenty odd years to make at least one thousand pastoral calls in every twelve months—this was the minimum with as many more added as time might allow. The

process of using up the gray matter of the brain in the preparation of sermons should in my judgment be paralleled by a similar process of wearing out shoe leather."<sup>4</sup>

Start your sermon early. Let the Holy Spirit speak to you through the Word during the first part of the week. Begin to form the basic ideas you feel God is asking you to share with your people the following weekend. Carry these ideas with you all through your parish all through the week. Walk your ideas around in the street. If they don't meet practical needs you see there, don't preach them. If they do fit, you'll find illustrations and practical applications by the dozens that will help you teach them.

Then, before you preach, stand at the church door as people come to worship. Greet them. Look into their faces. Feel their needs. This final tuning will prepare you to lead them in worship.

*Use characterization,* putting yourself in the prophet's shoes. The ancient rhetoricians Hermogenes and Aphthonius developed a method of training speakers that took the ancient world by storm. It was called the *progymnasmata*.

One of its methods was characterization. The rhetoricians assigned a student to pretend he was some specific historical figure under a prescribed circumstance. Then they asked him to give the speech that he imagined that person would make. The idea is so old, it's new again. Today we call it role playing.

Try stepping into the shoes of a Bible character or Bible writer. What real life problem did he face? How does that same problem manifest itself in contemporary society? Remember, the Bible was written to address practical problems and needs.

*Try modernization,* putting the prophet in your shoes. What would Paul say to your church if he were writing today? How would Jesus tell the story of the good Samaritan if He were preaching now?

Professor Phillip Morrison, of Cornell, one of the scientists who worked on the atomic bomb, visited Hiroshima.

The devastation nearly overwhelmed him. How could he help Americans sense the horror of atomic war? Instead of describing Hiroshima, he imagined the bomb having fallen on New York City. Then, in graphic detail, he depicted the horror of this unfamiliar experience as if it had taken place in a setting familiar to his readers.

*Experiment with problem-centered preaching.* Having suggested it, I want immediately to wave a red flag. Fosdick, who is often thought of as developing problem-centered preaching, probably went too far with it. Certainly his admirers did, preaching a social gospel with too little dependence on Scripture.

But let's not throw out the baby with the bath. Fosdick had something to say that we all need to hear. He believed that the sermon should focus on some specific, practical problem; that helping people solve life problems was the sermon's business. When he preached he wanted his listeners to know within the first sentence or two that he was going to address a problem they had experienced.

Here are some typical opening sentences from his sermons:

"Amid the uncertainties of modern psychology, one thing seems assured: More people suffer from a humiliating sense of inferiority than ever has been supposed."

"Our morning's subject, Handicapped Lives, probably takes us all in."

"Our thought starts this morning with the plain fact that it is not always easy to tell the difference between right and wrong."<sup>5</sup>

No less a theologian than Karl Barth once described preaching as an attempt to give God's answers to the questions people raise. Don't be afraid to address questions people raise. Just be certain you are, to the best of your ability, giving God's answers.

How aware are you of the hurts represented in your congregation week by week? Over there sits someone who's just been told by her doctor that she must have surgery. Yonder is someone who's just learned that it's too late for surgery and that nothing human can help. Back

**I**f, by means of some physical activity, a person will express the decision he has made for Christ, it will be more specific in his own mind and will last longer in his everyday experience.

there is someone single who longs to be married, and in the next pew is someone married who longs to be single. Seated on the aisle is a wife who wants to be pregnant and isn't. Across the aisle is one who doesn't want to be pregnant and is. The old couple up front wish their children would come to see them; home has far too much peace and quiet. The young couple in the "Reserved for Parents" pew near the back take turns rushing in and out on 1-, 4-, 6-, and 9-year-old emergencies. They wish the kids would all go away, just for a little while, and give them a little peace and quiet at home.

You can see, scattered throughout the congregation, the epileptic, the diabetic, and the heart patient, worried over getting through the service without an attack. And notice, out in the foyer, the deacon so deeply in debt and so discouraged he's ashamed to join the congregation. There in the middle sits a pregnant teenager. And on either side of her sit her parents, trying desperately to "hold their heads up."

Preacher, what do you have to say to these hurting people? How can you show that Jesus can help?

There's nothing wrong with problem-centered preaching if you just keep your timing right. There's a time to focus on truth and a time to focus on people. Both are necessary. But the focus on truth should precede the focus on people.

Don't go to your study feeling you know what life's problems are, sure you have the answers, and looking only for Biblical support. If you do, you've become a humanist, a philosopher, not a preacher of the Word. Rather, go to the Bible, asking what the real questions of life are, seeking the answers. Then find how God's answers to God's questions meet your people's needs. When it's time to preach, feel free to begin with people's needs, because in the study you began with God's answers. Keep your timing right.

*Share your pulpit with your people.* If you know of someone in your congregation who has through Christ learned how to cope with a certain problem, ask him to

share his experience as part of the sermon. One pastor says that every three or four weeks he gives five minutes or so of his sermon time to someone from the congregation for whom Christ has recently done something special.

### **Preaching for decisions**

To be practical, preaching must persuade people to make decisions.

Henry Ward Beecher said the sermon should be like a hunter's gun, not a firecracker. People explode firecrackers just to make a noise. The hunter fires his gun expecting to see some game fall. Always preach for decisions. Expect some game to fall.

You should preach not only for decisions—but for *immediate* decisions. Don't preach a series of sermons anticipating that people will make their decision when you get to the last one. In the first place, you will never have exactly the same audience. Second, the human mind doesn't work that way. Big decisions are best made through a series of small ones. I could not run ten miles without a break, but I can run one mile. And if I run one mile ten times, I have run ten miles.

*Expression deepens impression.* Two men discuss a business deal. Reaching agreement, they shake hands as a physical expression of the decision made. A couple stand at the wedding altar. They exchange words and a kiss as an expression of their commitment. Research indicates that when a person transfers an idea in his mind to his body's motor system through some physical activity, the idea leaves a longer-lasting impression on his brain.

If, by means of some physical activity, a person will express the decision he has made for Christ, it will be more specific in his own mind and will last longer in his everyday experience. Expression deepens impression.

Leighton Ford comments: "I am convinced that the giving of some kind of public invitation to come to Christ is not only theologically correct, but also emotionally sound. Men need this opportunity for expression. The inner

decision for Christ is like driving a nail through a board. The open declaration of it is like clinching the nail on the other side, so that it is not easily pulled out."<sup>6</sup>

Vary your form of expression to fit the occasion, the congregation, the sermon, and your own personality. Have an altar call. Or invite your people to raise a hand, stand up, write a response, fill out a card, attend an after meeting, pray silently, pray audibly, or pray in groups. H.M.S. Richards has become convinced through the years that many, especially in the upper echelons of society, would never respond to a public invitation of any kind. He suggests that these be visited and asked to make decisions in their own home.

However you do it, preach for decisions and help people find an immediate way of expressing the decisions made.

And keep your invitations both specific and open-ended. Your listeners find it quite embarrassing to be asked to commit themselves to something when they're not exactly sure what it is. Be specific.

On the other hand, what could be more tragic than interfering with the Holy Spirit? You have just preached on problem A. Someone in your congregation has been having trouble deciding about problem B. The Holy Spirit uses your sermon to help him decide about B, but your invitation allows decisions only on A. Don't dictate to the Holy Spirit. Keep the main gist of your invitation specific enough that people know what you are after, but keep a part of it open-ended enough so that someone needing to make a different decision is free to do so.

*Doing is better than deciding.* You can conclude your sermon by leading your people to something better than deciding and expressing. You can help them experience or do something. The purpose of preaching is not that people will merely believe something, but that by believing they will do something.

When you preach on joy, aim to do

(Continued on page 28)

# 1985 World Ministers Council

*General Conference Presession  
June 23-27, 1985, New Orleans*

**Learn, Grow,  
Fellowship with  
ministers from  
every corner  
of the world.**

Morning and evening plenary sessions will feature some of the greatest preachers and spiritual leaders in Adventism today. They will focus on *The Minister: The Person; The Minister: The Message; The Minister: The Mission.*

Afternoon seminars offer an informal setting for learning from men and women with special expertise in practice and theology. See the following pages for a complete list of seminars and presenters. Then fill out the preregistration form and mail it today!

## **World Ministers Council SEMINARS**

### **Evangelism**

**Bible Study Evangelism** GCM7036 M, T  
*George Knowles* will bring together a group of men and women presently giving Bible studies successfully to share expertise, methods, techniques, and tools.

### **The Art of Gaining More Decisions**

GCM7037 M, T, Th  
*Mark Finley* will share scriptural principles, scientific research, psychological insights, and practical approaches for gaining the maximum number of decisions for Christ and His church.

### **Electronic Evangelism Resources**

GCM7038 T, W

*Jere Wallack* will draw on the expertise and equipment of people who use electronic equipment in personal and public evangelism. The latest in video and multimedia equipment will be demonstrated.

### **Reaching Non-Christian Religions**

GWM7039 W

*Werner Vyhmeister* will coordinate exploration of how to win those with no Christian background. Special emphasis will be on Islam, Buddhism, and new religions with a separate subseminar devoted to each.

### **Health Evangelism**

GCM7040 M, T, W

*Jim Crawford* will share ideas for using health as an entering wedge in corporations and elsewhere, share new health materials and programs, and update information on health and health hazards.

### **Evangelismo Latinoamericano**

GCM7041 M, W

*Carlos Aeschlimann* presentará la técnica más de evangelismo que se está usando con mucho éxito en los países de habla hispana. Esto incluye campañas nacionales, seminarios, y evangelismo de radio y televisión. En español.

### **Seminar Evangelism**

GCM7042 W, Th

*Roy Naden* will present an overview of a year-round approach to reaching the community with a series of seminars that follow in logical order. He will also examine several full-length seminar programs for large and small groups.

### **Evangelism: The Urban Dilemma**

GCM7043 M

*Robert C. Connor's* workshop is designed to help pastors, evangelists, and administrators who are challenged by big-city evangelism. The workshop will deal with developing citywide and long-range strategies.

### **Organizing Home Bible Fellowship Groups**

GCM7044 T, W

*Norman and Dorothy Versteeg* will describe what a Home Bible Fellowship Group is, what it can do for you, and how you can start one.

## **Management and Administration**

### **Issues in Conference Administration**

GCM7045 M

*Phil Follett* will provide a forum for discussing and working toward solutions to administrative concerns in administrative tension, managing personnel, planning and budgeting, and other areas.

### **Problem Solving and Conflict Management**

GCM7046 T, Th

*Don Reynolds* will provide concepts, experiences, processes, and tools for handling conflict constructively.

### **New Frontiers in Church Finance**

GCM7047 W

*Paul Smith* will coordinate presentations by R. R. Roncarolo, Fred E. Hernandez, Fred K. Wangai, and Ted N. C. Wilson on topics such as "How to Guarantee Financial Self-sufficiency in Your Conference and/or Church."

## **Pastoral**

### **Caring Church Seminar**

GCM7048 W-Th\*  
*Robert Dale* and others will present the North American Division model for coordinating and implementing all facets of ministry, with emphasis on moving the church into action. Two-day seminar.

### **Understanding Children**

GCM7049 M, T

*Kay Kuzma* will deal with promoting positive parent/child and teacher/child relationships through focusing on children's needs, individual characteristics, emotions, discipline, and self-worth.

### **Understanding Youth**

GCM7050 W, Th

*Kay Kuzma* will deal with major issues facing young people today: developing independence; effective communication; sexuality; moral decision-making; and developing a saving relationship with Christ.

### **Church Planting: You Can Activate Your Church**

GCM7051 M, T

*Clarence Gruesbeck* will share the why, who, where, when, and how of church planting, dealing with the role of new churches, targeting for success, developing a climate for church planting, and steps in church planting.

### **Computers in the Church**

GCM7052 W, Th

*Lynn Mallery* will cover specific applications of computers for the local pastor—how to use a computer for finance, visitation, membership records, and room reservations, and when you should *not* use a computer.

### **Counseling Techniques**

GCM7053 M, T, Th

*Elden Chalmers* will present a practical model of Christian counseling, including identifying the counselee's strengths and weaknesses, developing the counselee's self-responsibility, and counseling for conversion.

### **Holding and Reclaiming Members**

GCM7054 M-T\*

*Lynn Martell* will deal with specific skills for calling on inactive members, developing a calling ministry in the church, and intervening to stop the dropout cycle in the congregation. Two-day seminar.

### **Managing for Mission**

GCM7055 W, Th  
*Des Cummings, Jr.*, will deal with leadership issues concerning both pastors and administrators, including forecasting the future, creating a responsive organization, and the DARE Implementation System.

### **Loss, Grief, and the Church**

GCM7056 M, T, Th

*Larry Yeagley* will examine the broad spectrum of loss and the many reactions to it, ways to minister to families in grief, principles of ministering to the sick, and means of avoiding burnout while supporting the grieving.

### **Motivating Volunteers**

GCM7057 T, W

*John Rhodes* will share the basic principles of motivating, enlisting, and keeping volunteer help in the church by helping people find just where they fit into the Lord's work.

### **Improve Your Preaching**

GCM7058 M, T, W

*Benjamin Reaves* will present a working seminar on the preaching process from idea through design to delivery. Building on existing skills, the seminar will open up new strategies to enrich and diversify preaching.

### **Discovering and Developing Spiritual Gifts**

GCM7059 M, T

*Bill Liversidge* will analyze the Biblical and philosophical roots of church growth through building up of the body. He will help you develop techniques for identifying and motivating the various parts of the body.

## **Personal Life**

### **Clergy Marriage**

GG57060 M, W, Th  
*John and Millie Youngberg* will explore the special needs of clergy families, setting priorities, financial planning, communication techniques, and ministerial burnout. Emphasis will be on the how-to of meeting special needs.

### **Team Ministry for Pastoral Couples**

GCM7061 M, T, W

*Jim and Sharon Cress* will teach pastoral couples how to merge their differing abilities into a united ministry, to manage time and family responsibilities, and to discover and meet felt needs.

### **Roles of the Minister's Wife**

GG57062 T, W  
*Carole Kilcher* will serve as coordinator for a potpourri of mini-workshops to help ministers' and administrators' wives deal with expectations and stereotypes, and develop strategies for growth.

## **Theology**

### **The Shape of the Church to Come**

GTH7063 M, W

*Raoul Dederen* intends to keep this seminar as open to discussion as possible. No syllabus will be prepared, but participants are asked to bring their Bibles and study several major issues related to the identity and role of the church.

### **The Minister and Medical-Ethical Issues**

GTH7064 M, T

*Gerald Winslow* will lead an examination of challenging moral issues such as abortion, euthanasia, and allocation of scarce medical resources. Each topic will be studied from the perspective of Christian ethics.

### **The Sanctuary in Daniel: Recent Developments**

GOT7065 M, T

*Gerhard Hasel* will focus on Daniel 7 and 8 and the sanctuary doctrine, including such questions as the pre-Advent judgment in Daniel 7 and the identification of the little horn in Daniel 7 and 8.

### **Current Issues and Revelation-Inspiration**

GTH7066 M, W

*George Reid, Herb Kiesler, and Ed Zinke* will survey the history and development of the church's view of revelation and inspiration and deal with the implications of various views.

### **Reaching the Secular Mind**

GWM7067 T  
*Humberto Rasi* will deal with the process of secularization and evaluate several strategies that are producing results in reaching secular man with the Adventist message.

### **Current Issues in Science and the Bible**

GTH7068 W

*Ariel Roth* will introduce participants to scientific evidence that supports the Bible and to current conflicts between science and Genesis. Included will be photographs from some of the most scenic parts of the world.

### **Ellen G. White: Authority and Inspiration**

GG57069 M, Th

*Robert Olson* and White Estate colleagues will discuss contemporary problems and controversial issues with a candor that may surprise you. A complete set of EGW books with all known instances of "literary borrowing" highlighted will be displayed.

### **Elena G. de White: Autoridad e Inspiración**

GG57070 T

*Elbio Pereyra* y los asociados del Patrimonio White discutirán la naturaleza y el alcance de la autoridad doctrinal de Elena G. de White, problemas contemporáneos y puntos en disputa, y los reglamentos que gobiernan la liberación de los manuscritos del Patrimonio White. En Español.

### **Current Issues in Prophetic Interpretation**

GTH7071 W, Th

*Gerhard Hasel* will discuss questions including: Is every prophecy fulfilled once, twice, or more times? Does the Bible predict time spans? Is dispensationalism scripturally supportable?

# Preregister Now!

Guarantee your seminar choices. Avoid waiting in registration lines.  
Save one third or more off registration fee.

## Seminar Schedule

Course Numbers and Titles

### Monday, June 24

1:30 P.M.-6:00 P.M.

GCM7036 Bible Study Evangelism

GCM7037 *The Art of Gaining More Decisions*

GCM7040 Health Evangelism

GCM7041 Evangelismo Latinoamericano (Spanish)

GCM7043 Evangelism: The Urban Dilemma

GCM7045 Issues in Conference Administration

GCM7049 Understanding Children

GCM7051 Church Planting: You Can Activate Your Church

GCM7053 Counseling Techniques

\*GCM7054 Holding and Reclaiming Members (contd. on Tues.)

GCM7056 Loss, Grief, and the Church

GCM7058 Improve Your Preaching

GCM7059 Discovering and Developing Spiritual Gifts

GG57060 Clergy Marriage

GCM7061 Team Ministry for Pastoral Couples

GTH7063 *The Shape of the Church to Come*

GTH7064 *The Minister and Medical-Ethical Issues*

GOT7065 *The Sanctuary in Daniel: Recent Developments*

GTH7066 *Current Issues and Revelation-Inspiration*

GG57069 *Ellen G. White: Authority and Inspiration*

### Tuesday, June 25

1:30 P.M.-6:00 P.M.

GCM7036 Bible Study Evangelism

GCM7037 *The Art of Gaining More Decisions*

GCM7038 Electronic Evangelism Resources

GCM7040 Health Evangelism

GCM7044 Organizing Home Bible Fellowship Groups

GCM7046 Problem Solving and Conflict Management

GCM7049 Understanding Children

GCM7051 Church Planting: You Can Activate Your Church

GCM7053 Counseling Techniques

\*GCM7054 Holding and Reclaiming Members (contd. from Mon.)

GCM7056 Loss, Grief, and the Church

GCM7057 Motivating Volunteers

GCM7058 Improve Your Preaching

GCM7059 Discovering and Developing Spiritual Gifts

GCM7061 Team Ministry for Pastoral Couples

GG57062 *Roles of the Minister's Wife*

GTH7064 *The Minister and Medical-Ethical Issues*

GOT7065 *The Sanctuary in Daniel: Recent Developments*

GWM7067 *Reaching the Secular Mind*

GG57070 *Elena G. de White: Autoridad e Inspiración (Spanish)*

### Wednesday, June 26

1:30 P.M.-6:00 P.M.

GCM7038 Electronic Evangelism Resources

GWM7039 *Reaching Non-Christian Religions*

GCM7040 Health Evangelism

GCM7041 Evangelismo Latinoamericano (Spanish)

GCM7042 Seminar Evangelism

GCM7044 Organizing Home Bible Fellowship Groups

GCM7047 *New Frontiers in Church Finance*

\*GCM7048 *Caring Church Seminar (contd. on Thurs.)*

GCM7050 *Understanding Youth*

GCM7052 *Computers in the Church*

GCM7055 *Managing for Mission*

GCM7057 *Motivating Volunteers*

GCM7058 *Improve Your Preaching*

GG57060 Clergy Marriage

GCM7061 *Team Ministry for Pastoral Couples*

GG57062 *Roles of the Minister's Wife*

GTH7063 *The Shape of the Church to Come*

GTH7066 *Current Issues and Revelation-Inspiration*

GTH7068 *Current Issues in Science and the Bible*

GTH7071 *Current Issues in Prophetic Interpretation*

### Thursday, June 27

7:45 A.M.-12:15 P.M.

GCM7037 *The Art of Gaining More Decisions*

GCM7042 *Seminar Evangelism*

GCM7046 *Problem Solving and Conflict Management*

\*GCM7048 *Caring Church Seminar (contd. from Wed.)*

GCM7050 *Understanding Youth*

GCM7052 *Computers in the Church*

GCM7053 *Counseling Techniques*

GCM7055 *Managing for Mission*

GCM7056 *Loss, Grief, and the Church*

GG57060 Clergy Marriage

GG57069 *Ellen G. White: Authority and Inspiration*

GTH7071 *Current Issues in Prophetic Interpretation*

\* Only the Caring Church and Holding and Reclaiming Members seminars extend through two days. All others are complete in one day in a 4½-hour session.

Mail your name and address, selection of seminars, and check to.

## 1985 World Ministers Council

Ministerial Continuing Education

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists  
6840 Eastern Ave., NW.  
Washington, D.C. 20012

Minister Registration

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Select up to four seminars

Monday, 1:30 P.M. \_\_\_\_\_

Tuesday, 1:30 P.M. \_\_\_\_\_

Wednesday, 1:30 P.M. \_\_\_\_\_

Thursday, 7:45 A.M. \_\_\_\_\_

Preregistration for minister: \$10—includes up to four seminars (one third off \$15 registration fee).

Your canceled check is your receipt. Tickets to your seminars will be waiting in New Orleans.

Spouse registration

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Select up to four seminars

Monday, 1:30 P.M. \_\_\_\_\_

Tuesday, 1:30 P.M. \_\_\_\_\_

Wednesday, 1:30 P.M. \_\_\_\_\_

Thursday, 7:45 A.M. \_\_\_\_\_

Preregistration for minister and spouse: \$15—includes up to four seminars each (\$10 off the \$25 regular fee).

# Annual Council—1984

*This year's Annual Council dealt with some weighty issues, among them the church's structure, the role of women, and policies for handling the tithe. You can gain a "feel" for the proceedings by reading our report.*

For the first time in its history, MINISTRY is presenting a major report of Annual Council, the most important session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church other than the quinquennial General Conference session. Our reason for presenting this report is simple. We believe that the ministers of the church should be as fully informed as possible about the policies of the church and how policy decisions are made.

We think you will find our report not only informative but interesting. We'd like you to feel like you were right there listening as major issues were discussed and voted. We'd like you to sense not only the "what" of actions taken but also the "how" and "why." We've tried to be as objective as possible, and have focused our attention on those areas of most interest to pastors and local leaders. (We have not attempted to report on every item discussed.)

So, what is Annual Council?

By definition it is a meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee "held annually for the purpose of considering budgets from the fields and making appropriations, and for the transaction of other business and the adoption of such policies as may be necessary in the operation of the worldwide work." \* In function the council serves to assure that decisions affecting the worldwide work can be made between General Conference sessions with adequate input from leaders not stationed at world headquarters in Washington, D.C. Although the Executive Committee meets weekly throughout the year (Thursday mornings) at the General Conference office, and also has a Spring Meeting each year, major policy changes are almost always handled at an Annual Council meeting because that is when leaders from around the world are present. Incidentally, all the individuals

with voting privileges at the council are called invitees, not delegates, because this is not a constituent meeting, but simply a committee meeting. And many leaders who are not members of the committee are invited to participate in this particular meeting.

The General Conference Executive Committee is composed of all persons elected to the General Conference at the quinquennial General Conference session plus the chief executives of General Conference institutions, union conference presidents, up to 50 other persons elected to serve on the committee, and certain others. A complete list appears in the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* each year. Total membership ranges between 340 and 350. Quorum is 15, including a General Conference officer.

Local conference and mission presidents of the host division (usually North America, although the next quinquennium will see two councils in overseas divisions) and certain other invitees such as college and hospital chief executives also attend and vote. Although these invitees are not mentioned in the constitution or bylaws, they have been a part of Annual Council throughout most of the history of the church. As one officer put it, in the beginning the conferences made up the General Conference, not vice versa; when the General Conference met it was the conference presidents who made up the bulk of those attending. Although the practice of inviting local conference presidents was not followed for several years, Robert H. Pierson reinstated this in 1966. This provision might seem at first glance to give undue representation to the host division. However, all items brought to the floor are first screened by a meeting including all division presidents, a procedure that helps counterbalance the host division's "advantage."

Total attendance at Annual Council this year was about 340 because even though divisions outside the host divi-

sion usually send only their president, one other officer, and one or two union presidents, other invitees filled the roster.

One item always on the council agenda is the budget for the coming year. It is based on projected giving. Unlike the U.S. Congress, which seems to put off voting a budget in the hopes that the problem will go away, invitees here typically vote the budget on the first day. Perhaps the difference is that this budget is voted on faith. Other items can range in import from reorganizing the divisions of the General Conference to changing a few words in church working policy.

In practice, Annual Council is the final authority of the church between General Conference sessions. It is not a time for initiating new actions, but rather for considering, modifying, and voting for or against actions recommended by various committees, subcommittees, and study groups. A typical reference line for an item presented to the council reads: GCO/GCDOUP83AC/G83AC/165-83G/GCDO84AC to KJM-84AC. This "pedigree" indicates that the presented document first went to GCO (General Conference officers), then to GCDOUP83AC (a meeting of General Conference and Division officers and union presidents prior to 1983 Annual Council), then to the 1983 Annual Council with the master agenda control number 165-83G, then to GCDO84AC (a meeting of General Conference and Division officers prior to 1984 Annual Council), and was then given to general vice president Kenneth J. Mittleider to present to the 1984 Annual Council for consideration and a vote.

## Officers' reports

Each year certain items dominate the agenda at Annual Council. Last year the

\* General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Article XIII, Section 2a.

major item was the merger of two African divisions. This year was no exception: Restructuring of the church, the role of women in ministry, and reprimands of both the "left" and "right" wings within the church were some of the more significant points.

Neal C. Wilson, General Conference president, opened the council with a call to renewal of the covenant. Above his head was the theme for the council—"What Hath God Wrought" and "Even So, Come, Lord Jesus." Elder Wilson reported that the church was on target with its One Thousand Days of Reaping. The world church is averaging 1,034 baptisms a day, totaling some 668,683 accessions since the thousand days began. Membership as of June 30, 1984, is 4,261,116.

The General Conference secretary, Ralph Thompson, and the treasurer, Lance Butler, gave their reports, noting the growth in each of their areas. Butler was pleased to see a reversal of the two-year slide in tithe income. The first six months of 1984 show a 5.61 percent increase as compared with the same period in 1983. Invitees raised questions concerning the seemingly huge indebtedness of Adventist Health Systems—some \$940 million. Both Wilson and Don Welch, president of Adventist Health Systems, assured the invitees that while it was a matter of concern, the financial stability of the church was not in danger.

Midway through the morning, Wilson startled some of the invitees by talking about exercise. That morning and in subsequent sessions they were going to try an experiment that if they liked could be used in their committee meetings back home. It consisted of a series of simple exercises set to music that could be done right in one's pew. Dr. Mervyn Hardinge and Stoy Proctor, both from the General Conference Health Department, gave an introduction and explanation. What a sight it was: some 300 people, mostly men, moving to and fro and standing up and sitting down in the Takoma Park church in time to a lively rendition of "Rise, My Soul, and Stretch Thy Wings"! It certainly helped blow away some cobwebs and pump some extra oxygen to the brain.

The invitees broke for committees that afternoon and evening. Not until Thursday morning did they begin to discuss one of the main items of the council, one that was subsequently to

extend through three days of the six-day session. This was the eagerly awaited report of the Role and Function Commission.

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## Role and Function Commission report

Neal C. Wilson introduced the report of the Role and Function Commission—a group that had studied the whole question of the structure and role of the church organization. As part of the study, Wilson himself had looked for job descriptions detailing the positions of General Conference personnel and found few available. While some departments had excellent job descriptions, others were sorely lacking.

Wilson pointed to two recent examples of reductions in large organizations. He noted that the new chief at the American Red Cross reduced the headquarters staff from more than a thousand to 742 without any loss in efficiency. Wilson next referred to a *Time* magazine article that described how Edward Telling, the chairman of Sears, had brought sweeping changes to that giant retailer. Telling drastically reduced personnel by some 82,000—20 percent of the work force. Then Wilson made his point. A large organization is not our goal. "The reason we exist," he said, "is to serve the local church and conference."

The commission took a hard look at overlapping functions and the proliferation of the materials funneled to the local church and pastor. A questionnaire was sent to the world field and followed up with personal interviews. Wilson estimated that more than \$1.25 million could be saved in personnel at the General Conference. The heaviest criticism concerned the union conferences—and as much of this criticism came from overseas as from North America. Wilson emphasized that "we staunchly defend the unions." At this there were many hearty amens. Then he added, "But maybe [with] a revised role." At this other hearty amens arose.

Part of the report focused on how the church's departments could serve the field more effectively. There are four departments that have weekly impact on the local church—Lay Activities (Personal Ministries), Sabbath School, Stewardship, and Youth. The report

recommended combining these four into a Department of Church Ministries. Wilson explained that this would function not as four coordinated departments but as one department and would enable a reduction in personnel. The combination would promote greater efficiency, cutting overlaps both of function and production of materials.

Local pastors and church officers complain about being swamped with the number of programs and the amount of materials they receive from the departments now functioning, the report noted. And on the local level, basically the same people implement the programs of all the departments. As it is now, for instance, Sabbath School and Youth work with the same young people. It makes better sense to have one department serving their various needs.

The invitees began to go through the report page by page. Little discussion took place until they reached Section B, "Authority of Officers," the seventh page of the report. This section is part of the main subdivision of the report entitled "Officers, Departments, and Executive Committee: Administrative System of Governance." Here the church was spelling out its philosophy of government, and this evoked spirited discussion.

It was evident from the interchange that followed that the differences between the "presidential" system and the "committee" system were not clearly understood. Several conference presidents commented that they had learned some things about the structure of the church that they had never understood before.

Fred Thomas, president of the Pennsylvania Conference, asked if the conferences having vice presidents for finance and administration would have to go back to the old system. Wilson replied, "Yes, the committee system is the way we function, not the presidential." Wilson explained that the secretary and the treasurer do not work under the direction of the president, but instead work under the committee. They report directly to the committee.

Others asked how closely conference constitutions were to follow the outline given by the General Conference. It was pointed out that they were not to deviate in crucial areas without prior approval from the next higher level of organization.

Richard Hammill, retired General

Conference vice president, stressed that this was a very important document with far-reaching consequences. He asked if it was going to be voted on at the next General Conference session. Wilson replied that some of the concepts would require constitutional changes, and thus it must go to a General Conference session. However, since changing the constitution was always a momentous event, he would rather see an enabling action that would authorize the General Conference to try the changes for the next five years before any changes were made in the constitution.

Thomas J. Mostert, Jr., president of the Southeastern California Conference, asked whether conferences were limited to having only three officers (a president, a treasurer, and a secretary). General vice president Francis Wernick replied in the affirmative, stating that this meant three positions with equal status. But assistant treasurers and associate secretaries are also officers. Ralph Watts, president of the Southern California Conference, expressed a concern that the document be flexible enough to allow for some diversity. In his field they have four officers: a president, a treasurer, and two secretaries of equal rank. One of these secretaries oversees the large ethnic groups in the conference. Wilson replied that the way to deal with this is to have one secretary, but then have vice presidents as needed. A vice president is an officer of the conference who reports to the president. The associate secretaries report to the secretary and the assistant treasurers report to the treasurer. The president, the secretary, and the treasurer report to the conference committee.

B. B. Beach, director of the General Conference Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department, pointed out that departmental directors are elected by the committee; they are not selected by the president, as is the practice in the United States Government. Wernick replied that they were trying to preserve the authority of the committee; it is not just a policy-making body but also an operating body. (See page 25 for the commission's description of the committee system.)

Several people spoke on the need to develop, through communication, a better understanding of the church structure. John Fowler, president of the Ohio Conference, suggested that Wilson appoint a committee to define the

committee system in greater detail.

The second section of the document that came under careful scrutiny was that concerning the role of the departments. Invitees asked to whom the departmental directors were accountable. This section originally read: "The departmental directors work under the direction of the executive committee and work in close council with, and assist, the officers in promoting plans and work outlined by the committee." Some objected to the phrase "work under the direction of the executive committee." Wilson proposed an amendment that would help meet these objections: "The departmental directors are elected by the constituency and therefore work under the direction of the executive committee. However, operationally and administratively they are responsible to the president, and assist him and the other officers in promoting plans and work outlined by the committee." This amendment was approved.

The next section that occasioned heavy comment was the proposed reorganization of the Lay Activities (Personal Ministries), Sabbath School, Stewardship, and Youth departments into one department—the Department of Church Ministries.

The president of the Southern Union, Al McClure, stated that they were trying to reduce personnel at their level but were concerned about the effects on the local conference. They felt it would be a tragedy to lose the stewardship work, and the youth particularly need specialists, not generalists. Dr. Leo Van Dolson, of the General Conference Sabbath School Department, was concerned with what he presumed the size of the new department would be. He had counted more than 30 functions to be served by this department, which would be far too many for one departmental director to coordinate.

George Brown, president of the Inter-American Division, started off by saying he favored the objectives of this document and that "your humble servant will support and promote with his usual enthusiasm what this body will vote." However, he wished to see more details as to how this would work in practice. In Inter-America these departments were functioning well; they had no problems. Several more speakers echoed this sentiment. Cyril Miller, president of the Texas Conference, felt that the departments were the genius of

our church. He was convinced that the great growth of our church had come through the shared leadership of the departments. He went on to say that the departments often feel second-class because of all the criticism. Our small churches function much better than those of other denominations—they have excellent Sabbath schools—because of the leadership in these departments. We have listened too much to the pastors who knock the departments. Conference departmental directors should be going directly to their counterpart at the local level instead of having to go through the pastor.

Up to this point most of the comments spoke against the recommendation that these four departments be combined. Then Walter Scragg, president of the Australasian Division, rose to speak. He was a member of the commission that made the study. The personal interviews he had conducted in various parts of the world had really convinced him of the need for reorganization. Small churches did not have enough people to staff all the positions/departments as presently constituted. It made sense to cut down on the overlapping. Wernick interjected that some had expressed the fear that if these functions were combined some of them would be lost. But down at the local church level many of these functions were not working anyway. And the field is complaining. Regardless of what presidents and overseas leaders might say, the commission repeatedly heard the same criticisms: The church structure involves too much duplication, too much overlapping. These criticisms came just as strongly from overseas as from North America.

Ralph Martin, president of the Nevada-Utah Conference, spoke of how radical and even revolutionary these changes might appear to some. But the commission was simply taking note of changes that were already happening. At one time every church regularly had an MV meeting. Now there is a tension between the Sabbath school and youth departments. There used to be a ten-minute period for lay activities every Sabbath, and the first Sabbath of the month was devoted to this subject. Now these are largely ignored. The church has been organized mainly on a vertical axis—now it seemed to him the proposal was to make it more horizontal. Groupings should be according to age, with one leader for the children, one for the

youth, and one for the adults. He would like to see a model of how this would work in practice.

Wernick responded that models had been considered, but they wanted authorization to go ahead with the concept before developing models. He pointed out that youth make up more than 60 percent of our world membership. We have three distinct age groupings: children, youth, and adults. All should be in Sabbath school, all should be concerned with outreach. They had tried bringing the leaders of these departments together for coordination. This was fine in theory, but in practice each one still went his separate way. This explains the need for a single department.

More and more comments were now being made in favor of the proposed changes. Joel Tompkins, president of the Mid-America Union, felt this document was long overdue but hoped some room for flexibility would be allowed so that unions and conferences could employ specialists as needed.

One of the more telling speeches was made by Gerald J. Christo, president of the Southern Asia Division. He said he had been a pastor, union and then division departmental director, and was now a division president. As a pastor he had wondered what he ought to do with all the materials that came down from the higher levels. At the union level he had directed two departments and felt frustrated in attempting to be equally effective in each area and in getting the appropriate materials for the conference directors. When he became a division director he became even more frustrated because he found many of his materials never even reached the local church. Now, as president, it was a major difficulty to find really competent and effective departmental directors. He wished for a program of training and education for departmental leaders.

Support for the proposal was building rapidly. Earnest Lutz, Jr., president of the Minnesota Conference, recounted how, in addition to his conference duties, he also serves as a local church pastor. He is in the unique position of being at both ends of the funnel. He supported the reorganization. This section was then voted.

As discussion moved on to the role of the departments, a number of amendments were made and defeated. A major discussion ensued over whether or not union departmental directors coordi-

nated the work of the departments on the conference level. Ohio Conference president John Fowler proposed an amendment that would delete "coordinate" and add "serve as consultants and resource persons." Wernick then spoke in opposition to the amendment, reminding the body that the role of the union is to coordinate the departmental work of the conferences. The amendment lost. The issue would not go away, however. Bruce Johnston, president of the Idaho Conference, felt the wording was too strong. He wanted to know

whether the union departments simply coordinate the work as a whole or actually coordinate and direct the local conference departments. Wernick replied that the role of the union is to coordinate the work in the departments, and that conferences should not be too independent. After more discussion Wernick agreed to bring in a revised description, which subsequently was accepted. To convey an idea of the give-and-take that goes on at an Annual Council, the original proposal and the revision as voted are printed below.

#### Original

D. Guidelines for departments and services on the union conference/mission level.

##### 1. Role

a. To coordinate the work of the departments within the local conferences/missions within the union.

b. To facilitate communication by the General Conference/division with the departments of the local conference/mission level.

c. To assist local conferences/missions in the finding of expertise and resources, and, where necessary, in the planning and promotion of programs.

d. To help in the adaptation of resources and materials to the needs of local areas.

#### As Voted

D. Guidelines for departments and services on the union conference/mission level.

##### 1. Role

a. To assist the union president and the committee in coordinating departmental activities in the territory of a group of conferences/missions.

b. To serve as resource people and consultants to the departments in the local conferences/missions of the union.

c. To facilitate communication by the General Conference/division with the departments on the local conference/mission level.

d. To assist local conferences/missions in the finding of expertise and resources, and, where necessary, in planning and promotion of programs.

e. To help in adapting resources and materials to the needs of local areas.

The next question asked was how this combining of departments would affect the local church. The document explained that on the local level all the former ministries would continue to function. In other words, churches would still have a Sabbath school, youth society, Pathfinder Club, et cetera.

The commission recommended that the special relationship between the North American Division and the General Conference continue. It proposed some changes, however. North American Division departmental directors will continue as associate directors in the General Conference, but the commis-

sion recommended that these individuals be grouped together in the General Conference complex to provide visible and functional unity and identity. At present they are scattered throughout the various departments and buildings. In addition, for the first time, the General Conference vice president for North America will also have the title of president of the North American Division.

After three days of debate, discussion, and revisions the Annual Council voted to recommend the whole report to the General Conference session in New Orleans.

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## Role of women

The balconies of the Takoma Park church are always open for observers when Annual Council meetings are in session on the main floor. But seldom have more than a half-dozen interested onlookers filled those pews. It was different Sunday, October 14. Seventy people certainly didn't make it crowded, just unusual.

Word had apparently gotten out that sometime that day the "hot" topic of the role of women in the church would come up. Approximately 40 women and 30 men sat quietly, occasionally leaning forward to peer over the railing for a clearer view of what was going on or who was speaking. They sat through the morning session, listening patiently as division, union, and conference presidents, General Conference personnel, department heads, and lay representatives debated the issues involved in the Role and Function Committee report. They came back at two-thirty for the afternoon session, and listened for another hour before final action was taken on the Role and Function report. Then the session chairman, General Conference general vice president Enoch Oliveira, brought up Agenda Item No. 183: Women (Local Church) Elders—Election and Ordination.

The intent of this item was to reaffirm a 1975 Spring Meeting action that opened the way for ordination of deaconesses and for ordination of women as local elders after counseling with the union and division committees.

Immediately after introducing this item, the chair deferred to General Conference president Neal C. Wilson, who wished to make a statement. Wilson began his remarks by sharing his openness to the considerable concern that the issue of women and ministry had aroused in certain areas of North America and other parts of the world. He mentioned having received 30 to 40 letters on the matter in recent months, and alluded to 28 phone calls that had come to his desk just that morning. Most of the opinions registered, he allowed, were on one side of the issue, but he was unwilling to share which side for fear of prejudicing subsequent discussion. Some, he said, felt the matter was a moral issue, while others felt that it wasn't. Biblically, he said, it

seems clear that women are definitely accorded equality of status. The question remaining is whether the Bible or Spirit of Prophecy mandates equality of function.

Wilson reviewed the history of the women in ministry issue, starting with a 1973 study group and its report to Annual Council. That council received but did not act on the report that recommended further study be given to the election of women to offices requiring ordination. The 1974 Annual Council reaffirmed most of that report and requested the President's Executive Advisory to arrange for further study of election of women to such offices. The Spring Meeting in 1975 voted to accept a similar document, which mandated that "the greatest discretion and caution be exercised in the ordaining of women to the office of local elder, counsel being sought in all cases by the local conference/mission from the union and division committees before proceeding."

From that point, Wilson perceived the church as proceeding step by step in opening new opportunities for women to serve. Subsequently, the way was opened for women attending the Seminary to receive the same stipend as men. Women began to graduate with M.Div. degrees and accept positions as associates in pastoral care. Like their male ministerial-intern counterparts, they were ordained as local elders and served as assistant or associate pastors. But here a strong dichotomy developed. While a man could leave the Seminary and immediately begin to baptize and fulfill the other responsibilities of an ordained minister within his own district, a woman graduating at the same time could share the responsibilities but not the privileges of ordination to the gospel ministry. Wilson seemed undecided as to whether the church had done the right thing by encouraging ladies to go this far. If we never intended to allow ordination, he wondered, did we do the wrong thing by bringing them so tantalizingly near while keeping that final privilege from them?

While the specific item on the agenda at this point was simply the ordination of local elders, Wilson went on to explore the agenda item he knew would be next: a specific request from the Columbia Union and Potomac Conference to allow women who are ordained as local elders and serving the conference as associates in pastoral care to baptize. He

admitted that there is some ambiguity in church policy regarding this since local elders can baptize under certain circumstances even if they have no ministerial license.

Carrying the discussion a step further, he addressed another issue raised in the Potomac Conference's request: the granting of ministerial licenses to women. Wilson admitted that the church's working policy could be interpreted as being ambiguous here as well. One portion of the policy obviously limits ministerial licenses to the masculine gender while another portion seems to be intentionally worded to include both genders. The Potomac Conference had proceeded on the assumption that the policy does not deny the license to women, and now wanted clarification from Annual Council as to whether they could license their female ministers, who are noted for doing very effective work. A third portion of the Potomac request asked for renewed consideration of ordaining women to the gospel ministry.

Potomac's request had first been referred to a General Conference officers' meeting, and then to a meeting of General Conference and division officers and union presidents. These bodies forwarded the request to the Annual Council session, along with some history of the issue and a recommended timetable for studying the issue and settling it finally at next year's General Conference session.

Wilson closed his lengthy statement by returning to the item at hand. He moved that the Annual Council endorse the 1975 Spring Meeting action allowing the ordination of women as local elders. He stated that in some areas of the world the Spring Meeting action was not viewed as having the weight of an Annual Council action, which involves a broader representation.

After the motion was seconded, Oliveira expressed his concern that this action, which would affect the world field, was once again being taken with very little representation from outside North America. Wilson then pointed out that nothing in the motion would force any action upon any area of the world field, and that he had discussed it thoroughly with the various division presidents.

Dr. Calvin Rock, president of Oakwood College, questioned whether the council really wanted to continue to require such stringent procedures for

approving ordination of women—are we really still at the point that it would have to be taken all the way to the division committee before we could ordain a local elder? Wilson spoke in favor of continuing the procedure as outlined in 1975, as this was the desire of the world leaders with whom he had spoken.

When the issue was brought to a voice vote, only one No was heard. Laughter in the vicinity of the negative vote indicated that it may have been facetious. The Sunday afternoon session closed without the Potomac request being discussed on the floor.

Monday morning's discussion of the women's issue was chaired by General Conference general vice president Kenneth J. Mittleider. He opened the discussion by referring invitees to a recommendation from the General Conference and division officers and union presidents.

The recommendation called for the Potomac Conference to table the issue of ministerial licenses for women until the larger issue of ordination of women to the gospel ministry could be resolved. It also proposed a specific timetable for arriving at a definitive decision on the ordination issue (see box, p. 26), and called for the Biblical Research Institute to coordinate distribution of a balanced summary of theological positions to those who would be studying the issue at the Spring Meeting called for in the timetable. The recommendation closed by stating that "the decision of the 1985 General Conference session will be definitive and should be accepted as such by the church worldwide."

After the recommendation was read, Mittleider called for a motion to adopt it. It appeared that he hoped to avoid further discussion since adoption of the recommendation would refer discussion to the Spring Meeting and from there to the General Conference session, the only body really qualified to make a final decision on the ordination question.

If the chairman wished to move on without further discussion, his wish was not to be granted. First to speak was Atlantic Union president Earl Amundson. He gave statistics that he said indicated that women are more widely accepted in executive level positions in divisions outside North America. He then moved changes in paragraph 3 of the timetable to mandate that the chairperson of the Women's Commission and two of its members, two women

from church educational institutions, the chairman and vice chairman of the General Conference Human Relations Commission, and two women pastors join the meeting of the division representatives scheduled in connection with the 1985 Spring Meeting. Australasian Division president W. R. L. Scragg, General Conference president Neal Wilson, General Conference general vice president Francis W. Wernick, and the chairman each spoke against the motion on the grounds that a study group should not be nominated in such a large meeting, and with such a preponderance of North American Division representatives. Wilson also challenged Amundson's statistics. Bekele Heye, president of the Eastern Africa Division, also appealed that any body making decisions that largely affect the world church should be internationally representative. When the amendment was brought to a vote, less than a dozen supported it.

Next to address the invitees was Charles E. Bradford, North American Division president. He appealed to world church leaders to try to understand what is happening in North America. NAD administrators have been encouraged by the General Conference to hire women as ministers. They have required the same things of women as men, but then the women can only sit back and watch when their peers are ordained. He challenged world leaders to "get inside the skin" of the men who have to deal with this problem.

Wallace Coe, Columbia Union Conference president, also appealed for understanding, specifically for Potomac Conference president Ron Wisbey, and then Wisbey himself addressed the group, giving the background of his conference committee's actions. He told of a meeting on February 11 when eight individuals ordained as local elders but not as ministers were authorized to perform baptisms. He noted that the General Conference raised questions about only the three women in the group. He felt it ironic that the conflict came in the area of soul winning. He asked that the invitees recognize that all he was requesting for the women was the privilege of baptizing, not ordination. The morning session adjourned after his appeal that those assembled "consider our needs."

Lowell L. Bock, general vice president of the General Conference, chaired the afternoon session. Several speakers

addressed the question of whether any action taken couldn't just be limited in scope to various divisions. Retired General Conference president Robert H. Pierson appealed that any decision be based on the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy rather than on man's counsel. "I'm afraid of moving a step at a time," he said. "We're in this problem today because of moving a step at a time. . . . We must on our knees find a solution."

Gerald J. Christo, president of the Southern Asia Division, stated that the North American Division should not feel that the world field is holding back on this issue. Rather, he had heard more opposition from within North America than from the world field. He asked that the group could move forward on the issue at hand rather than discussing it further.

The chair recognized six more individuals in line to speak, but then entertained a motion from the floor to move the question without further discussion. Bock explained that a two-thirds vote was required to close the discussion, and the vote was taken by standing. The count was 145 to 65 in favor of closing discussion. Before the final vote on the recommendation was called for, Richard Hammill asked a clarifying question about how widely the study documents from the Biblical Research Institute would be distributed. Would they be published in the *Adventist Review*?

Wilson indicated that a more likely venue for distribution might be the union papers, and appealed that those who would be requested to make decisions study the documents carefully and prayerfully. He said that a number of excellent papers have already been prepared, and that most indicated that neither the Bible nor the Spirit of Prophecy either endorses or condemns ordination of women. He raised the question of just how much authority the church has to act in a dilemma like this. He also pointed out that invitees had just the previous day endorsed a document saying that one ordained ministry serves the world church, so the decision must apply throughout the world, not just locally.

Returning to his earlier question of whether the church had done the right thing in proceeding step by step to open new fields for ministry by women, he said that now some were saying we ought to just go forward, since it would be less

harmful than backing off after going this far. He seemed to feel that the present dilemma had resulted from the church's taking too many strides without carefully considering where it was going. The result was an unjust inequality between male and female Seminary graduates. He even went so far as to question whether the problem didn't stem from the 1976 expansion of the rights of a licensed minister. Was that expansion a mistake? he wondered. He clearly felt that the church's present stand is untenable, and that we must either back up or go forward. He appealed that no one would suppose that the issue was being referred to the General Conference session with the intention of defeating it there.

When the vote was taken, it was clearly in favor of following the recommendation. Wisbey made one final speech in which he told of a husband-and-wife ministerial team who had graduated from the Seminary together, with the wife at the head of the class. The husband would be ordained October 20. His wife, who had studied and served beside him through the years, would only be allowed to watch. Wisbey concluded his remarks by making it clear that he was pleased and thankful to Wilson and the council for taking the Potomac request seriously and for giving it a hearing.

No one in the balconies seemed surprised by the action taken. Most filed out alone, or talking in small groups. None appeared disgruntled; they seemed willing to wait patiently for the decision at next year's General Conference session.

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## Our work in the Soviet Union

One of the more interesting sidelights to Annual Council came on Tuesday morning when Alf Lohne, the General Conference general vice president who serves as adviser for the church's work in the Soviet Union, shared a report of progress in recent years. He reported that in the past 15 years he has seen significant advances in the church's ability to work. In the late sixties and early seventies, meetings were held in secret, and there were severe divisions among Soviet Adventists. Today the

church is united, and 3,000 people attended one recent meeting. Lohne introduced M. P. Kulakov, president of the Association of Seventh-day Adventists in the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, and N. A. Zhukaluk; cochairman of the Association of Seventh-day Adventists in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Zhukaluk spoke briefly in Russian with Kulakov translating, then Kulakov told of 1,500 baptisms in the past year, and of publishing Bibles and a magazine for ministers. He reported that next year Adventists will be able to print 5,000 New Testaments and 3,000 Sabbath School quarterlies in the U.S.S.R.

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## Administration and use of tithe funds

One of the more significant documents presented for approval at this Annual Council is titled "Tithe Funds—Administration/Use Of." It is actually a summary of a report issued by a committee that studied the issue of tithe administration and usage last June. The study and recommendations grew out of a desire to regularize the handling of tithe and to stop recent trends that have tended toward disunity and even competition between organizations within the church. To this end it defines proper channels for handling tithe, approved methods of soliciting and sharing tithe funds, and the proper "storehouse" to which the tithe should be returned.

The document is far-reaching in its application to members and administrators. It points out that the Malachi 3 promise of unmeasured blessings for tithers is conditioned upon bringing tithe to the storehouse. Here are some of the most significant points covered in the recommended action:

1. The General Conference Committee at Annual Council or General Conference session has authority to create and revise the church's tithing policies by vote of its delegates and members.

2. The proper storehouse to which to bring tithe is the local conference treasury, and the proper channel for getting tithe to the storehouse is via the local church. This does not disallow members' sending their tithe to the union or General Conference office, but

when this is done, the receiving organization should send it to the local conference treasury without divulging the name of the donor. If members send tithe to these higher organizations with instruction that it not be returned to the local conference, the receiving organization should try to persuade the member to allow the funds to be distributed through normal channels. If the member declines to allow this, the money should be returned to the donor along with an appeal that he or she be reconciled to the local church and/or conference.

3. The tithe-sharing principles that provide for certain proportions of local conference tithe to be shared with the local, union, and General Conference should be adhered to with all tithe funds, and no organization of the church should accept tithe funds from members who state that the funds cannot be shared as mandated by policy. No church organization should accept tithe funds to be passed directly to another organization.

4. No conference or mission should solicit tithe funds directly from members in another conference or mission. (Here the recommendation does not forbid acceptance, only solicitation.)

5. No denominational institution should knowingly accept tithe funds directly from Seventh-day Adventist members.

The document also deals with proper handling of offerings, detailing how access to denominational mailing lists may be granted to certain organizations for solicitation purposes. It also forbids local churches and elementary schools from appealing for funds outside their own conference territory. In receiving offerings, local churches should designate all loose offerings for the announced offering of the day and not require those wishing to give to the announced offering to place their gift in an envelope.

These recommendations were brought to the floor on Tuesday morning, October 16, a meeting that Enoch Oliveira chaired. The document was opened for discussion, but it was not felt necessary to review it item by item. The chairman asked that it be ratified by calling question on each individual page. Many council invitees were inserting recent handouts in their notebooks, and there was general confusion as question was called on the first three pages, but then J. Robert Spangler, secretary of the General Conference Ministerial and Stewardship Association, rose to ques-

tion the policy of having the General Conference refuse to accept tithe directly from members. He felt that some members upon hearing of this policy would begin to send their tithe to organizations outside the church.

Several others spoke on this issue as well, with some saying that no organization should accept tithe if it can't be shared. Richard Hammill said that he would allow that it is unfortunate that members become disgruntled and send their tithe outside their local field, but that they are often reconciled in short order. If the General Conference in the meantime refused to accept their tithe, this could lead to further alienation from the church. He questioned why the individual should be denied the right to send his tithe wherever he wishes. He moved that this aspect of the document be referred for further study.

Many individuals rose to speak on this question, but the weight of opinion seemed to hold that allowing any segment of the church organization to keep 100 percent of any tithe sent to it would break down the principle of tithe sharing. Kenneth Mittleider stated that when he was a local conference president he couldn't conscientiously accept tithe that was restricted from sharing, and that the General Conference should abide by the same principle. Hammill's motion was finally defeated, and the document was accepted as a whole.

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## Association of Adventist Forums report

Tuesday morning dawned with none of the invitees suspecting that two extremely diverse constituencies within the Adventist Church were going to receive powerful reprimands. Midway through the morning discussion Neal C. Wilson paused and said he had a very important statement to make. Here are his opening words:

There do come times in the life of a leader when he knows that he must do something that he dislikes to do. But a leader has to do some things because he knows the people are looking for a signal from him, and that's true of all of you. There are some who may misunderstand when a leader makes

certain statements, and that's always a risk you have to take. It can also at times strain personal relationships and friendships, and that's something too that you desperately try to avoid. But in spite of all this, there are times when people expect a signal from you and as a leader you need to make a statement. This morning I would like to share some of the questions in my own heart regarding the relationship of the church to the Association of Adventist Forums and its magazine, *Spectrum*. I've modified my statement a number of times and I'm going to try to be kind, but I'm also going to be very clear. I'm not asking, Brother Chairman, for debate, discussion, or a vote on this item. I would like you to know this comes from Neal Wilson. I do represent an office in the church that people look to for signals, and because of this I feel it necessary to make a statement.

Wilson, in a six-page statement, went on to express some real concerns he had with this group. He gave some background to the beginnings of the association and listed its stated aims and objectives, which were:

1. To provide an organization that will facilitate fellowship between graduate students in different geographical areas of the United States.
2. To stimulate evangelistic contact through cultural interaction with non-Seventh-day Adventist scholars.
3. To serve as a point of contact between graduate students and the Seventh-day Adventist organization, and to encourage and facilitate the service of these students to the church.
4. To encourage pastoral guidance for Seventh-day Adventist students on non-Seventh-day Adventist campuses.
5. To maintain an organ of communication wherein Seventh-day Adventist scholars may exchange academic information, thoughts, and opinions.

Wilson went on to list how the association had departed from these laudable aims and had become a critical, destructive voice within the church. Wilson emphasized that he considered much of what *Spectrum* had published to be helpful but that its overall emphasis has become one of "planting seeds of criticism, polarization, negative questioning, undermining confidence in

church organization, and lessening respect for the legitimacy and authority of church leadership." Wilson pointed out that up to this time he had served as adviser and consultant to the association but now he was withdrawing from that role. And he noted that *Spectrum* does not carry the endorsement of church leadership. [It never had official endorsement.] He listed seven concerns:

1. We do not agree with what appears to be a practice, and basic approach, of the AAF, namely, that it is necessary or productive to listen to and discuss all viewpoints, whether positive or negative, truth or error. We cannot accept the premise that our journals and pulpits should give equal time and exposure to all viewpoints with the idea that ultimately truth will prevail. We have a distinctive message that needs to be presented with emphasis and conviction.

2. It seems to us that the AAF and *Spectrum* do not take any definite or clearly stated positions regarding doctrinal subjects and issues. Much seems to be rationalized and left tentative. Pluralism seems to be advocated, and even some spiritual values seem to be negotiable.

3. We weary of always being told what is wrong with the church! Why do we not hear about some positive, workable, and tested solutions and alternatives? Especially do we feel this way when negative comments come from individuals who appear to pose as experts, but who have never had church leadership responsibility or the more awesome and sacred responsibility of trying to maintain unity in a spiritual world family.

4. We are disappointed that the AAF takes the initiative to provide a platform and arrange meetings for known and declared dissident individuals and groups within the church.

5. We reject the implication or inference that *Spectrum* is the most authentic source of information regarding church affairs. We hope it is obvious to many readers that *Spectrum* not infrequently contains factual inaccuracies and faulty conclusions.

6. We observe with concern the persistent involvement of the AAF and *Spectrum* in actively urging what appears to us to be irresponsible concepts of, and changes in, denominational administration, operations, structure, and organization. Unfortu-

nately, these ideas are propagated with little apparent concern for what the results might be.

7. Finally, we find it difficult to explain why the pages of *Spectrum* so seldom defend or endorse positions of the church or say anything positive about its evangelistic thrust.

Wilson believed that the association still could perform an important role if it would only return to its original objectives. The president was also very careful to say that we must not judge or condemn those who belong to the association. He made a pastoral plea for the AAF to reconsider its position and be a strong participant in the mission of the Adventist Church.

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## Schism

Tuesday morning Neal C. Wilson had administered a strong rebuke to the Association of Adventist Forums for their critical and judgmental attitude toward church leadership. That same afternoon Wilson again departed from the prepared agenda to administer a rebuke—this time to part of the ultra-conservative wing of the church for their critical and judgmental attitude. Pilgrim's Rest in Tennessee had sent to every member of the General Conference Committee participating in the Annual Council (more than 340 individuals) a number of documents pertaining to the schism in the church in Hungary.

Wilson began by reading the opening paragraph from a paper titled "An Appeal to the General Conference Committee." He pointed out inaccuracies in the very first paragraph and said the rest of the documents were like this, a mixture of truth and misinformation. Wilson went on to say, "I have sympathy for them, but no respect." He commented on how complex the situation is. Pilgrim's Rest material represented only one side of the issue. Wilson has five thick files in his office on this problem. He then called upon Edwin Ludescher, president of the Euro-Africa division, to make a statement.

For the next hour Ludescher recounted the issues, which he stated went back over 40 years. Both sides had "horns and wings"—each side had made their mistakes. Counsel had been given to the leaders, and some progress was

being made. However, because of the political makeup of the country, the division and the General Conference had to be very cautious in their handling of the situation.

The members of the council listened with close attention to his report and at the end voted:

To send the following message to the Euro-Africa Division and our fellow church members in Hungary: The members of the 1984 Annual Council express appreciation to the leadership of the Euro-Africa Division and the General Conference for their full report of the church schism in Hungary and for the sensitivity, patience, and concern shown by them in their arduous attempts to effect unity.

Further, the members of the General Conference Committee in Annual Council lovingly appeal to these individuals who have not returned to the official body of Seventh-day Adventist believers to do so as soon as possible, thus enabling God's church to present a united front to the nation of Hungary and the world.

The editors of *MINISTRY* hope to sort out the considerable complexities of the Hungarian situation and present a full report to our readers in the near future.

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## A statement on theological freedom and accountability

On the afternoon of the last day of their meeting, the invitees took up a matter with implications for individuals in every branch and level of denominational employ. The 1983 Annual Council had considered a document on academic freedom and the procedures that should be followed in the case of a church employee who came to differ with the church's teachings. However, at that time, some of the invitees pointed out that it would be difficult to handle fairly with one procedure the diverse situations of pastors and religion teachers. What fit one would not necessarily be appropriate for the other.

Consequently, the recommendation was referred back to the committee. The invitees asked that two separate documents be developed to fit these differing needs. These, then, were presented to this year's council.\*

Document A is entitled "A Statement on Theological Freedom and Accountability—The Church and Its Institutions." It deals with church employees at the local and conference level (including K-12 institutions) and employees of the church's nonacademic institutions.

Its first section begins by pointing out that freedom is essential to the church and those who serve in it. But it stresses the importance of unity and a broader perspective than that of the individual. "One person may stimulate the community to study a question, but only God's people and church as a whole can decide what is or is not true in the light of Scripture."

In the procedures that it recommends for dealing with a worker who differs theologically with the church, it attempts to maintain a balance between preserving the character of the church and giving the worker's views a hearing.

These procedures involve three distinct steps: private consultation between the worker and his chief executive officer (CEO), a review committee, and appeals to other levels of the organization. A worker who initiates the consultation with the CEO and who makes no attempt to promulgate his views may remain at his post and submit a written report of his position within six months. If he and his CEO are able to resolve the matter at that point, no further action is necessary. If not, the executive committee of the conference/institution in which the worker is employed is to arrange for a hearing before a review commission.

A worker who is actively promulgating his position and whose CEO must initiate the consultation may be asked to remain at his post but to refrain from presentation of his views, or he may be placed on administrative leave during the period of the hearing. The executive committee of his employing institution then is to arrange for a hearing before a review committee.

The composition of the review committee aroused what discussion there was regarding this document. Originally it

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\* These documents are included in the package *MINISTRY* is offering. For ordering information, see the end of the article.

specified that the review committee, which was to be chosen by the conference/institution executive committee, was to include the Ministerial secretary of the union, who would serve as chairman; the chief executive officer; a theologian from a Seventh-day Adventist educational institution with some proficiency in the matter under question or a person of comparable ability; two individuals from among five names of peers submitted by the worker; and two additional individuals selected by the conference/institution executive committee.

The discussion ensued when Philip

Follett, president of the Northern California Conference, moved that the document be amended to allow the conference to choose the review committee, subject to union approval. He objected to a committee containing too many members from outside the conference because these members tended to feel no urgency in completing their task and would let the matter drag on too long, to the detriment of the work in the local field.

Neal C. Wilson commented that the composition of the review committee was recommended in order to delay precipitous action and to add an outside

viewpoint. And Charles B. Hirsch pointed out that with the amendment, ministers may feel they are not receiving a fair hearing. Ralph W. Martin, president of the Nevada-Utah Conference, spoke in support of the amendment, arguing that administration must be kept free to act without undue delay.

With this discussion, the amendment passed. The revised document does not specify the makeup of the review committee. It states only that the committee should include "peers chosen by the conference/institution executive committee with the concurrence of the next higher organization, to give hearing to

## Officers, Departments, and Executive Committee: Administrative Roles, Functions, and Relationships

*Editors' note—We quote the following from the Role and Function Commission report. This material helps clarify the differences between the committee and presidential systems.*

### A. Committee System of Governance

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a representative form of church government and functions between sessions of the constituency on what can be called the "committee system," administrative authority on all levels being vested in the executive committee. The committee has legislative, executive, and oversight functions. The committee system is based on Biblical models and the need for a multitude of counselors (Prov. 11:14). The Ellen G. White counsel is clear regarding the sharing of responsibility.

Historically, the imitation of secular forms of government and organization has been an ever-present but dangerous attraction to the church. Today, government, business, and academic structural forms in various countries are having an influence upon Seventh-day Adventist Church governance. In some countries it is easy for church members to think of the church as a presidential system\* with all other officers subordinated to the president. However, there are ecclesiological dangers in following such a system based on secular models of government, business, corporation, or academe. The Biblical advice is, "It shall

not be so among you" (Matt. 20:26). The Spirit of Prophecy counsels us to avoid "kingly power" (*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 232, 233), which is the misuse of administrative authority within the church.

### B. Authority of Officers

The president is the first officer and chairman of the executive committee. The secretary and treasurer derive their constitutional authority from the constitution and are elected by the same constituency that elected the president, and with the president work under the authority of the committee. The president has been elected to lead. His co-officers must acknowledge his leadership and work in close counsel with him, and vice versa. The concept of making the secretary or treasurer vice presidents runs counter to the basic Adventist model of church government with its inbuilt distributed responsibility.

The authority of the officers as a group is the combined authority of the offices of the president, secretary, and treasurer. While their collegial authority does not grant the officers additional authority beyond the constitutional authority of their offices, yet it does increase their practical management.

The officers are not a substitute for the committee, but they do have important functions in directing the work of the committee and supervising executive implementation of its actions. Their responsibilities include bringing recom-

mendations or options to the committee.

The officers function as management and execute the actions of the committee.

### C. Role and Function of Departments

Departmental leaders are facilitators of the mission of the church.

The duties of departmental leaders are generally not along executive lines, but lie primarily in giving leadership to program planning and promotion. Furthermore, departments vary in their activities and responsibilities. Some departments are more "promotional," while others are more "administrative." Some departments are more involved in "problem solving," while others are more "service" oriented.

The departmental directors are elected by the constituency and therefore work under the direction of the executive committee. However, operationally and administratively they are responsible to the president, and assist him and the other officers in promoting plans and work outlined by the committee.

\* In the context of the Seventh-day Adventist Church governance, the presidential system is defined as any constitutional or organizational provision that would center authority in one person to whom the secretary and treasurer would be responsible—as compared to the committee system, in which authority is shared and exercised by elected officers who are accountable to the executive committee, which in turn derives its authority from the constituency.

and judgment upon the doctrinal issue.”

If the review committee finds that the worker's views are compatible with the church's fundamental beliefs, no further action is necessary. If they find his views at variance, however, and the worker continues to hold those views and feels constrained to promulgate them, the committee is to recommend to his executive committee that his credentials be withdrawn. Upon determination that his position is both *new* and *valid*, the committee is to recommend further study of his position to higher levels of the church organization.

The section of the document that deals with the appeal process makes provision for the church employee to appeal for a hearing by a committee appointed by the union executive committee, and finally, to the executive committee of the division of the General Conference in which he resides.

Document B, which deals with educators, is entitled “Academic Freedom in Seventh-day Adventist Institutions of Higher Education.” It lays out a similar concern for freedom and truth as does Document A, but within a framework appropriate to an educational institution. It defines academic freedom as “the guarantee that teachers and students will be able to carry on the functions of learning, research, and teaching with a minimum of restrictions.”

The document notes that “freedoms are never absolute and that they imply commensurate responsibilities.” It specifies that academicians have freedom of speech, of research, and to teach. Expanding upon the freedom to teach, it states, “Academic freedom is freedom to pursue knowledge and truth in the area of the individual's specialty. It does not give license to express controversial opinions on subjects outside that specialty, nor does it protect the individual from being held accountable for his teaching.”

The next section of the document is entitled “Shared Responsibilities.” It enlarges upon two basic responsibilities: The first is that of the teacher and leaders of the institution and of the church “to seek for and to disseminate truth.” And the second is “the obligation of teachers and leaders of the institution and the church to counsel together when scholarly findings have a bearing on the message and mission of the church.”

In developing the latter, the document points out not only the scholar's

responsibility to seek the counsel of others but also church leaders' responsibility to “foster an atmosphere of Christian cordiality within which the scholar will not feel threatened if his findings differ from traditionally held views.” It indicates that teachers in the church's educational institutions ought not teach as truth what is contrary to the historical doctrinal position of the church, referring to the “Fundamental Beliefs” published in the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*.

Unlike Document A, which recom-

mends the procedures that should be used in dealing with other church employees who differ with church teachings, Document B specifies no such process for teachers. Instead it states, “When questions arise dealing with matters of academic freedom, each university and college should have clearly stated procedures to follow in dealing with such grievances. Such procedures should include peer review, an appeal process, and a review by the board of trustees.”

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## Proposed Timetable for Reaching a Decision on Ordination of Women to Gospel Ministry

*Editors' note—We quote this material from the recommendation brought before, and accepted by, the 1984 Annual Council.*

A. During Annual Council, 1984, clarifying statements will be made in regard to the intent of previous General Conference and NADCA actions regarding the role of women in the church, the ministerial license, associates in pastoral care, women as local church elders, and other related issues.\*

B. The following steps will be taken to obtain a conclusive decision by the 1985 General Conference session.

1. The various issues will be discussed with the division officers in connection with the premeetings of the 1984 Annual Council.\*

2. Each division will be asked to

discuss the issues in preparation for a meeting of representatives from the world divisions sometime in early 1985.

3. A meeting of at least two representatives from each of the world divisions will be scheduled in connection with the General Conference Committee's 1985 Spring Meeting. The meeting will be coordinated by the Biblical Research Institute.

4. The report of the meeting of division representatives will be presented to the 1985 Spring Meeting, and recommendations will be referred to the 1985 General Conference session for decision.

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\*These items struck from final document because already done.

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## Special Offer

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### Key Annual Council Documents

For those on you who would like to read the full reports on some of the major items discussed and voted at the Annual Council, MINISTRY is making a special offer. We have collected into one package the following documents:

- “Role and Function of Denominational Organizations”
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- “Sabbath Observance”
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## Family worship—pain and joy

*Life's tempo continues to increase—at least while you have children at home. It's never easy to work family worship into your schedule, but with innovation you can do it. And it's worth the effort.*

*It is so easy to identify with Ginger Church as she rolls back the years, recounting extremely busy yet very pleasurable times with her boys, one of the most memorable of which is having family worship. Now facing the challenge of family worship with two teenage boys, she offers some creative ways to spend this time together.*

*If you have been too busy in the past for family worships, perhaps you will want to prioritize worships on your New Year's resolution list after reading her article.—Marie Spangler.*

Picture with me a family seated in front of a roaring fire. The father holds a large Bible in his hands, and the children watch him, listening intently as he shares a familiar story.

Now change the scene. Picture instead a group of people rushing about, racing the clock as they struggle to finish early-morning duties. Mother is frantically fixing breakfast and sacking lunches. Father is on the phone making business appointments, holding his finger in his left ear to shut out the din. Junior is tearing the living room apart in a vain search for his unfinished homework. Sis has just thrown her curling iron in the bathroom sink and is wailing that the curls on the right side of her head never want to match the curls on the left side.

Which family is having the better day? The first, of course. You've heard it said that "the family that prays together stays together"! But even though it's been preached and taught to us as far back as we can remember, "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Too often we aim high but miss the mark.

When my boys were small we'd

snuggle down and read a Bible story. They usually sat spellbound and full of questions while I read. Sometimes to break the monotony of an oft-repeated story, I'd let them fill in the blanks. When we were finished they often begged, "Just one more!"

As the years flew by and the boys became primary and junior age they were still enthusiastic about family devotions. My husband and I found that the youth devotional books made having family worship easy and fun. We'd delve into nature or one of many other topics. There might have been more creative

ways to conduct worship, but at least we were trying.

Now that I'm the mother of two teenage sons, family worship suddenly poses new challenges.

How I wish I could tell you that when the boys were small we always took advantage of their interest and didn't miss a day. But one of the ways the devil confuses Christian families is by keeping them "too busy."

When the boys were small I could have told you in all sincerity that "life could simply never be more hectic!" Fortunately, back then I didn't have

## Prayers from the parsonage

I am keeping vigil tonight over our cat that was stiff-legged and in pain this morning and now lies weak and listless. Cuddles is very sick; but we cannot reach the vet on Sunday, and the emergency clinic with its high fees is a last resort.

Dick, raised on a farm, is realistic. "If he pulls through, great; but we're not going to run up medical bills for a cat."

Hans, who'd rather have a dog, nevertheless insists, "Jesus can make him well."

Lisa who hates to see even a spider crushed, pleads, "We can't just let him die, Mommy! I'll pay for everything." (A brave pledge from someone whose allowance is 50 cents a week.)

And I? I'm caught in the middle. My head knows that Cuddles was a "free" kitten. Already checkups and shots, food and litter have cost more than we'd expected.

Thousands of unwanted kittens are killed or dumped in animal shelters, and we could easily find another pet needing

a home.

But my heart understands love in a new dimension. This cat leaves hair on the cushions and snags in the drapes. He scratches when I brush him and often walks off coolly just when the children would like to play. Yet he is special precisely because of the months we've spent in nurturing and training. We love him because he's *ours*. I cannot place a dollar-and-cents value on his life. Like a friend, he is not replaceable.

Creator-God, do You not also love Your creatures? Did You not weep when You killed the first animals to make garments for Adam and Eve? Did You not long for man's obedience rather than the sacrifice of his herds and flocks? While on earth, did You perhaps have a pet lamb or dove? Did You not state that God is concerned over a half-cent sparrow?

Cuddles' yellow eyes follow me trustingly as I try to make him comfortable. The children, so distraught before bedtime, now sleep in perfect assurance that You and I will save their pet. Help me, Lord, to make the best decision.

Cherry B. Habenicht

Ginger Mostert Church, editorial secretary for *Insight* magazine, is the mother of two teenage sons and writes from Williamsport, Maryland.

time to worry about the years to come. Besides, in my inexperience I had no way of knowing that things could and would get busier as Doug and Dony got older.

With first one and then both boys in school, the roller coaster ride picked up speed. Mornings always disappeared in the rush to get ready—forever that “Hurry, hurry, or we’ll be late.” Evenings managed to fill up too; homework, Home and School meetings, special programs, company, and a multitude of minor details strove to fill every available minute. And don’t forget TV. It was always in the background, offering entertainment and education.

Human nature kept prompting me to believe that life would be easier as the boys grew older and established school routines. But now that I have a tenth-grader and a seventh-grader, the tempo has reached an all-time high. How terribly exciting teenage life is! There are always places to go and things to do. They don’t want to miss a thing.

So where is the time for family devotions—the most important time of the day? That special time with and for the Lord?

What a wonderful blessing if you can start your day with worship! But maybe you—like me—already begin your day at five o’clock. A few minutes for personal devotions, and the race is on. For us evenings offer more time for family worship. After supper and before every-

**W**hat a wonderful blessing if you can start your day with worship! For us, evenings offer more time for family worship.

one goes his separate way we try to set aside a few minutes. Worship does make the day more meaningful and encourages spiritual growth and family unity.

We especially enjoy the youth worship book. What a wealth of information nature offers! Religious bookstores offer a wide range of material to aid the struggling parent. Or you can be more creative with what you do for your devotional time. Some like to play Bible games. Others read and discuss the Bible. Studying the lesson helps make Sabbath school more enjoyable. Each worship must be geared to your particular family’s likes and dislikes. Some enjoy singing; others would rather listen to records or tapes. Still others don’t want or enjoy any music at all. That’s the beauty of belonging to God’s family. He made us so alike and yet so different.

Lately I’ve come to recognize the broader meaning of worship as part of my daily life. Is worship only the act of reading the Bible, singing a song, and saying a prayer?

I’ve come to see that much of everyday living can be an act of worship. As

Christians we can be constantly worshipping God in our every act and deed. The small things I do for other family members or the acts of kindness to “the least of these” are a form of worship. Even my facial expressions denote feelings of love and adoration to God. How about that chatting time with your oldest at the end of the day? The way you greet your youngest—sleep still in his eyes? Even the entertainment you choose? While these may not serve the same purpose or fulfill the same needs as gathering the whole family in prayer, they are an important part of a family’s worship experience.

Parents of small children, of teenagers, whoever you are—don’t be discouraged. If you missed formal worship last week, last night—try again. It is important, so don’t give up! Discouragement is the devil’s tool. Hang in there! And in your family worship time, each member can be strengthened and family unity buttressed that each member may make every act of his or her life an act of worship. It’s true—families that pray together do stay together.

## Practical application in preaching

From page 12

more than discuss it—aim to produce it. Don’t preach on forgiveness only so people will believe in forgiveness, but so that by believing they will be forgiven. Your sermon on prayer should ideally end with people praying. Your highest hope for any sermon should be to bring to pass in your listeners’ lives that which you are speaking about.

Let’s put it all together now. You mean to be a Biblical preacher. But what is Biblical preaching? The preparation of

a truly Biblical sermon requires at least three tools: one Bible and two chairs. One chair should be comfortable enough so you will spend considerable time in it. You simply cannot preach well without spending time with the Word. After prayer for the Holy Spirit’s leading, you open your Bible. As you study, an idea or lesson comes to you out of the Word. Now you need the other chair. You set it across the desk from yourself and, in your imagination, seat in it representative members of the congregation to whom you plan to preach: someone very young, someone very old; someone very educated, someone very ignorant; a non-Christian who just happens to find himself in church that day, a lifetime Christian who has come to church as long as he can remember; a man, a woman; a husband who has just married a wife, a wife who has just buried a husband. Biblical preaching means both

preaching Bible truth and applying it to human needs and life situations as the Bible does.

If you’ll do this, what happened to one preacher will happen to you. As he moved from point to point in his sermon, a little boy sat wide-eyed, taking it all in. Finally it just became more than he could keep to himself. Grabbing his mother’s arm, he whispered, “Mother, why does he all the time keep talking to me?” That’s practical application. That’s preaching.

<sup>1</sup> Halford E. Luccock, *Communicating the Gospel* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Reynolds Brown, *The Art of Preaching* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> H. Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), p. 208.

<sup>4</sup> Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Edgar N. Jackson, *A Psychology for Preaching* (Great Neck, N.Y.: Channel Press, 1961), p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> Leighton Ford, *The Christian Persuader* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 124.

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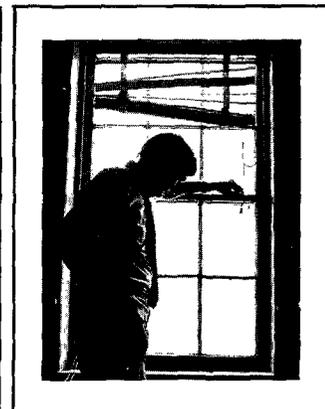


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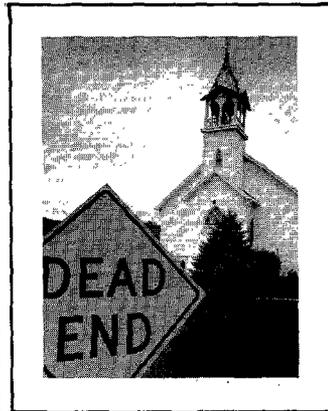
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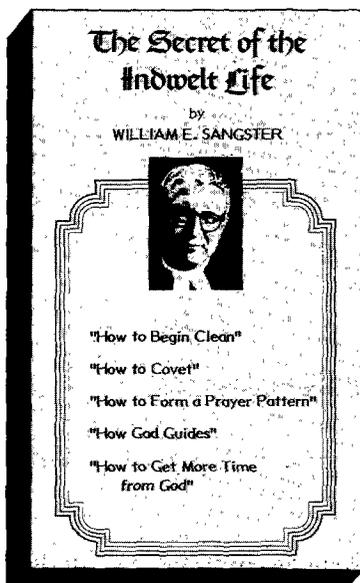
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