

# Elder's Digest

A Quarterly Resource for Local Church Elders

Vol 5 N 4



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Advent  
Movement"***

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# More Than Public Evangelism

Joel Sarli



**P**ublic evangelism is needed. Evangelism arrests the attention of people. We could on the other hand say that the time of evangelism is over and what we need today is the ministry of small groups. But my conviction is that in the quietness of a personal interview, just the

two, the seeker and the sought, with the unseen third Person striking the arrow of conviction deep into the heart, is where real soul-winning takes place.

Elder Cleveland, an outstanding evangelist of this denomination, used to say:

"We need to know how to use not only the long sword but the short one as well."

One may be a great preacher, but if he fails as a personal worker for souls, he fails utterly.

A story is told that some years ago the pastor of a large church in London felt the need of a genuine revival among the members of his congregation, and so he invited a certain noted evangelist to conduct a series of revival meetings. These meetings were widely advertized and largely attended. The audience gave respectful attention, but seemed almost as if carved out of ice and stone. There was no response. The series was concluded, yet the great heart of the church was not stirred.

Remembering a dear old friend of his residing in a distant city, the pastor wrote him of the apparent failure of this evangelistic effort, and asked counsel and especially the prayers of this earnest man of God.

The old man felt a burden for the work of the younger, and accepted the invitation. After a little conversation in the study, the pastor said earnestly, "You have to speak to my people tonight."

The old man was horrified. "Why, you know I'm not a preacher. I couldn't preach to your congregation. I wouldn't know what to say."

"But you know Jesus, and know the need of the sinful heart. Don't try to preach to my people. Just talk to them a few minutes right out of your heart's experience."

At last the old gentleman promised, and the hour finally came. With fear tugging at his heart, yet with cordage of a definite purpose, and after a few words of cordial introduction on the part of the pastor, the old gentleman arose and began to speak.

A quiet hush fell over the congregation. It was as if the very heavens had opened, and a little breath had blown down upon the waiting people, so quietly, so

earnestly. In such a heart-felt manner, did this man of God bring home to them the message which he had to share from the great heart of love.

In citing this simple story the writer said, "While my elderly friend had not been to Oxford, he had been to Calvary."

Surely this is the secret of

all successful soul winning. No preacher's work is finished, but only begun, when he steps down from the pulpit. It is the personal touch that brings success.

The real joy of Christian leadership is that which comes to one who is conscious that the Lord Jesus Christ is using him to bring sin-sick souls to the foot of the cross.

"The work of every faithful laborer lies close to the heart of Him who gave Himself for the redemption of the race." Letter 21, 1903.

"In order to break down the barriers of prejudice and impenitence, the love of Christ must have a part in every discourse. Make men know how much Jesus loves them, and what evidences He has given them of His love. What love can equal that which God manifested for man, by the death of Christ on the cross? When the heart is filled with the love of Jesus, this can be presented to the people, and it will affect hearts." Letter 48, 1886. **E**

*Just the two, the seeker and the sought,  
with the unseen third Person striking the  
arrow of conviction deep into the heart, is  
where real soul-winning takes place.*

# The Truth for Our Time

Ellen G. White

*The law of God, the Sabbath, the sanctuary, and the three angels' messages—all are intertwined in the message that constitutes the truth for our time.*

**T**he temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament." Revelation 11:19. The ark of God's testament is in the holy of holies, the second apartment of the sanctuary. In the ministration of the earthly tabernacle, which served "unto the example and shadow of heavenly things," this apartment was opened only upon the great Day of Atonement for the cleansing of the sanctuary.

Therefore the announcement that the temple of God was opened in heaven and the ark of His testament was seen, points to the opening of the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary in 1844 as Christ entered there to perform the closing work of the atonement. Those who, by faith, followed their great High Priest as He entered upon His ministry in the most holy place, beheld the ark of His testament. As they had studied the subject of the sanctuary they had come to understand the Saviour's change of ministration, and they saw that He was now officiating before the ark of God, pleading His blood in behalf of sinners.

## Law in God's Sanctuary

The ark in the tabernacle on earth contained the two tables of stone, upon which were inscribed the precepts of the law of God. . . . Within the holy of holies, in the sanctuary in heaven, the divine law is sacredly enshrined—the law that was spoken by God Himself amid the thunders of Sinai and written with His own finger on the tables of stone.

The law of God in the sanctuary in heaven is the great original, of which the precepts inscribed upon the tables of stone and recorded by Moses in the Pentateuch were an unerring transcript. Those who arrived at an understanding of this important point were thus led to see the sacred, unchanging character of the divine law. They saw, as never before, the force of the Saviour's words: "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law." Matthew

5:18. The law of God, being a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, must forever endure, "as a faithful witness in heaven . . ."

## Sabbath

In the bosom of the Decalogue is the fourth commandment, as it was first proclaimed: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:8-11.

The Spirit of God impressed the hearts of those students of His word. The conviction was urged upon them that they had ignorantly transgressed this precept by disregarding the Creator's rest day. They began to examine the reasons for observing the first day of the week instead of the day which God had sanctified. They could find no evidence in the Scriptures that the fourth commandment had been abolished, or that the Sabbath had been changed; the blessing which first hallowed the seventh day had never been removed. They had been honestly seeking to know and to do God's will; now, as they saw themselves transgressors of His law, sorrow filled their hearts, and they manifested their loyalty to God by keeping His Sabbath holy.

Many and earnest were the efforts made to overthrow their faith. None could fail to see that if the earthly sanctuary was a figure or pattern of the heavenly, the law deposited in the ark on earth was an exact transcript of the law in the ark in heaven; and that an acceptance of the truth concerning the heavenly sanctuary involved an acknowledgment of the claims of God's law and the obligation of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.

## Secret

Here was the secret of the bitter and determined opposition to the harmonious exposition of the Scrip-

tures that revealed the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. Men sought to close the door which God had opened, and to open the door which He had closed. But "He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth," had declared: "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." Revelation 3:7, 8. Christ had opened the door, or ministration, of the most holy place, light was shining from that open door of the sanctuary in heaven, and the fourth commandment was shown to be included in the law which is there enshrined; what God had established, no man could overthrow.

Those who had accepted the light concerning the mediation of Christ and the perpetuity of the law of God found that these were the truths presented in Revelation 14. The messages of this chapter constitute a threefold warning which is to prepare the inhabitants of the earth for the Lord's second coming.

### Judgment

The announcement, "The hour of His judgment is come," points to the closing work of Christ's ministration for the salvation of men. It heralds a truth which must be proclaimed until the Saviour's intercession shall cease and He shall return to the earth to take His people to Himself. The work of judgment which began in 1844 must continue until the cases of all are decided, both of the living and the dead; hence it will extend to the close of human probation. That men may be prepared to stand in the judgment, the message commands them to "fear God, and give glory to Him," "and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

The result of an acceptance of these messages is given in the word: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." In order to be prepared for the judgment, it is necessary that men should keep the law of God. That law will be the standard of character in the judgment. The apostle Paul declares: "As many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." And he says that "the doers of the law shall be justified." Romans 2:12-16. Faith is essential in order to the keeping of the law of God; for "without faith it is impossible to please Him." And "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Hebrews 11:6; Romans 14:23.

### Obedience Necessary

By the first angel, men are called upon to "fear God, and give glory to Him" and to worship Him as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. In order to do this, they must obey His law. Says the wise man: "Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Ecclesiastes 12:13. Without obedience to His commandments no worship can be pleasing to God. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." 1 John 5:3; Proverbs 28:9.

The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator and that to Him all other beings owe their existence. And wherever, in the Bible, His claim to reverence and worship, above the gods of the heathen, is presented, there is cited the evidence of His creative power. "All the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens." Psalm 96:5. "To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things." "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it: . . . I am the Lord; and there is none else." Isaiah 40:25, 26; 45:18. Says the psalmist: "Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves." "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Psalms 100:3; 95:6. And the holy beings who worship God in heaven state, as the reason why their homage is due to Him: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power: for Thou hast created all things." Rev. 4: 11.

### Worship the Creator

In Revelation 14, men are called upon to worship the Creator; and the prophecy brings to view a class that, as the result of the threefold message, are keeping the commandments of God. One of these commandments points directly to God as the Creator. The fourth precept declares: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:10, 11. Concerning the Sabbath, the Lord says, further, that it is "a sign. . . that ye may know that I am the Lord your God." Ezekiel 20:20. And the reason given is: "For in six

days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed." Exodus 31:17.

"The importance of the Sabbath as the memorial of creation is that it keeps ever present the true reason why worship is due to God"—because He is the Creator, and we are His creatures. "The Sabbath therefore lies at the very foundation of divine worship, for it teaches this great truth in the most impressive manner, and no other institution does this. The true ground of divine worship, not of that on the seventh day merely, but of all worship, is found in the distinction between the Creator and His creatures. This great fact can never become obsolete, and must never be forgotten."—J. N. Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*, chapter 27.

It was to keep this truth ever before the minds of men, that God instituted the Sabbath in Eden; and as long as the fact that He is our Creator continues to be a reason why we should worship Him, so the Sabbath will continue as its sign and memorial. Had the Sabbath been universally kept, man's thoughts and affections would have been led to the Creator as the object of reverence and worship, and there would never have been an idolater, an atheist, or an infidel. The keeping of the Sabbath is a sign of loyalty to the true God, "Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." It follows that the message which commands men to worship God and keep His commandments will especially call upon them to keep the fourth commandment.—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 433-438.

### Warning

The burden of the warning now to come to the people of God, nigh and afar off, is the third angel's message. And those who are seeking to understand this message will not be led by the Lord to make an application of the Word that will undermine the foundation and remove the pillars of the faith that has made Seventh-day Adventists what they are today. The truths that have been unfolding in their order, as we have advanced along the line of prophecy revealed in the Word of God, are truth, sacred, eternal truth today. Those who passed over the ground step-by-step in the past history of our experience, seeing the chain of truth in the prophecies, were prepared to accept and obey every ray of light. They were praying, fasting, searching, digging for the truth as for hidden treasures, and the

Holy Spirit, we know, was teaching and guiding us. Many theories were advanced, bearing a semblance of truth, but so mingled with misinterpreted and misapplied scriptures, that they led to dangerous errors. Very well do we know how every point of truth was established, and the seal set upon it by the Holy Spirit of God. And all the time voices were heard, "Here is the truth," "I have the truth; follow me." But the warnings came, "Go not ye after them. I have not sent them, but they ran." (See Jeremiah 23:21.)

### Truth Today

The leadings of the Lord were marked, and most wonderful were His revelations of what is truth. Point after point was established by the Lord God of heaven. That which was truth *then*, is truth today. But the voices do not cease to be heard—"This is truth. I have new light." But these new lights in prophetic lines are manifest in misapplying the Word and setting the people of God adrift without an anchor to hold them. If the student of the Word would take the truths which God has revealed in the leadings of His people, and appropriate these truths, digest them, and bring them into their practical life, they would then be living channels of light. But those who have set themselves to study our new theories, have a mixture of truth and error combined, and after trying to make these things prominent, have demonstrated that they have not kindled their taper from the divine altar, and it has gone out in darkness.

### Three Angels' Messages

The proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages has been located by the Word of Inspiration. Not a peg or pin is to be removed. No human authority has any more right to change the location of these messages than to substitute the New Testament for the Old. The Old Testament is the gospel in figures and symbols. The New Testament is the substance. One is as essential as the other. The Old Testament presents lessons from the lips of Christ, and these lessons have not lost their force in any particular.

The first and second messages were given in 1843 and 1844, and we are now under the proclamation of the third; but all three of the messages are still to be proclaimed. It is just as essential now as ever before that they shall be repeated to those who are seeking for the truth.

By pen and voice we are to sound the proclamation, showing their order, and the application of the prophecies that bring us to the third angel's message. There cannot be a third without the first and second. These messages we are to give to the world in publications, in discourses, showing in the line of prophetic history the things that have been and the things that will be.

The book that was sealed was not the book of Revelation, but that portion of the prophecy of Daniel which related to the last days. The Scripture says, "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Dan. 12:4). When the book was opened, the proclamation was made, "Time shall be no longer." (See Rev. 10:6.) The book of Daniel is now unsealed, and the revelation made by Christ to John is to come to all the inhabitants of the earth. By the increase of knowledge a people is to be prepared to stand in the latter days.

### Sabbath the Great Issue

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Rev. 14:6,7).

This message, if heeded, will call the attention of every nation and kindred and tongue and people to a close examination of the Word, and to the true light in regard to the power that has changed the seventh-day Sabbath to a spurious sabbath. The only true God has been forsaken, His law has been discarded, His sacred Sabbath institution has been trampled in the dust by the man of sin. The fourth commandment, so plain and explicit, has been ignored. The Sabbath memorial, declaring who the living God is, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, has been torn down, and a spurious sabbath has been given to the world in its place. Thus a breach has been made in the law of God. A false sabbath could not be a true standard.

In the first angel's message men are called upon to worship God, our Creator, who made the world and all things that are therein. They have paid homage to

an institution of the Papacy, making of no effect the law of Jehovah, but there is to be an increase of knowledge on this subject.

### Gospel and Law

The message proclaimed by the angel flying in the midst of heaven is the everlasting gospel, the same gospel that was declared in Eden when God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). Here was the first promise of a Saviour who would stand on the field of battle to contest the power of Satan and prevail against him. Christ came to our world to represent the character of God as it is represented in His holy law; for His law is a transcript of His character. Christ was both the law and the gospel. The angel that proclaims the everlasting gospel proclaims the law of God; for the gospel of salvation brings men to obedience of the law, whereby their characters are formed after the divine similitude.

### Repairer of the Breach

In the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, the work of those who worship God, the Maker of the heavens and the earth, is specified: "They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations" (Isa. 58:12). God's memorial, His seventh-day Sabbath, will be uplifted. "Thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath (no longer trample it under your feet), from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, . . . I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 58:12-14).

The history of the church and the world, the loyal and the disloyal, is here plainly revealed. The loyal under the proclamation of the third angel's message have turned their feet into the way of God's commandments, to respect, to honor, and glorify Him who created the heavens and the earth. The opposing forces have dishonored God by making a breach in His law, and when light from His Word has called attention to His holy commandments, revealing the breach made in the law

by the papal authority, then, to get rid of conviction, men have tried to destroy the whole law. But could they destroy it? No; for all who will search the Scriptures for themselves will see that the law of God stands immutable, eternal, and His memorial, the Sabbath, will endure through eternal ages, pointing to the only true God in distinction from all false gods.

Satan has been persevering and untiring in his efforts to prosecute the work he began in heaven, to change the law of God. He has succeeded in making the world believe the theory he presented in heaven before his fall, that the law of God was faulty and needed revising. A large part of the professed Christian church, by their attitude, if not by their words, shows that they have accepted the same error. But if in one jot or tittle the law of God has been changed, Satan has gained on earth that which he could not gain in heaven. He has prepared his delusive snare, hoping to take captive the church and the world. But not all will be deceived. A line of distinction is being drawn between the children of obedience and the children of disobedience, the loyal and true and the disloyal and untrue. Two great parties are developed, the worshipers of the beast and his image, and the worshipers of the true and living God.

#### Angel of Revelation 10

The message of Revelation 14, proclaiming that the hour of God's judgment is come, is given in the time of the end; and the angel of Revelation 10 is represented as having one foot on the sea and one foot on the land, showing that the message will be carried to distant lands, the ocean will be crossed, and the islands of the sea will hear the proclamation of the last message of warning to our world.

"And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer" (Rev. 10:5,6). This message announces the end of the prophetic periods. The disappointment of those who expected to see our Lord in 1844 was indeed bitter to those who had so ardently looked for His appearing. It was in the Lord's order that this disappointment should come, and that hearts should be revealed.

#### God Predicted

Not one cloud has fallen upon the church that God has not prepared for; not one opposing force has risen to counterwork the work of God but He has foreseen. All has taken place as He predicted through His prophets. He has not left His church in darkness, forsaken, but has traced in prophetic declarations what would occur; . . . He has brought about that which His Holy Spirit inspired the prophets to foretell. All His purposes will be fulfilled and established. His law is linked with His throne, and satanic agencies combined with human agencies cannot destroy it.

Truth is inspired and guarded by God; it will live, and will succeed, although it may appear at times to be overshadowed. The gospel of Christ is the law exemplified in character. The deceptions practiced against it, every device for vindicating falsehood, every error forged by satanic agencies, will eventually be eternally broken, and the triumph of truth will be like the appearing of the sun at noonday. The Sun of Righteousness shall shine forth with healing in His wings, and the whole earth shall be filled with His glory.

#### Certainty of Prophecy

All that God has in prophetic history specified to be fulfilled in the past has been, and all that is yet to come in its order will be. Daniel, God's prophet, stands in his place. John stands in his place. In the Revelation the Lion of the tribe of Judah has opened to the students of prophecy the book of Daniel, and thus is Daniel standing in his place. He bears his testimony, that which the Lord revealed to him in vision of the great and solemn events which we must know as we stand on the very threshold of their fulfillment.

In history and prophecy, the Word of God portrays the long continued conflict between truth and error. That conflict is yet in progress. Those things which have been, will be repeated. Old controversies will be revived, and new theories will be continually arising. But God's people, who in their belief and fulfillment of prophecy have acted a part in the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages, know where they stand. They have an experience that is more precious than fine gold. They are to stand firm as a rock, holding the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end. —*Selected Messages*, 2:103-109. **E**



# Seven Reasons for Joining the Advent Movement

Francis D. Nichol

**T**his is not an attempt to present all the valid reasons why a person should convert to the Seventh-day Adventist faith. Those reasons are many, though they may all be condensed into one; namely, because the Seventh-day Adventist faith presents the teachings of the Bible. The following reasons are, however, offered simply as one approach to the important subject of how to persuade men to decide to cast in their lot for the Lord. In a world filled with uncertainty the following approach, based on the element of certainty in Seventh-day Adventist teachings, may prove helpful in placing these teachings in an appealing light. Presented as a personal testimony, the seven reasons could be stated thus:

## Certainty in Spiritual Realm

*1. A desire for certainty and authority in the spiritual realm.*

A person cannot do any serious, intelligent thinking on the subject of religion without soon coming to the conclusion that the worth-whileness of the views held by a religious body depends upon the authority behind those views. One of the primary points of conflict between Rome and Protestantism in the Reformation days was the question of authority. The Catholic Church rested its claim, first of all, upon the authority of the church as set forth in the declarations of its clergy and of its councils, and upon traditions that had come down through the centuries. The Protestant Reformers declared that the valid authority for the Church must be the Bible.

The tremendous need for a foundation of authority is revealed in the history of Protestantism. In modern times Protestant preachers have discounted the Bible, placing speculation and human reason above it. The result is that the foundations of Protestantism have been greatly weakened. An increasing number of people now view Protestant churches as having no more compelling power over their hearts than a literary society or a

lodge. Men are not inclined to live, much less to die, for a religious organization that does not have behind it a compelling authority that captivates and controls their hearts. Men seek for certainty and assurance, something they can count on. That search is most marked when it comes to spiritual matters. That is one of the reasons why Rome today makes a definite appeal to many, even among intellectuals. She claims an authority that is above and beyond passing whims and theories of men.

But as a serious religious person seeking a church home, I would not take long in deciding against Rome and for the Seventh-day Adventist movement. The first and chief reason would be that I would find Adventism founded on a belief in the Bible as the supreme inspired revelation of God to man, a "Thus saith the Lord" that is free from the fallibilities and the foolishness that are often so glaringly evident in the traditions of men. I would realize that the Adventist Church was being guided the same way as was the church in the wilderness thirty-five hundred years ago, when God gave to man through Moses the first of the written revelations. I would realize that the Adventist Church has behind it the same authority and credentials possessed by the early Christian church, whose apostles declared that they preached none other things than those which Moses and the prophets declared should come, and who presented to the new believers the Bible as the true source of instruction, reproof, and counsel.

As I looked further into the matter, I would find that the Seventh-day Adventist Church expounds the prophecies of the Bible, showing the evidences of their fulfillment. This would lead me, first, to an increasing confidence in the Bible as the true guide; and, second, to a definite assurance that the advent movement is the church I should join. The evidence of fulfilled prophecy gives one the tremendous conviction that God has a plan and a program for the world, and specifically that God foretold the rise of this advent movement in these last days.

As I looked still further into the subject, I would find additional reason for believing that the Adventist movement could bring to my soul a sense of certainty and authority in the spiritual realm, because the gift of the Spirit of prophecy has been manifested in the movement. My study of the former dealings of God with man would show me that by a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet were the Israelites preserved, guided, warned, and rebuked through the centuries. I would also discover that in the beginnings of the Christian church the gift of prophecy was definitely manifested for the guidance and the building up of the church. And as I examined the wealth of instruction and timely counsel found in the Spirit of prophecy, I would be persuaded that conversion to the Seventh-day Adventist movement would bring to me that sense of certainty and authority in the spiritual realm that I so much desired.

#### The Question of Beginnings

2. *My desire for certainty regarding the moot question of the beginning of our world would lead me to become a convert to the advent movement.*

For two generations the religious world has been involved in sharp controversy over the question of the beginnings of things in our world, both as to man and as to all other living things upon the earth. The advocates of the skeptical evolution theory have tried to minimize the whole discussion by declaring that it does not matter where we came from, but rather where we are going to.

But as a serious religious person who had come far enough along in his thinking to take the Bible as his source of authority, I could not be satisfied with any such quip. Instead, I would be persuaded that our ultimate destination has a close relation to our beginning. In other words, even my elementary study of the Bible would lead me to believe that the record in Genesis has a real relation to the record in the Gospels and to the description of the new earth in the book of Revelation.

I could not hope to understand rightly the trend and direction of our whole world unless I could take my bearings from the beginning of time on this earth. I could not find any satisfaction in reading the promises of an earth made new, where all would be restored to original Edenic beauty, unless I were sure of what the original was like. It would provide no thrill to my heart to be assured that the earth is to be restored to its original state, if I must believe that the original state was marked with a varied array of dank pools filled with amoebae.

Having found my source of authority in the Bible, I would naturally, wish to find certainty regarding the beginnings of things in a religious body that believed what the Bible teaches concerning beginnings. And,

behold, I would find it in the advent movement. I would find my feet standing on the solid ground at the entrance to the Garden of Eden. With the aid of Bible prophecies my eyes would be directed to the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

And right on this very point of the importance of a clear Biblical understanding of beginnings, I would find this advent

movement observing a certain day every week in holy memory of the fact that in six days God made heaven and earth, as the Genesis record declares. I would be greatly impressed that here was a most unusual organization, one that made central in its teachings and practice a truth as vital and fundamental as the miraculous creation of our world. I would see in this practice of keeping holy the seventh day an assurance that this religious body believed with great earnestness and definiteness the truth of creation, that it was not a mere theory with them. I would be assured in my heart that when they preached to me the truth of the new creation, of the new heart and spirit which God will give to us, they are not talking some abstract theory to me, but were building their preaching upon the great historical truth that the God who promises to re-create us new creatures in Christ Jesus is the same God

*If I were seeking for a church home, I would become a convert to the Adventist faith because I would find in it an answer to the question that has been asked and re-asked through all the centuries, "If a man die, shall he live again?"*

who originally created man perfect, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

I would feel that the Sabbath gave me a sense of continuity from the very beginning of God's program for man on the earth, as if by a series of links of weeks I was anchored to that very first Sabbath, when God rested from all His works, and was refreshed. I would feel a sense of relationship right through to the new earth, when from Sabbath to Sabbath we shall all come up to worship before the Lord. Thus the doctrine of the Sabbath would stand revealed to me, not simply as a proof of the people who believe what the Bible says regarding the beginning of our world, but also as a mighty aid in generating within my heart a sense of certainty and assurance in things spiritual, a feeling of close relationship with God's great beginnings and endings for our world.

#### A True Moral Standard

*3. My longing for certainty regarding a definite moral standard would lead me to become a convert to the advent movement.*

No man can go very far in serious thinking on religious matters without coming to the conclusion that there must be a definite moral standard as a rule for life, for religious thinking immediately stirs up the moral faculties. The sense of right and wrong is quickened, conscience is aroused, the mind is filled with questionings, and all questions focus on the primary inquiry, Is there a definite moral standard by which to govern one's life? and if so, what is that standard?

Now, my acceptance of the Bible as the basis of authority for religious life would cause me soon to discover that much is said in the Scriptures concerning a moral code. I would read of the law of the Lord, which is declared to be perfect. I would read of ten holy commandments, which God spoke with His own voice, and uttered no more. I would read of how those ten commands were written also by the finger of God on tables of stone, and placed in a sacred shrine apart from all other laws. I would read that faith does not make void this law, but rather establishes it, and that this great code which is called the law of liberty will judge us in the last great day.

My longing for certainty as to a moral standard would thus have been satisfied, but where should I find a religious movement that upholds all of this law, a law that is so definitely one complete whole that to be guilty

of breaking one precept means breaking the whole law? As I listened to Adventist evangelists, I would find that they stress this great truth that the Decalogue provides an infallible moral standard for all men in all ages. I would find this truth presented in Adventist literature everywhere. In neither the preaching nor the writing of the exponents of Adventism would I find any suggestion of the demoralizing doctrine that good and evil are only relative terms, that one's environment and training and the age in which one lives determine whether some act is to be considered good or bad. I would find no suggestion of the modern skeptical doctrine so often proclaimed in liberal churches, that the ten-commandment law is rather out of date, that it represents simply the best thought that Moses had long ago.

No possible doubt could be in my mind as to the belief of Adventists concerning the moral law. That, in itself, would provide me with great comfort. I would know that I could measure my life by something sure and immovable. Then as I looked at the Bible prophecy concerning a movement to arise in the last days, I would find that one of the characteristics of this movement would be its keeping of the commandments of God.

#### Certainty Beyond the Grave

*4. If I were seeking for a church home, I would become a convert to the Adventist faith because I would find in it an answer to the question that has been asked and re-asked through all the centuries, "If a man die, shall he live again?"*

What a vast amount of literature has been written by sages and philosophers in all ages in an endeavor to answer this question. The hopes and fears of men have revolved around it. And closely related to this has been the inquiry, What is man? Is he but flesh and blood, of the earth earthy? Or is that which our eyes gaze upon merely a prison house and shell for the real being, which is ethereal and which flits away to another abode at death?

My reading of much that has been written would bring me only confusion of mind. I could not bring myself to accept the skeptical writings of even the wisest who would seek to persuade me that the grave ends all. On the other hand, I could never feel satisfied with the mysterious explanations offered by sectarians such as Spiritualists. Their explanations would seem un-

satisfying. I could not feel that the future of men was to be understood in the setting of the seance chamber, with mysterious mumblings and shadowy apparitions.

And even the examination of many of the Christian writings would still leave me with questions in my mind, because having set out sincerely to search the Scriptures, I would soon find that many of the statements in so-called orthodox Christian writings did not square with the explicit declarations in the Book of God. For example, they would not square with the simple story of the creation of man, into whose nostrils God breathed the breath of life. I could not find in that creation record any account of an immortal soul being put into man. What is more, my reading of the Good Book would reveal to me that God only hath immortality, that we must seek for it, and shall not receive it until the last great day.

I would be further perplexed in my mind from reading most of the Christian writings on the nature of man, because they would not leave any reasonable, logical place for a resurrection or a future judgment. The teaching that man goes immediately at death either to heaven or to hell, freed from the bodily prison house, would not harmonize with what I would be reading in the Bible concerning a last great judgment day, when there is to be a literal resurrection, and all men are to receive a reward according to the deeds done in the body.

Furthermore, I would feel that there was something shadowy and uncertain about the future reward, if it dealt only with airy spirits.

But my examination of the teachings of Seventh-day Adventists concerning the nature of man would dissolve my problems and give me a sense of certainty and definiteness. I would find that the Adventist teaching presents man as a real being, standing perfect from the hand of God in the Garden of Eden, made animate by the breath God breathed into him. The Adventist teaching of man is that he is one complete whole, that there is no separate entity called the soul that flits away at death, but that in some supernatural way God created a being with physical and spiritual natures fused into one person, and that at death the animating breath from God returns to its divine source, and man—the whole man—returns to the dust. This conception of man would enable me to see why there should be a resurrection and a future day of judgment, and why God should plan to restore to us the kind of Edenic world which the original man inhabited.

At the same time I would be able to dismiss from my mind forever the disturbing claims of spiritists, for I would see in their manifestations simply a modern recital of the falsehood told to our mother Eve by the serpent in the Garden of Eden.

#### **Certainty as to Salvation**

*5. My desire for certainty regarding the subjects of sin and salvation would prompt me to become a convert to the Seventh-day Adventist faith.*

Through all the centuries finite men have wrestled with these questions in an attempt to find a solution to the dark problem of sin. And those solutions have ranged all the way from the offering of one's own children in flaming, pagan sacrifice, to the bleak program of denying the reality of sin and attempting to develop a rich character by one's own individual efforts. But no one can go very far in serious religious thinking without being persuaded that there is something wrong with our innermost nature, call it by whatever name we will. We discover Paul's experience to be true to our own life, that what we would do, that we do not, and what we do not want to do, that we do. A sense of guilt and helplessness dominates the mind of a man who honestly examines his own soul. Certainly this is true if a man has gone far enough in his religious search for a church home to be a prayerful reader of the Scriptures.

In the very heart of Seventh-day Adventist teachings is found the doctrine of the sanctuary, which portrays the whole subject of sin and salvation in such vivid figures that I would at once feel as if I were indeed watching the whole drama by which God designs to purge us of guilt and cause us to stand justified in His sight. As I studied into the typical service of the ancient sanctuary, and then listened to the truth unfold concerning the sanctuary in heaven above, where Christ now ministers in behalf of those who call upon Him, any possible questions and uncertainties regarding God's way of dealing with the tragedy of sin in my life would disappear. I would discover in the subject of the sanctuary one of the most comforting truths that could ever be brought to the heart of a man, certainty of salvation.

#### **Proper Care of the Body**

*6. My desire to know how to properly care for my body, which the Bible describes as the temple of the Holy Ghost, would lead me to convert to Seventh-day Adventism.*

My examination of the Scriptures down to this

point, in my search for a church home, would have presented to me, as discussed in a preceding section, the truth that man is one complete whole, that the spiritual is not insulated and isolated from the physical. 'Therefore I would realize that the care I give to my body has a vital relationship to healthy spiritual living. I would see new force in the scripture which declares that whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, we should do it to the glory of God.

In view of my discovery of the nature of man and the inspired command to care rightly for the body, I could not feel satisfied to join a church that gave no attention to healthful living, and, in fact, permitted its members, unrebuked, to engage in many habits and practices that are injurious to the body. When I turned to examine the Seventh-day Adventist movement, I would find something new and unusual, a religious organization that concerned itself not simply with theology but also with physiology, with right food for the body as well as for the spirit.

I would feel that here indeed is a church presenting a balanced program for successful living, according to the Bible pattern. I would feel that I had discovered an added reason for believing in the gift of the Spirit of prophecy as manifested in the Adventist movement, because the one who made claim to the gift, I would discover from my study, is the one who presented to the Adventist Church certain distinctive outlines of the doctrine of healthful living as a vital part of the program of successful Christian life.

### The Meaning of the Times

7. *Finally, my desire to know with certainty the meaning of the times in which we live and what the future holds for us, would lead me to become a convert to Seventh-day Adventism.*

All about me in the world I see confusion, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth. I read in my daily paper of the forebodings of statesmen, the dire prophecies of general calamity and destruction throughout

the earth. As a sincerely religious person seeking a church home, I naturally wish to ally myself with a religious body that will provide me with peace and assurance in my heart in these days of world unrest, and if possible with some answer concerning the questions in my mind as to the future. But as I looked about, I would find the religious bodies, in general, strangely troubled concerning affairs in our world. Instead of their being able to provide an answer to the question as to what the future holds, I would find them somewhat amazed that I should even ask.

Yet having started out sincerely to lead the religious life, and thus having given some study to the Bible, I would be impressed that it should be possible to know something concerning conditions in the world about

me, and something also about the future. My reading of the Bible would lead me repeatedly to prophetic descriptions that seem to fit our day, and then foretell events that are connected with the end of earth's history. For example, when I read the statement of Christ in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, I would find that it answers at length the question of

His disciples, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

As I examined the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists, I would find what my heart was longing for—an explanation of these troubled times, and a "Thus saith the Lord" concerning the future of our world. Peace would fill my heart, despite the troubled conditions about me, for I would see that these conditions were foretold in prophecy; that despite the apparent chaos, God is working out His own plans and soon will come the day of the return of Jesus Christ, when all the evil of this world will end. I would lift up my head and rejoice that my redemption draws nigh, and with enthusiasm would I become a convert to this advent movement, dedicating my time and my all to the proclaiming of its truths to the world in these closing hours of earth's history. **E**

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*Francis D. Nichol was the editor of the Adventist Review when he wrote this article.*

# Steps to Success

John R. Loor

**E**very leader for God desires to be successful. We are told that a disciplined, organized mind is essential for such success. Also that the worker for Christ should not shun mental discipline. In other words, we should be willing for the Holy Spirit to organize us. We, who are so accustomed to organizing others, must not resist organization ourselves. And this goes for our elders' and other workers too. Sometimes this can be slightly painful, if we have been lax along these lines. Our type of work is a perfect target for Satan as he strives to create disorder. We have no time clock to punch like some other workers. The responsibility of faithfully utilizing our time is ours.

God's servant tells us that we must have rules to achieve success through order and discipline. What are some of these rules?

♦ *Recognize priority.* "By dallying over the less important matters, they find themselves hurried, perplexed, and confused when they are called upon to do those duties that are more essential."—*Evangelism*, p. 649. We need to know how, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to put first things first.

♦ *Have a plan.* "Everything must be done according to a well-matured plan, and with system."—*Ibid.* That doesn't leave much out does it? Sometimes we all feel too busy to take time to plan. But if we would do this we would save more time in the final analysis.

♦ *Cultivate regularity and punctuality.* We all have occasions when the best schedule is interrupted; nevertheless, a definite schedule is necessary in order to work smoothly and successfully. Here is a challenge: "Regularity in all things is essential. Never be late to an appointment."—*Ibid.* None of us like to see people straggling into Sabbath school and worship service late. How do we feel when the situation is sometimes reversed?

♦ *Make words and time count.* We should never be too busy to really help precious souls, and may God guard us from "professionalism," but we should avoid

much lost motion. "In no department or office should time be lost in unnecessary conversations."—*Ibid.* Let us make our time really count for Christ, for souls, and for eternity.

♦ *Prompt attention to important matters.* By important matters we mean more than priority. We need to recognize what is important, but we must also move ahead quickly on those very things. If you question this at all, listen to this: "The unfortunate habit of neglecting a special work which needs to be done at a certain time triples the difficulty of performing it later with exactness and without leaving something neglected or unfinished."—*Ibid.*, p. 651. I don't believe that any of us desire to triple the difficulties of any of our work.

♦ *Have a notebook and use it.* "If necessary, have small book in which to jot down the things that need to be done, and set yourself a time in which to do your work."—*The Youth's Instructor*, Jan. 28, 1897.

If you would avoid many "slips" and the constant clouds of uneasiness involved in wondering whether you are forgetting to do something, be sure to make good use of your "little book."

♦ *Have no sidelines.* There is much that could be said in this area and in matters of definition. May the Holy Spirit guide all of us, as we consider the principle enunciated in the following: "Elder \_\_\_\_\_ will surely lose his bearings unless he ceases to interest himself in work that God does not require him to do, work that demands attention to business details. By engaging in secular work he would not be doing that which has been appointed him by God. The proclamation of the gospel message will be his light and life."—*Evangelism*, p. 654. What is our real "light" and "life"?

One more point should be mentioned. I believe that it is clearly supported in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

♦ *Regular rest hours.* God's Word says we should be "temperate in all things." Do we sometimes even boast of our irregular, intemperate programs as though we

are almost proud of them? If God's worker is tired, nothing seems right. His God, his own experience, his church members, and his own family—all suffer as a consequence. It takes discipline to get sufficient physical rest in many cases. It is important. Leave some things to unfinished business. The late Robert Frost put it this way: "I leave a great deal to unfinished business."

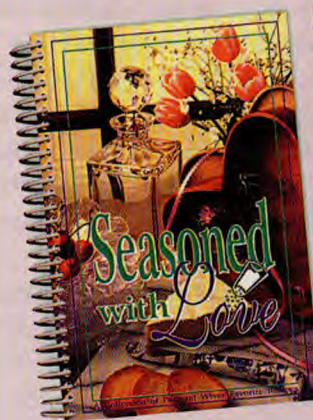
Lest anyone misunderstand, let me hasten to add that this in no way, undoes the previous statement in our list. Donald Culross Peattie's comment on Frost's statement with clarity:

"Roll them about in your mind, you worried and hurried ones. Savor the richness of time and patience, of hope and faith, that lies in this simple utterance. For there is much in the business of our lives that we cannot hasten, for all the urgency of speed that today devils us. There is much—and this is true of the most important of our affairs—that cannot be concluded in a day, or a week, or a month, but must be let to take a guided course. We are too prone to bring it with us to our rest, and thrash it over uselessly. . . . When an acorn fallen from an oak at last splits husk, sprouts, and begins to take root, how much unfinished business lies ahead of it! It has no contract with the sun and rain to have become an oak tree by a certain date. But with their help, it will grow until it towers and spreads shade, in the good time we call God's. We ought as trustingly to let our plans to problems ripen to solution, knowing there is another Hand in the business besides our own. To leave a question to 'unfinished business' is not to abandon the task. It is to attain the serenity which will give us strength to carry on with it when the call to effort comes."

If, by the grace of God and with the help of his Holy Spirit, we follow such God-given suggestions, what will be the result? There is no question. Here it is: "Such a training is necessary not only for the young men but for the older workers in order that their ministry may be free from mistakes, and their sermons be clear, accurate, and convincing."—*Evangelism*, p. 648. May God give us such an experience and such a ministry. **E**

*John R. Loor worked as pastor in Dallas, Texas, when he wrote this article.*

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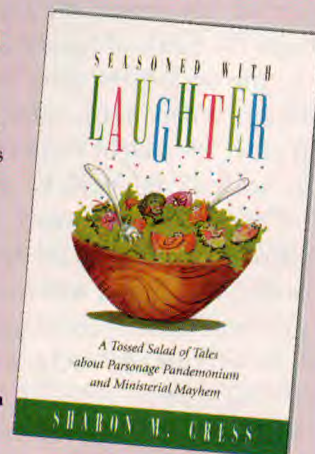
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# The Content of the Pastoral Prayer

C. M. Mellor

**P**rayer in the church worship service is the respectful and receptive opening of the heart to God with others of like attitudes and expectations. It is a togetherness in approaching God for His presence and mercies. How inspiring is the promise: "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him: He also will hear their cry, and will save them" (Ps. 145: 18, 19).

Just how does one prepare a pastoral prayer? There is a natural sequence to be followed in this art. This is true both when we are in private communion with our Lord and when we are praying before a congregation in the setting of a worship service. Let us together consider six aspects of an effective prayer.

1. *Adoration and reverence.* All prayer begins with adoration and a reverence for God and His holy name.

To adore God is to love Him. This is the foundation of all true prayer. We address our prayers to God through the name of Jesus Christ.

In the Scriptures there are many illustrations of adoration. When the disciples said to Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray." He taught them to say, "Our Father which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name" (Luke 11:1,2). When the angel announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds, they sang, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men" (ch. 2:14). In the prayer of Isaiah, preceding his vision of the glory of God, he exclaimed, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 6:3).

Is it not significant that the remnant church which heralds the "everlasting gospel," is admonished, "Fear God, and give glory to Him" (Rev. 14:7)? This text in Phillips' translation reads: "Reverence God, and give glory to him."\* "Prayer is the most holy exercise of the soul. It should be sincere, humble, and earnest—the desires of a renewed heart breathed in the presence of a holy God. When the suppliant feels that he is in the divine presence, self will be forgotten. He will have no

desire to display human talent; he will not seek to please the ear of men, but to obtain the blessing which the soul craves."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 201.

One of the great problems in most Seventh-day Adventist churches is lack of reverence. Only as worshipers sense that they are in God's presence and that God is in the house of worship through the Holy Spirit can real prayer be experienced and real reverence felt.

To pray to God is to rejoice in Him; to turn our thoughts from self to God. Nothing we possess is as important as knowing who God is and that we possess Him. It is at this point that real, effective prayer begins!

2. *Praise and thanksgiving.* There is much in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy about joy and thanksgiving in prayer. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20). "We need to praise God more 'for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men.' Ps. 107:8. Our devotional exercises should not consist wholly in asking and receiving. Let us not be always thinking of our wants, and never of the benefits we receive. We do not pray any too much, but we are too sparing of giving thanks. We are the constant recipients of God's mercies, and yet how little gratitude we express, how little we praise Him for what He has done for us."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 102, 103.

In the prayer of adoration and reverence, we love God for Himself and what He is; in the prayer of thanksgiving and praise, we thank God for what He has done. It is to say, "God, I thank thee for. . ." As we thank God for His many blessing, our attention is directed away from ourselves and upward to Him. "No tongue can express, no finite mind can conceive, the blessing that results from appreciating the goodness and love of God."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 253.

3. *The prayer of confession.* The two types of prayer previously mentioned—adoration and thanksgiving—are significant, for they direct us toward God. In the effective pastoral prayer, there is also a place for the



expression of the worshiper's needs. One of the basic problems of any congregation is the forgiveness of sin. It is sin that separates man from God.

The key to a reconciliation with God is to say, "Lord, we are sorry." "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). "True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 38. Not only is it important to confess the sins that come to our minds; but we must also confess the underlying motives that lie deep in the heart. It was the psalmist who cried, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults" (Ps. 19:12).

How solemn are the words "Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, 'Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, 'Where is their God?' " (Joel 2:17).

It is painful to recognize our spiritual failures, yet how wonderful to know God's forgiveness! When we pray the prayer of confession, it is not to condemn the church but to point to the mercies of a loving Father.

4. *Intercession in prayer.* In the prayer of intercession we are praying, not for ourselves, but for others. True Christians who deeply love others cannot but pray for them. This is one of the great privileges in talking to God in behalf of a congregation.

There are persons we would remember in our private communion with God who would not be remembered in the pastoral prayer. Those for whom intercession is made should be the concern of the entire congregation. At this point in the pastoral prayer, mention the leaders, evangelists, teachers, colporteurs, the sick, and the discouraged. Little do we understand the heavy burdens and bewildering perplexities upon the hearts of the worshipers. To mention such in a general way might be the means of giving someone the lift he or she needs. "It is when we come into difficult places that He reveals His power and wisdom in answer to humble prayer."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 199.

5. *Petition in prayer.* Generally when people pray it is because they want something. The prayer of petition is for ourselves, our needs and desires. Jesus, when teaching His disciples how to pray, said, "Give us this day our daily bread." In asking for things, caution must be expressed, for in praying thus, our wills are often placed before the will of God. We must examine our motives

to make sure they are righteous and unselfish.

In our private communion with God our prayers should be simple as we ask for our temporal and spiritual needs. Although He knows these needs, He wants us to ask for them.

Our petitions may not always be answered in the way we would wish, but we can learn lessons from God's refusals and pray for the wisdom and strength that we need to reach His standards.

6. *Committing ourselves to God.* The proper climax of prayer is for us to commit and dedicate ourselves to the service and keeping of God. Failure to align our lives to the revealed will of God would debase prayer to empty and high-sounding words. "Commit thy way unto the Lord trust also in Him; and he shall bring it too pass" (Ps. 37:5).

Effective prayer comes from total dedication. Thus it seems fitting to commit ourselves to God near the conclusion of the pastoral prayer. "There are conditions to the fulfillment of God's promises, and prayer can never take the place of duty. 'If ye love Me,' Christ says, 'Keep My commandments.' . . . Those who bring their petitions to God, claiming His promise while they do not comply with the conditions, insult Jehovah."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p.143.

In leading a congregation in the pastoral prayer, development can be experienced by using the six aspects of prayer. The six steps are:

*Adoration and worship:* "Our Father which art in heaven. We love Thee with all our hearts. . ."

*Thanksgiving and praise:* "Thank You, God, for the gift to mankind in the form of Jesus, Thy Son, for the revelation of Thy will in the Holy Scriptures. . ."

*Confession:* "We're sorry we are lukewarm when we should be fervent, for failing to apply to ourselves the standards of conduct we demand of others. . ."

*Intercession:* "Help him who is preaching these eternal truths to those who do not know Thee, and direct those who are manning difficult, lonely stations . . ."

*Petition:* "If it be Thy will, give us the means to build our new school, for food and clothing so our Dorcas Society can help the needy. . ."

*Commitment:* "Take us and use us in Thy great vineyard to help finish the work so we may be ready to meet the Lord when He comes . . ." E

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*C. M. Mellor was the ministerial secretary of the Northern California Conference when he wrote this article.*

# Hospital Visitation

## An important ministry for elders

**M**embers in the hospital need pastoral visits, but not always from the pastor. Local lay elders can have a vital hospital ministry. The following guidelines should be helpful.

1. *Turn gossip into a gift.* Assign members who always seem to know everything that goes on the responsibility of notifying the pastor or head elder when a member is hospitalized.

2. *Go immediately.* Hospital stays are getting shorter and shorter, and people feel neglected and even rejected if someone representing the church doesn't visit.

3. *Check at the nurses' station* as a courtesy to the care-givers. You might learn something about the patient's illness and ensure that a visit is not out of order. This is especially important in an obstetrics ward, where special rules may apply.

4. *Befriend others in the room.* They may be longing for spiritual encouragement.

5. *Don't wake the patient.* Finding rest is difficult in a hospital. Write a sentence or two on a card and leave it by the bed.

6. *Don't sit or lean on the bed.* This can bring serious discomfort to a sore body. Instead, offer a lingering handshake as you begin your visit. It shows you care.

7. *Be cautious in asking about illness.* The patient may be facing immediate surgery or a serious diagnosis, such as malignancy. The direction of your visit and its length should follow the particular need of the situation. It is better to get your information at the nurses' station, but the nurse might not be available or willing to tell you. So you might ask the patient: "Are you in for something serious?" or "How are you feeling?" You could also say with a reassuring smile: "Tell me what's been happening with you." You'll learn whatever the person wants to share about the illness.

8. *Be sensitive to anxiety.* Some patients suppose that good Christians should not suffer fear or worry.

They simulate a courage and bravado that they don't genuinely feel. If you sense this happening, gently encourage them to air their negative feelings so you can bring relief.

9. *Be positive.* Bring in a little sunshine. Keep in mind, though, that the hospital is not a place for boisterous frivolity.

10. *Listen much.* Don't talk too much, but enough to assure patients that you have heard and understood them. Your mere presence says a lot.

11. *Share a text if appropriate.* Carry a pocket Bible. Suggested scriptures are in the shaded box below.

12. *Be brief.* Leave almost immediately if the patient is in pain. In other cases, a 5- to 10-minute visit is usually adequate.

13. *Pray.* Take the patient's hand and pray specifically for the needs expressed. Pray a special prayer with new mothers, asking God to bless their babies.

14. *Leave soon after prayer,* while its aura prevails. The blessing of the Lord will remain with the patient, and the results of your visit may prove to be eternal.

### Suggested scriptures for hospital visitation

*General texts:* Psalms 23, 46, 101, 103; Jeremiah 30:17; Matthew 15:30, 31; Romans 5:3-5; 8:16-39; James 5:13-16; 3 John 2

*Before surgery:* Psalms 91; 103:1-5; Isaiah 43:1-3; 58:8, 9

*In pain:* Isaiah 26:3, 4; Mat 11:28, 29; John 14:27

*Facing death:* Psalms 23; 56:11; 90:1-6, 10; Isaiah 56:11; John 3:14-16; 14:1-4, 25-27; Romans 8:35-39; 2 Corinthians 5:1-4

*On recovery:* Psalms 34:4-8; 107:1-9; Luke 17:12-18

*Childbirth:* Matthew 18:1-6; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 1:46-49

*Adapted from the Minister's Manual*

# The Call to Come and the Call to Go

Mark 3:13-19

## I. Introduction.

We can come to Jesus just as we are, and by encouraging others to come just as they are. But the truth is that we cannot come to Jesus and remain exactly as we are.

His transforming power is demonstrated most dramatically in the changes that came about in the disciples, who later became apostles. In the days following the ascension of our Lord, we find them as brave and courageous proclaimers of a message that brought upon them the hostility of both political and religious leaders, see Acts 4:13.

Before one can become an apostle, he must be a disciple. Not all disciples become apostles. A disciple is a learner, a follower, a listener, a hearer.

The word translated *apostle* means "one sent forth." An apostle was a representative of another who went on a mission. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul speaks of apostles as being the gifts of the Spirit to the church. We cannot limit this term to the original twelve. Anyone who goes forth on a mission being led by the Holy Spirit is in reality an apostle.

If we would become the servants, the apostles, the helpers of Jesus Christ, we must "be *with* him."

These men were originally receivers but because of being with Him, they were changed into givers.

Jesus Christ calls us to be with Him before He sends us out to be His blessing to others.

## II. Jesus issues a call to all to come.

A. He invites us to come to Him that we might experience the cleansing of forgiveness.

B. Jesus invites us to enter into a family relationship with God (John 1:11-12). He wants everyone to experience the sense of belonging that comes to those who are members of God's family.

C. Jesus invites us to come to Him for fullness of life (John 10:10).

## III. Jesus issues a call to companionship.

We are to respond to Him as Lord and teacher and shepherd and friend.

Before the original disciples could become apostles, it was necessary that they "be with Him."

A. Only by being with Jesus could they really get acquainted with God. John 14:9. Jesus came to manifest the character and the purpose of God.

1. It takes time to really get acquainted with someone.
2. We must really listen to someone to get acquainted with him.
3. We must carefully observe and watch someone if we are to become deeply acquainted with him.
4. We must take the risk of getting hurt in order to really get acquainted with someone.

B. Only by being with Jesus can we learn how to live by faith.

1. We have to learn to trust God.
2. Most of us want to trust in ourselves or in circumstances.
3. Many of us want to plot our own course and then let God okay it. We want to jump off the cliff and depend upon God to rescue us if this is not good for us.
4. Jesus would teach us that God is good and wise.
5. Jesus would help us know that God will always show us what is right.

C. Only by being with Jesus can we really learn the way of love. Jesus wanted to teach His disciples to love God supremely and to love others by the same measure that they loved themselves.

1. Most of us live self-centered, selfish lives.
2. The security and the development of others was always uppermost in the mind of Jesus Christ.

D. Only by being with Him could His disciples learn the importance of being absolutely obedient. Jesus was obedient to His Father. He sought to instill within His disciples the

desire to so love God that they would always be obedient to the commands of God. Jesus knew that the evangelization of the world would be dependent upon the obedience of His disciples. When one dies to self, he will be raised back to life again.

**IV. Conclusion**

It was after considerable teaching and growth that “the disciples were for the first time called Christians.” In Antioch they became Christians as they let Him change them into His own image. God needs you; others need what God can do through you. Determine that you will be with Him so that He can make an apostle out of a disciple, using your life as the raw material.

**V. Illustration: *Call of the apostles Why choose me?***

A Sunday School teacher was teaching a group of teenage boys one Sunday about Christ’s disciples; about their abilities, their attributes, and why Jesus might have chosen them. Toward the end of the lesson a teen-aged boy who was particularly enthralled about the whole concept of calling, chosen by God, said, “Teacher, why did Jesus choose Judas?” To which the Sunday school teacher replied, “Son, I don’t know. But I have a harder question. Why did Jesus choose me?” **E**

# Believe and Behave

**Matthew 5:21-48**

**I. Introduction.**

The law of God is a reliable guide for successful living. Based on two great principles, reverence for God and respect for others.

Christianity is no easy “do-as-you-please” religion. He says that if we dare bear His name we are to believe and behave!

There are five problems with others we will not have when we believe and behave!

**II. The problem of anger (Matt. 5:21-26).**

- A. The danger of anger (Matt. 5:22). The word “danger” appears three times in this one

verse, the danger of anger. Read Mark 3:5 and Eph. 4:26. Anger is not always condemned in the Bible. God has given us the ability to feel anger, but He expects us to use it constructively.

In Matthew 5:22 Christ is not speaking about anger concerning a situation, but anger that is directed toward individual people. The word *raca* can hardly be translated because it describes a tone of voice more than content or meaning. Christ forbids the use of this word because it displays a spirit of arrogance and contemptuous anger.

Christ forbids also the usage of the word *fool*. Christ is forbidding us to destroy another person’s name and reputation.

- B. The defeat of anger (Matt. 5:23-26). Christ contends that one should discontinue worship, go to his brother, make things right, and then return to a meaningful worship experience. Christ is stating that the Christian takes the initiative in reconciliation. The sooner we take this initiative in asking forgiveness, the better and the easier it is. Therefore, Christ says, “Go first and be reconciled to thy brother.”

Reconciliation is a prerequisite to fellowship with God.

**III. The problem of adultery (Matt. 5:27—28).**

In the matter of adultery, everybody involved loses. Never is there a happy ending to an “affair,” whether that affair be extramarital or premarital.

- A. The root of adultery (Matt. 5:28). The law condemns the act of adultery; Jesus condemns the attitude of adultery.

The attitude He condemns is the lustful look. If we take the law of Moses literally, a man on a desert island can never be guilty of adultery. But according to the teachings of

Christ, he could if he persisted in his lustful attitude toward women. In his imagination he could treat a woman as a passing pleasure, rather than a person. Thus Jesus deals with the root of the problem of adultery, which is a matter of the heart.

- B. The remedy for adultery (Matt. 5:29-32).  
Christ offers two remedies.
1. Personal purity.
  2. Respect for marriage.

We must be careful not to become Pharisaical in our attitude. If God will forgive a person who lies, or who steals, or who commits adultery and repents, surely He will forgive a person who has made a mistake in his marriage.

**IV. The problem of dishonesty (Matt. 5:33-37).**

- A. We must tell the truth under all circumstances (Matt. 5:34-36).
- B. Dishonesty is solved by Christian character (Matt. 5:37).

**V. The problem of retaliation (Matt. 5:38-42).**

- A. The senselessness of retaliation (Matt. 5:38).  
Exchanging criticism gets us nowhere except in serious trouble.
- B. The alternative (Matt. 5:39-42). The ancient law of unlimited retaliation and the later law of limited retaliation is replaced by Christ with the law of no retaliation.

The implication of Christ's teaching is that if I am slapped in the face, I must neither hit back nor run. Rather I must stand my ground, take the insult, and demonstrate that as a Christian I would rather suffer wrong than do wrong.

**VI. The problem of hate (Matt. 5:43-48).**

- A. The destructiveness of hate (Matt. 5:46-47).  
In verse 46, Christ states that hate destroy our rewards. In verse 47, He contends that it destroys our testimony. Ultimately hate

destroys the person who hates. Hate warps our judgment, breaks down our personal poise and peace of mind, creates nervous disorders and high blood pressure, and can cause illness and death. These facts are confirmed by leading physicians in clinical studies.

- B. The destruction of hate (Matt. 5:44-45).
1. We must love our enemies.
  2. Bless our enemies. Speak well of them.
  3. "Do good to them."
  4. Pray for them.

**VII. Conclusion.**

Read verse 48. This is an impossible imperative, since no one can be as perfect as God. Yet the word *perfect* should not be interpreted to mean sinless or flawless. Rather we should understand it to mean the whole—complete and mature. "Quit acting like a child!" He is admonishing us to grow up and become mature, as our heavenly Father is mature, and thus make our love all-inclusive. It is then you will be numbered among those who "believe and behave!"

**VIII. Illustration.**

In our relationships with others, often what passes for love is little more than a neat business transaction. People are kind to us, so we repay them with equal consideration. When they treat us unjustly, our negative response is really what they asked for. Everything is so balanced, so fair, so logical with this eye-for-an-eye and tooth-for-a-tooth kind of justice. But Christian love never settles for only what's reasonable. It insists on giving mercy as well as justice. It breaks the chain of logical reactions.

General Robert E. Lee was asked what he thought of a fellow officer in the Confederate Army who had made some derogatory remarks about him. Lee rated him as being very satisfactory. The person who asked the question seemed perplexed. "General," he said, "I guess you don't know what he's been saying about you." "I know," answered Lee. "But I was asked my opinion of him, not his opinion of me!"

*Joel Sarli is the editor of Elder's Digest.*

# Elder's Job Description

We have received at the Ministerial Association many letters from pastors and elders asking for a comprehensive job description for elders in the local congregation. Here we are including in this issue of *Elders's Digest* these guidelines that reflect the experience of pastors and elders in different places and cultures.—The Editor

## The Elder's Relationship with the Congregation and Pastor

Pastors and elders are partners in ministry. Each should be able to say of the other, as Paul did of his associates, "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now." (Phi. 1:3-5, RSV).

Elders need to find time for doing their work. Elders are seldom chosen who are not busy, successful people. The time they can spend in church work is limited by their vocations, families, and health. However, they need to understand that many pastors, reading what has been said in the chapter 3 of *Elder's Handbook* about sharing work with their elders, will do so with a skeptical eye. The reason these pastors sometimes feel they must do everything themselves is that they have given assignments to elders who have proven undependable. Elders should probably not be elders if they see their work exclusively as a Sabbath morning responsibility.

## Elder's Activity General Guidelines

1. *Visit every family* on your parish list at least once per year—Take a deacon with you.
2. *Participate in Communion Services*—Head Elder will make assignments.
3. *Regularly attend bimonthly elder's meetings*. These always fall on odd-numbered months—six hours per year; we need inter-elder communication.
4. *Regularly attend bimonthly afternoon meetings, elder's homes*. These always fall on even-numbered months, Meeting time—fifteen hours yearly.
5. *Platform duties of the Presiding Elder:*
  - a. 9:00 a.m. meeting with the Pastor for announcement period and orientation.
  - b. Prayer requests and congregational prayer—short, three minutes maximum, upbeat.
  - c. Work with, explain particulars etc. to person giving invocation.
  - d. Reading of Word—Go over texts for day.
  - e. Assist worship hour speaker wherever possible.
  - f. After service, stand at exterior door and greet folks as they leave.
6. *Platform duties 2nd Elder:*
  - a. Offertory prayer.
  - b. Benediction—summarize sermon, or Gen 31:49; Num 6:24-27; Joshua 1:9; Psa 19:14; Isa 60:1, 19; Rom 15:15; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 3:20, 21; Jude 24, 25; Phil 4:8, 9; 1 Tim 1:17; Philemon 3; Heb 13:20, 21; 2 Peter 3:18
  - c. Assist other elders.
  - d. Invite special music into elder's preparation.
  - e. After service, mingle with and greet folks.
7. *Participate as requested in ordinations, baptisms, special services.*
8. *Be actively involved in Spiritual Gifted areas of ministry.*
9. *Regularly review Elder qualifications:* 1 Tim 3:1-7, Titus 2:1-9, 1:5-9.
10. *Assist or lead out sometimes in member anointing services.*
11. *Regularly attend all church board meetings*, at least 10 out of 12 per year.
12. *Be especially attentive to welcome*, and incorporate new members into the church body.
13. *Be a "spiritual" leader*, role model, in your circle of influence.
14. *Remember all are called to be disciplers:* Matt. 28:19.
15. *Visit the sick on your parish list*. Contact a pastor if it is a serious illness.
16. *Make it your business to get close to your parish families*, know their spiritual condition, encourage

*their continued growth.*

17. *Maintain a daily, growing, personal devotional life.*
18. *Plan your ministry hours so as not to burn out, or underachieve your possibilities.*
19. *Be an affirming person with praise on your lips. It's catching.*
20. *Uphold the Bible message of the S.D.A. Church and its organizations.*
  - Be loyal.
  - Believe that this is the best Church in the Universe and that your congregation is the best individual church, with the best people, leaders, etc., that you know.
  - Realize that the above is totally impossible to accomplish without dependence and strength from God. God's strength is made perfect in weakness.

#### Parish Minister's Responsibilities

1. Become personally acquainted with each family in your parish, visiting each at least once every three months and the elderly or ill once each month—more often if necessary. Use report forms to register visits. The report forms should be given to the Pastor on the Sabbath after the visit.
2. Report to the pastor the names of all who, because of physical handicaps or other circumstances, are not able to attend the Sabbath services.
3. Encourage regularity in church attendance and active participation in church activities. Arrange transportation when necessary.
4. Take special note of the sick, birth dates, wedding anniversaries, new babies, etc., by sending appropriate cards and by passing information along to the church office for publication in the church newsletter or bulletin.
5. Report to the Pastor the names of all in your parish who would like communion in the home on the Sabbath that this service is observed in the church. Assist the Pastor in arranging for this.
6. In case of death, contact Head Deaconess to arrange for meals to be provided for the family on the day of the funeral.
7. Report to the Head Deacon or Head Deaconess any physical or material needs where help may be needed. Report to Community Services when

the need is such that it may call for their assistance.

8. Report to the church office any changes of address or family member additions or departures that occur in your parish.
9. Pass on to the church office any news item that would be appropriate for the church newsletter.
10. Be alert to discover prospective church members moving into our area. Get acquainted and invite them to the services.
11. Make a special effort to contact new members added to your parish, doing what you can to help integrate them into the church program by introducing them to leading officers of the church, as well as to others.
12. You are the under-shepherd of your parish. Show a genuine interest. Be concerned about their welfare. Take note of their absence from church. Seek to help stem any trend toward discouragement or apostasy. In this work, you will be a real help to the pastor. The more work the layman can do, the more the pastor can do.

#### Administration of Visitation

##### A. Desirable Characteristics

1. Be friendly
2. Be sincere
3. Smile
4. Show genuine love and interest
5. Be natural
6. Be well-groomed

##### B. Basic Objectives of Visitation

1. To minister to persons, and convey a concern to the person himself.
2. To get to know intimately the persons or family involved. Elders cannot adequately minister to the needs of people until we know them as persons, understand who they are, and where they are emotionally, culturally, and religiously.
3. To minister to the personal needs of those called upon. (The most common barrier to recognizing the needs of persons is the elder's concern to discuss or promote the institutional program of the church.)
4. Every call must convey God's love and the

church's concern for those called upon.

5. To establish a relationship that will serve as a bridge for more effective pastoral care in the future. "It is highly important that a pastor mingle with his people, and thus become acquainted with the different phases of human nature. He should study the working of the mind, that he may adapt his teachings to the intellect of his hearers." G.W. 191

### C. Purpose of Visiting

The primary aim of all our visitation must be spiritual and not merely social.

1. To win the lost. (Visiting is the only way to reach and help some people.)
2. To regain the backslider.
3. To help straighten out spiritual difficulties.
4. To comfort the sorrowing. (Visit the bereaved after the funeral too.)
5. To minister to the lonely and afflicted.
6. To comfort and encourage the sick.
7. To welcome new members.
8. To contact prospects.
9. To bring cheer to the aged and those who are unable to attend church.
10. To learn the home conditions of the members.
11. To encourage family worship.
12. To encourage regular church attendance and active participation in church activities.
13. To represent Christ and the Church.
14. Important in visiting members, an item often overlooked, is to secure names and addresses of prospects for church membership. This will include:
  - a. Members of the family
  - b. Neighbors
  - c. Friends
  - e. Former Adventists
  - e. Other contacts

"We should visit every family. . . to inquire into the spiritual condition of every member of the household. His own soul must be imbued with the love of God; then by kindly courtesy he may win his way to the hearts of all, and labor successfully for parents, and children, entreating, warning, encouraging, as the case demands." *Evangelism*, p 347.

### D. What to Do on a Pastoral Visit

1. Pray before leaving to visit.
2. Make the call.
3. Remember the objectives of pastoral visit described above. It is absolutely essential to know why you are engaged in visiting.
4. Accept people as you find them.
5. Remember that the main concern of visiting is not what you say, but how you relate to the person.
6. Be a good listener, and not ears only. Give your undivided attention to the person being called upon. Most visits would be improved if the elder listened more and talked less. (Usually the quickest way for an elder to get a parent to open up for free discussion is to ask about the children in the family.)
7. Speak a word of encouragement or counsel (depending on the situation.)
8. Read a portion of God's word.
9. Don't look at your watch too often (better if you don't have to at all.)
10. Don't appear anxious to leave.
11. Pray in each home.
12. Never use God's word lightly or facetiously.
13. Have a sympathetic heart—be understanding.

"Visiting from house to house forms an important part of the minister's labors. He should aim to converse with all the members of the family, whether they profess the truth or not. It is his duty to ascertain the spiritual condition of all; and he should live so near to God that he can counsel, exhort, and reprove, carefully and in wisdom. He should have the grace of God in his own heart and the love of God constantly in view." 2T 338

### E. What to Talk About on a First Visit

1. Informal self-introduction, telling the member you just dropped in for a few minutes to get acquainted and a few friendly remarks about the home. Hand them your calling-card if you have one, so that they can remember your name and phone number.
2. Ask how this individual came into the truth and how long ago. (A valuable background in cataloging a member in your mind.)



3. Ask what Sabbath School class the member is in. (If not attending regularly, this brings out an admission of non-attendance, opening the way for you to urge greater faithfulness in the future and your desire to be of any help and encouragement possible.)
4. Take mental note of all the children, their names and ages, to jot down when you get out to the car.
5. Ask if they have any relatives, neighbors or friends in the area who are interested in the truth.
6. Give the member a brief enthusiastic preview of plans, enlisting interest and prayers.
7. If any children of church school age are not in our schools, put in a word urging the parents to give earnest study to getting them into our schools.
8. Find out the general schedules of the member or family, when they work, when generally home, etc. This is valuable for planning later visits.
9. Conclude with a word about the "lateness of the hour" and the need for us to have a full, day-by-day consecration and readiness for the Lord's return and faithfulness in Sabbath School and church attendance.
10. Close with prayer.
11. As you leave assure this member that you want to be considered a friend—a friend available in sickness or trouble, day or night and that their names will be on your heart.
12. As you cover the Parish List, you should draw up two lists:
  - a. The shut-ins and sick.
  - b. The discouraged, the irregular and the slipping members.

These two groups will need additional attention regularly. Never neglect the sick. Those needing spiritual help must be visited as often and as soon as your schedule will allow.

#### F. Emergency Calls

Emergency calls need special attention. They include serious accident cases, deaths, illnesses, disturbance in the families, in fact, all cases of life. The

elder should be available for all such cases as far as possible.

#### Visitation of the Sick

1. Make your call as soon as possible. Take your spouse if it seems advisable.
2. A visit of probably no more than ten minutes is wise. Let your visit bring courage and optimism to the one who is sick.
3. Previous to the visit, choose an appropriate scripture to read—one of faith, courage, God's love, His watch-care, a gospel story. Suggestions: *Ps. 103:1-13, Isa. 26.3.4, 3 John 2*, these are only samples. Many quotes from *Steps to Christ, Ministry of Healing, Desire of Ages* are excellent.
4. Finish with a short, uplifting prayer that the presence of God might be strongly felt.
5. Promise them that you will continue to pray for them in your own home. This means much to them.
6. It is good, many times, to leave a denominational paper or booklet with them if they can read.

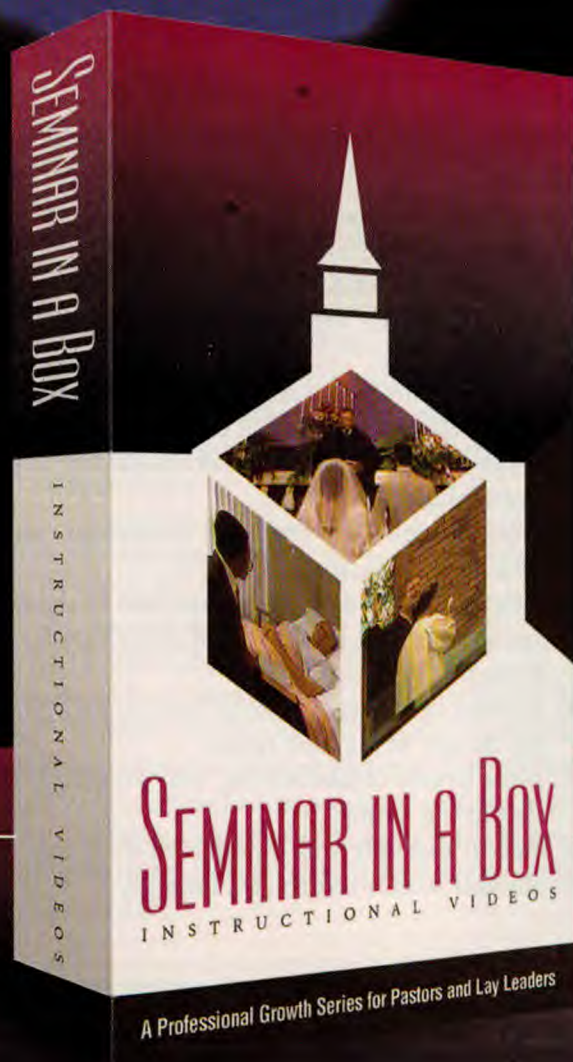
#### Visitation of Newly-Baptized or Transferred Members

1. Make your call as soon as possible after they are received into church membership.
2. Let this family know that they are welcome, and that the church wishes to help them in every possible way.
3. Make it known, inconspicuously, that your visit is on behalf of the church board.
4. If this is a divided home, exercise careful tact in every phase of the visit.
5. Note carefully any problems discovered, with which we can help.
6. Attempt to discover if any members of the family have experience in any line of church work, including musical talents.
7. If you can arrange it, invite them to your home for dinner in the near future.
8. Have prayer before leaving, and pray for each one in the family.
9. Report carefully your findings to the Pastor.
10. Re-visit within three to six months.

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# Church Pulpit Year

Ralph W. Martin

*These guidelines for planning the church pulpit year will be helpful for elders as well as for pastors.—Editor*

**S**ome preachers find it difficult to work out a pulpit schedule a year in advance. If you are dependent on planning 52 sermons that are unrelated to each other, it is complicated. If you take a broader view, and plan six to ten series, then it becomes much easier. Those who have preached a series on the Ten Commandments know that a certain rhythm and pace develops that is pleasing both to the congregation and the preacher. The struggle to be fresh and challenging forces the speaker to grow, and the congregation will grow with him.

*A series has several advantages for the preacher.*

The first three were just mentioned. It helps him plan his pulpit year. It gives him pace and rhythm. It forces him to research deeply into a subject, thereby giving him and the congregation growth. It allows him to cover a broader subject than one sermon would allow. It encourages the members to come regularly so they will not miss a sermon in the series. It makes advertising of the topic easier. It lets the congregation know in advance what to expect. It gives the congregation confidence that their pastor knows how to organize and how to lead them in Bible study.

*There are some problems in a series that should be pointed out.*

A long series can become tiresome. Three to six sermons are considered about right. If I preached the Ten commandments again, I would break them into two sections, preaching a four sermon series, and later, the other six.

A poorly-planned series can disrupt seasonal or denominational topics that should be covered. To disregard Thanksgiving, Christmas, Religious Liberty Day, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Spirit of Prophecy, or Educational Day, would be poor planning. With care, these special days can be worked into a series, or

you can arrange your schedule so that these days fall between series.

A series should have some inherent and logical connection. To string sermons together like popcorn on a string is not what is meant. Do not stretch a topic that could be covered in one sermon into three. The idea is to take a topic that cannot be covered in one sermon and divide it into logical parts.

A series must be interesting to the congregation. Sermons on the sanctuary can wear thin if they do not relate to practical experience. Few people care what symbols or Greek words mean unless it helps them to better understand God or themselves. It is easy for pastors to ride hobbyhorses in a series, unless they are careful to avoid them.

*Some of the highlights of my ministry have come from the series of sermons that I have preached.*

Special ones that come to my mind are: Christ, our righteousness—from the book of Romans (six sermons); lessons from the life of David (four sermons); highlights from the letters of Paul (six sermons taking the central theme of his letters to six churches); lessons from the Gospel of Luke (from Christmas to Easter); messages from the Minor Prophets (one sermon on each of the six prophets); the early history of the Seventh-day Adventist church (four sermons); early leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Bates, James White, Ellen White, J. N. Andrews, Uriah Smith); and Christian stewardship (four sermons). You can see from these examples that these series have forced me to broaden my study habits. With each of the series above, the congregation felt they were either being reassured of old truths, or gaining insights into new ones.

*When planning your pulpit year, try to cover major SDA doctrines during the year. Make our faith seem practical, inviting, and secure. Your preaching ministry will blossom, and your congregation will grow. **E***

*Ralph W. Martin was the head of the department of pastoral ministry in Oregon when he wrote this article.*

# Soul-warming tales that touch the heart

Henry Feyerabend

## Learning from Mistakes

A young man of 32 had been appointed President of a bank. He'd never dreamed he'd be president, much less at such a young age. So he approached the venerable Chairman of the Board and said, "You know, I've just been appointed President. I was wondering if you could give me some advice."

The old man came back with just two words: "right decisions!" The young man had hoped for a bit more than this, so he said, "That's really helpful, and I appreciate it, but can you be more specific? How do I make right decisions?"

The wise old man simply responded, "Experience."

The young man said, "Well, that's just the point of my being here. I don't have the kind of experience I need. How do I get it?"

Came the terse reply, "Wrong decisions!"

## Love and Forgiveness Comes from Jesus

Corrie Ten Boom shares this true story in her book, *The Hiding Place*. It was a church service in Munich that I saw him, the former S.S. man who had stood guard at the shower room door in the processing center at Ravensbruck. He was the first of our actual jailers that I had seen since that time. And suddenly it was all there - the roomful of mocking men, the heaps of clothing, Betsie's pain-blanching face. He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. "How grateful I am for your message, Fraulein," he said. "To think that, as you say, He has washed my sins away!"

His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often to the people in Bloemendaal the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side.

Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him.

I tried to smile, I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me Your forgiveness.

As I took his hand the most incredible thing hap-

pened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me.

I discovered that the world's healing hinges not on our forgiveness or on our goodness, but on His. When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself.

## "What Hath God wrought"

In an interview with the great inventor of the telegraph, Samuel F.B. Morse, George Hervey inquired, "Professor Morse, when you were making your experiments at the university, did you ever come to a standstill, not knowing what to do next?" "Oh, yes, more than once." "Then what did you do?" "I've never discussed this with anyone, so the public knows nothing about it. But now that you ask me, I'll tell you frankly—I prayed for more light." "And did God give you the wisdom and knowledge you needed?" "Yes, He did," said Morse. "That's why I never felt I deserved the honors that came to me from America and Europe because of the invention associated with my name. I had made a valuable application of the use of electrical power, but it was all through God's help. It wasn't because I was superior to other scientists. When the Lord wanted to bestow this gift on mankind, He had to use someone. I'm just grateful He chose to reveal it to me."

In view of these facts, it's not surprising that the inventor's first message over the telegraph was: "What hath God wrought!"

## Good Questions

A little boy came to his father and asked him, "Dad, who made God?" The father, engrossed in the evening paper, responded, "Beats me, son." The little boy would not be put off. "Dad, why is the earth round?" The dad answered, "I don't know, son." The boy played for a minute, then asked, "Dad, is there life on other planets?" The father patiently answered, "Nobody knows the answer to that." Finally the boy asked his father, "Dad, do you mind me asking you all these questions?" The father put down his paper, "Why not at all son," he said, "how else are you going to learn?"

## The Beauty of Forgiving Spirit

A mother once came to President Lincoln seeking the pardon of her son, under sentence of death. The

result of her pleading was that Lincoln issued a pardon. After leaving him, as she passed through a corridor, she exclaimed to Thaddeus Stevens, who accompanied her, "I knew it was a lie!"

Stevens asked: "What do you refer to?"

She replied with vehemence, "Why, they told me he was an ugly-looking man, but he is the handsomest man I ever saw in my life." (From *Little, Historical Lights*)

### Example Of Human

An honest and hardworking Russian peasant, named Aksenov, left his dear wife and family for a few days to visit a nearby fair. He spent his first overnight at an inn during which a murder was committed. The murderer placed the murder weapon in the sleeping peasant's bag.

The police discovered him that way in the morning. He was stuck in prison for 26 years, surviving on bitter hopes of revenge. One day the real murderer was imprisoned with him and soon charged with an escape attempt. He had been digging a tunnel that Aksenov alone had witnessed. The authorities interrogated the peasant about his crime, granting him at long last his opportunity for revenge, for on the peasant's word his enemy would be flogged almost to death.

Aksenov was asked to bear witness to the crime, and as only Tolstoy can tell the story, instead of jumping at the chance, the grace of God suddenly wells up in the peasant's heart, and he finds the darkness in him has fled, and he is filled with light. He finds himself saying to the officers: "I saw nothing."

That night the guilty criminal makes his way to the peasant's bunk and, sobbing on his knees, begs his forgiveness. And again the light of Christ floods the peasant's heart. "God will forgive you," said he. "Maybe I am a hundred times worse than you." And at these words his heart grew light and the longing for home left him. (Tolstoy)

### Learning Forgiveness from a Dog

Sir Walter Scott had difficulty with the idea of "turning the other cheek." But Jesus' words took on special meaning one day when Scott threw a rock at a stray dog to chase it away. His aim was straighter and his delivery stronger than he had intended, for he hit the animal and broke its leg. Instead of running off, the dog limped over to him and licked his hand. Sir Walter never forgot that touching response. He said, "That

dog preached the Sermon on the Mount to me as few ministers have ever presented it." Scott said he had not found human beings so ready to forgive their enemies.

### Forgiveness

When Leonardo da Vinci was painting the "Last Supper," he had an intense, bitter argument with a fellow painter. Leonardo was so enraged that he decided to paint the face of his enemy into the face of Judas. That way the hated painter's face would be preserved for ages in the face of the betraying disciple. When Leonardo finished Judas, everyone easily recognized the face of the painter with whom Leonardo quarreled.

Leonardo continued to work on the painting. But as much as he tried, he could not paint the face of Christ. Something was holding him back.

Leonardo decided his hatred toward his fellow painter was the problem. So he worked through his hatred by repainting Judas' face, replacing the image of his fellow painter with another face. Only then was he able to paint Jesus' face and complete the masterpiece.

### "I Never Forgive and I Never Forget"

General Oglethorpe once said to John Wesley, "I never forgive and I never forget." To which Wesley replied, "Then Sir, I hope you never sin." Very apt, for when we reflect on how much God has forgiven us, it makes our grudges against others seem rather petty.

### Sacred Stream

Dr. Jacob Chamberlain, an early missionary to India, recalls that while preaching to a group who had come to bathe in the "sacred stream" of the Ganges, a man joined them who had crawled many agonizing miles on his knees and elbows to reach that spot. The poor exhausted soul made his prayer to Gunga, and then slipped into the water but emerged with the same conviction of sin as before. The fear of death still tugged at his heart. Then he heard Chamberlain tell the wonderful story of grace and how Christ died on the cross to rescue needy sinners. With new hope the man staggered to his feet, clasped his hands together, and cried, "Oh, that's what I need! Forgiveness and peace!" The missionary soon led him to Jesus. E

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*Henry Feyerabend writes from Oshawa, where he works as director and speaker for "It is Written" in Canada.*



# Small Groups

## What about the Children?

Meredith Curtis

**I**nclude the children or not? Provide activities for them in another room of the house or not? Small groups consisting of young couples often face such questions. Some groups opt for a “no children except nursing babies” policy. This can work if everyone has access to a trusted babysitter and can afford the expense. However, many young couples are struggling financially.

If your small group is wondering, “What do we do with the kids?” here are some solutions to consider.

### **Hire a baby-sitter for the entire group.**

She can keep the children in another room or at a nearby house. The entire group chips in to pay her. She could just baby-sit or provide spiritually nurturing activities for the children.

### **Ask group members to rotate as baby-sitters.**

This can only work if everyone commits to take a turn. The advantage is that all the adults build relationships

with the children. The disadvantage is missing the meeting.

### **Couples swap children with couples from another small group that meets on a different night.**

The Smiths watch the Johnson children when the Johnsons go to small group on Tuesday. On Thursday, the Johnsons watch the Smith children so their parents can attend their small group.

### **Children participate for part of the meeting.**

They could join in for singing or icebreakers. For the rest of the time, they might watch a video in another room with an adult or teen supervisor.

### **Children stay for the entire meeting.**

Older children can fully participate, and the younger ones can color or read picture books. This requires that your meetings offer something for all age levels.

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## Seminar Update



**June 25-29, 2000**

**NOTE:** If you have already pre-registered for a cancelled seminar and/or want to change to a newly-added seminar, we will guarantee your choice at Toronto. If you have not already pre-registered, please keep the following information in mind as you select your choices among the seminars.

**The following seminars have been cancelled:**

- 283/484 Memorizing Scripture
- 409 Radio/TV/Internet
- 399 Pastoring: Information Process (Spanish)
- 297 The Role of the Holy Spirit Baptism (French)

**The following seminars have been added or additional information has been provided:**

- 116/316 Literature Evangelists Generate Interests  
—Ron Appenzeller  
Learn how to increase baptisms in your district by utilizing Literature Evangelists.
- 115 Recapitulation in the Book of Revelation  
—George Reid  
*Do the trumpets follow the seals chronologically. Accepting or rejecting recapitulation dramatically affects the interpretation of the Apocalypse.*
- 346/448 Pastors Meeting the Secular Mind (English)  
—Johann Gerhardt
- 148 Pastors Meeting the Secular Mind (German)  
—Johann Gerhardt  
*What is the secular mind and how do Adventist truths impact secular thinking. What are the challenges and opportunities and the role of the local church and pastor.*
- 247/347 The Time Before the End (English)—Udo Worschech
- 499 The Time Before the End (German)—Udo Worschech  
*The first written prophetic records within an eschatological climate of wealth and self-destruction in a nation originally called by God.*
- 114 Spiritual Growth in Lordship—Ben Maxson
- 214 Contemporary Issues in Finance/Stewardship  
—Ben Maxson



- 217 Personal Money Management for Pastor's Family  
—Pardon Mwansa  
*Four basic steps to financial management and a clear system of managing personal funds plus a plan to pay off debts and remain debt-free. Ten methods of how to increase home income.*
- 314 Lordship and the Pastor's Home  
—Ben and Mary Maxson
- 414 Real Problems, Real Lord—Fylvia Fowler Kline
- 106/216/315/415 A Faith that Works in Each Cycle of Life  
—Tom Carter and Morris Venden
- 245/446 Spreading His Fame—Michael Cafferky  
*Word-of-mouth networks are considered to be the most powerful form of advertising and a most effective medium for spreading the gospel. Note the impact when human effort is combined with Divine power.*
- 248/447 Successful Leadership in Multicultural Ministry  
—Delbert Baker  
*Dynamic, Christ-centered principles for leading diverse groups of people.*

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