

ELDER'S DIGEST

A Quarterly Resource for local Church Elders Vol. 7 No.4

... the SUN of righteousness will rise
with healing in HIS wings ...

Malachi 4:2



Elder: “Do the Work of an Evangelist!”

Joel Sarli



This admonition of the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 4:5 is for elders too. The elders not only assist the pastor with the shepherd care of the congregation but they share the concern for the lost.

The matter of leading our church members into evangelistic activity is one that presents a mighty challenge to every leader and worker in the cause of God. I firmly believe that the speed at which we shall finish the work of God upon this earth depends to a large extent on how we relate ourselves to this plan.

The church was called into being for no other purpose than to evangelize. The command is clear: “Go, ye therefore, and teach all nations . . .” (Matthew 28:19). But how few understand the full importance of that commission. It is so often assumed that this is an appeal to enter the ministry or to be a missionary. I think it is true to say, without exaggeration, that the vast majority of the elders in the Adventist Church have never dreamed that it is a personal, individual command to every child of God to go into his own personal world and be a soul-winning witness to every creature.

The evangelization of the community is a high priority for any Adventist Church. The pastor cannot be the only soul winner in the leadership if this task is to be accomplished. All church leaders and members must participate in the evangelistic outreach of the fellowship.

A primary need in most churches is a plan to train those gifted in evangelism. “In every church the members should be so trained that they will devote time to the winning of souls to Christ. . . . Let those who have charge

of the flock awake to their duty, and set many souls to work.” E. G. White, *Christian Service*, p. 61.

The time and supervision required to train these workers is again more than the pastor alone can handle. The elders provide the logical resource persons for expanding the evangelism program. The Biblical content of personal evangelism must be taught to the elders. Having a working knowledge of the subject, they need the firsthand experience of going from house-to-house or some other form of evangelistic approach. The pastor must show the elders how he wins people to Christ.

The elders who feel the responsibility for this ministry will make ideal trainers and overseers of the church evangelism team. Elders can teach the soul-winning courses. Some can be assigned to train workers by direct example. Some need to be appointed to oversee the program by fathering reports, encouraging workers, making them realize that there is accountability in the ministry they have undertaken for Christ.

The home Bible study is one of the most effective means of soul winning today. Those attending a home Bible study invite their unconverted friends who show an interest in the Scriptures to attend. The class leader brings a simple Bible lesson which presents the plan of salvation. This program should be more widely used if lay people were recruited to minister in evangelistic Bible studies.

The board of elders may have in their ranks a man with the gifts needed to oversee the Bible study ministry. An elder could train other laymen to teach the classes. He could then oversee the total program by locating homes for classes. By arranging follow-up for new converts, Bible classes would have a continuously growing outreach. **E**

How God Qualifies a Man for His Task

Paul F. Bork

As a historian, poet, philosopher, general of armies, and legislator, Moses stands without a peer. Those Jews who accept Moses as a historical figure quite unanimously ascribe to him the position of the greatest leader and legislator our world has ever known. Christians of all ages have read with great devotion the works of the man who composed a larger portion of the Bible than any other individual writer. Moses, for instance, wrote at least three times as much as Paul.

God thought so highly of Moses that He resurrected him (Jude 9), and when Christ needed great comfort and encouragement, the Lord sent Moses, along with Elijah, to the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:3). Perhaps the Lord selected Moses because his experience in so many ways paralleled that of Christ. During His ministry Jesus referred to Moses more often than to any other prophet, substantiating the Israelite leader's historicity and authority.

Moses was a Levite. In fact, Levi was Moses' great-grandfather. Pharaoh had made Moses' parents—an obscure Levite Amram, and his wife Jochebed—slaves along with the other Hebrews. The institution was not limited to the Hebrews, however. Many Egyptians were also slaves. Their situation may have dated back at least to the days of Joseph when anyone who wanted to survive sold all of his belongings and himself to Pharaoh in exchange for food (Genesis 47:18-25).

Before Moses' birth, as with that of Christ, Satan influenced the king to establish a law to exterminate all male children, thus hoping to destroy the deliverer. In both instances he failed. Jochebed laid her baby in a basket made waterproof with tar and floated him on the river where Pharaoh's daughter would be sure to see him. The strategy worked out between the baby's mother and her daughter Miriam, proved successful. Miriam, who

had been watching the infant from a distance, walked up to the princess and offered to find a Hebrew mother to nurse it for her. The princess in turn, probably rewarded the mother generously for her service during Moses' childhood and may have freed her of her slave tasks, permitting her to devote full time to the child's training.

Probably no other woman has ever taken her job of motherhood more seriously than Jochebed, and through no other woman, except Mary of Nazareth, has the world received greater blessing. The years at her disposal to implant heavenly principles in the life of her child were few. Moses, like Samuel, Joseph, and Daniel—all destined to become great men for God—had to early leave the influence of his godly home.

Whether the name "Moses" came from his parents or the princess is hard to tell. Meaning "son of" or "one born of," Moses was a common name or sometimes part of a name, usually having a prefix. For example, we find Ahmose, the one born of Ah (moon-god), Thutinoise, the one born of Thoth (the scribal-god), and Ramose or Rameses [Ramses], the one born of Ra (sun-god). Moses' name could have had such an Egyptian origin, with the princess having planned to add the prefix later in life. Or it may already have had a prefix repulsive to Moses which he dropped when "he . . . refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter" (Hebrews 11:24).

It must have been a painful experience for Amram and Jochebed to surrender their son to the princess. Whether the parents lived near the royal palace or whether the princess had just been visiting Goshen, Scripture does not say. If they lived near the palace, it would not be difficult to imagine them or his brother Aaron, or sister Miriam, occasionally going near it or its gate to catch a glimpse of Moses or to talk to him as happened centuries later with Esther and Mordecai.

Now his formal education must have begun. He no doubt received the best available in Egypt. As a member of the royal household, he learned the royal etiquette and behavior and received every opportunity to develop into a strong leader for his people. Moses, like other royal children, probably had a tutor appointed for him by the queen, whose sole duty involved the care and supervision of the growing youth.

As Moses matured we can imagine him noble in form and stature, of cultivated mind and princely bearing. He may well have earned renown as a military leader and become the nation's pride. Yet not only would his instructors teach him civil and military arts, but as a prospective sovereign, they must also train him in the mysteries of the Egyptian religion. It would have brought him into direct conflict with his own heritage. How much opposition he offered, how desperate the priests may have felt over their lack of success, we can only conjecture. His later life gives evidence that nothing easily swayed him.

We must keep in mind that in every part of Moses' life, God was preparing him for leadership of an extraordinary quality. To wrench a mob of slaves out of a nation unwilling to let them go, to bring the undisciplined, ignorant multitude together in one place, to lead them in an orderly fashion out of Egypt, to teach them the rudiments of worship, civil behavior, and public health, required a man carefully trained in leadership, eloquence, and human behavior. But above all, he needed total submission to God and full reliance on Him, for here was a divine plan dependent upon a human agent for its fulfillment.

Moses' great burden involved the deliverance of the Hebrews from Egyptian bondage, and he must have often wondered how God would accomplish it. He may have thought that God planned for him to become Egypt's Pharaoh as Joseph had been its prime minister. Scripture seems to imply that at the end of his youth in Egypt he tried to free them by force, with himself at the head of the Hebrews warring against the Egyptian armies. But like Gideon, he was not yet ready for the task. We have no information that would lead us to believe that God had clearly revealed to him that he was the man to deliver Israel, or how he was to accomplish it. The first definite commission we hear about—that at the burning bush—was still much in the future. He knew that God's plan involved freedom, but he did not know by whom or how.

In his own writings he stated many years later that

once as he witnessed the suffering of his people in captivity, he noticed a taskmaster beating a Hebrew and he "slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand" (Exodus 2:11,12). Moses singled out the incident, yet it may have been only one of many events and circumstances that culminated in his flight. The sorrowful plight of his kinsmen and the frustration at his inability to help them, the conditions of the power struggle in the royal court, plus the possibility of many other factors unknown to us, led Moses to the decision to leave Egypt.

Like many another, he immediately lost confidence in God and turned his back on the task of delivering his people. Then, like Jonah, he fled from a responsibility which seemed greater than he wished to bear. Moses had to realize that to take matters in his own hands would lead to inevitable failure. God spoke no approval of his act of homicide against the Egyptian. But, as one Christian writer suggested, "the Lord allowed these things that He might teach Moses the gentleness, goodness, and long-suffering that is necessary for every laborer for the Master to possess in order to be a successful worker in His cause."

We should not conclude that Moses' experience and education in Egypt proved a failure. Much of what he had received there helped him in many respects. God in His providence had placed him there where he could receive part of his education, though much of what he learned was of no use to him now. One does not easily acquire experience, maturity, and true leadership qualities, and Moses in his last murderous act in Egypt gave evidence that he did not yet possess them sufficiently for the arduous task ahead of him. He still needed to enter God's classroom to learn what the schools of Egypt did not teach—meekness, gentleness, self-distrust, selflessness, love, and complete dependence upon God.

How patiently God must have waited for Moses to realize that in his own strength he could not save his people! By choosing human beings as His agents, God has limited and handicapped Himself. Exactly when Moses totally surrendered to God and said, "Lord, take over!" we don't know, but it must have been sometime during the Midian experience. There God took charge and taught Moses the traits that would make him the greatest leader our world has ever known. **E**

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Adventist Youth Prevail with Calm, Dignified Music

John Thurber

For sixteen years I served as youth evangelist for the Texas Conference. One of my projects was to train groups of young people to witness through singing. Sometimes we had as many as twenty-five youth living in our home for the whole summer. I thank God for my very special wife Patsy, who loved, mothered, and fed them all.

I have become convinced that, if given a choice, many youth, both Adventist and non-Adventist, prefer good music over pop music. I could relate scores of stories and would like to tell you a few of them in this article.

It is true that the stories go back a few years, but we mustn't forget that even rock and roll has been around for more than forty years by now.

Before the stories, however, I would like to tell you about a survey that my son, Michael, sent out to about 1,000 young people in Adventist academies. You may be surprised by what he learned.

To the question, "Do you think rock music is compatible with the Christian lifestyle?" 75% of the Adventist young people who responded said, "No; rock music is not compatible with the Christian lifestyle."

In response to the question, "Are religious lyrics enough to make a song sacred?" 82% said, "No, religious lyrics are not enough to make a song sacred."

The so-called contemporary Christian music is closely linked to rock music. It uses the same beat, the same instruments, the same type of arrangements, and overall the same type of sound. It has religious lyrics, to be sure, words that are supposed to make it religious, but, as you can see, our own young people are wise enough to know that this is not enough to make it sacred.

"Good and evil never harmonize. Between light and darkness there can be no compromise. Truth is light revealed; error is darkness. Light has no fellowship with darkness, righteousness no fellowship with unrighteousness" (*In Heavenly Places*, p. 260).

"There is an emotional excitement, a mingling of the true with the false, that is well adapted to mislead.... Wherever men neglect the testimony of the Bible, turning away from those plain, soul-testing truths which require self-denial and renunciation of the world, there we may be sure that God's blessing is not bestowed" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 464).

Many groups offer religious rock today, and some of them are very popular, but are they really religious? A highly popular *gospel* group earned the following tribute from a newspaper music critic for its concert in a large Southern city: "As its beautiful *a cappella* opening chorus echoed through the hall to the cheers of the audience the band slowly filled in behind, and as the drums and guitars built to a crashing crescendo, the artist bounced onto the stage. This wasn't sweet hour of prayer, this was rock and roll, sometimes soft and tender as the sweetest love song, sometimes hard-edged and growling. But it wasn't words alone that brought the crowd clapping and cheering to their feet. There was some hefty assist . . . from booming guitar lines and crashing drums."

Ellen G. White tells us that young people "have a keen ear for music and Satan knows what organs to excite, to animate, engross and charm the mind so that Christ is not desired" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol.1, p. 497).

At a "Gospel" concert

Even before I became a youth evangelist, while I was still attending Southern Missionary College (now Southern Adventist University), four of us young men formed a quartet known as the Adelpians. My brother, Wayne Thurber, was baritone and director, Don Crook, second tenor, Jack Veazey, bass, and I sang first tenor. The college gave us a scholarship to travel around the Southern Union singing to churches and youth groups. One of the most memorable trips we took was to Asheville, North Carolina, to sing for a Youth Congress.

The quartet and Marilyn Dillow, our young lady soloist, were riding into the city about 5 p.m. The car radio was advertising a gospel all-night sing in the civic auditorium. We had never experienced a gospel sing, and since our music was hymns and gospel songs, we felt we could discover some new music by attending.

We were college kids with no money, so we stopped at a gas station and changed into our uniforms. We hoped that the person at the ticket counter would recognize us as a quartet and let us in free. Well, the lady at the ticket counter not only let us in free; she showed us right up to the stage door, apparently assuming that we were on the program!

A man inside the stage door took us backstage, where Wayne spoke to another man who was checking in the singers. Wayne told him our story and that our desire was just to listen for music ideas.

The man responded by saying that when things began to get dull during the all-night program, he might give us a chance to sing; and he called for someone to audition us. The man who was doing auditions took us into a room with a piano in it and motioned to Marilyn to come and play. Wayne said, "We don't use the piano; we sing *a cappella*, and at times she sings with us." The man was surprised but asked us to sing anyway. Jack blew the pitch pipe and we sang, "The Old Rugged Cross." No frills, just the plain message in simple style. Without any expression on his face, the man asked us to sing another, and we sang "The City of Light," composed by an Oakwood College student. When we finished, he got up and said for us to go backstage and wait. We might be used some time during the program.

We felt a little nervous standing around with all the famous gospel quartets and trios that were advertised features for the evening.

Soon the program started, and the first quartet to be introduced was one of the most popular ones at that time. The place went wild with whistles and thunderous applause. The group sang for about twelve minutes and came backstage. Of course, the audience wanted more, so the group went back out. We were not sure which spirit was evident—one of praising God or one of praising men. But which spirit it was became quite evident in their next song, and we knew that we were in the wrong place! The title of the song was "Hallelujah Boogie."

"God's work is ever characterized by calmness and dignity."

We huddled together and discussed whether to exit

the back door or stay on just a little longer. We decided to stay, hoping the music would improve. But when the quartet came off stage, the emcee went out and introduced us as the next group! Much to our surprise, we heard him talking about this college quartet from the Chattanooga area that had happened in, and that we were different. "They don't use any accompaniment, but sing *a cappella*," he explained.

We were stunned to be second on the program. The crowd gave us polite applause as we walked on stage. Wayne went to the microphone, introduced us, and announced our first song, "The Old Rugged Cross." When we finished, we got very little applause, and we felt sure that we were out of place. Wayne introduced our second song, "Have You Been in the Garden with Jesus, Alone with the Saviour in Prayer?" When we finished this time, there was absolutely no applause. Wayne said to us, "Let's sing one more and leave." He chose a number that Marilyn sang with us, "The Song of Heaven and Homeland." *"Sometimes I hear strange music, Like none e'er heard before, Come floating softly earthward, As through heaven's open door. It seems like angel voices, In strains of joy and love, That swell the mighty chorus Around the throne above."* Marilyn was off stage behind the curtain with a microphone, adding an obligato part. Her voice sounded truly like an angel's. When we finished, there was again silence.

As soon as we walked off stage, the emcee went back to introduce the next group. But the audience started to applaud lightly and kept on doing so until the emcee asked if they wanted to hear more of our kind of music—and they kept on applauding. So we went back and sang for another twenty minutes, once more without applause. As we were coming off stage for the second time, one of the singers in another gospel group said to us, "Don't ever change your music; it's of God. I know that some of our music is not pleasing to God."

We believe God gave us an opportunity to witness for Him that night before a huge crowd. Says *Selected Messages*, 2:42, "God's work is ever characterized by calmness and dignity."

At an outdoor rock concert

Another story that illustrates how Adventist youth have triumphed over pop music began when the pastor in a town where our team was scheduled to sing in church asked us to sing for an outdoor rock concert scheduled

by the city fathers in the city park.

I was not at all sure we should agree to the pastor's request. As youth evangelist for the Texas Conference, I knew that parents trusted me to take care of their children and protect them from evil influences. I spoke up to the pastor and said, "I will have to pray and think about this one." His reply was, "The Lord has opened the door, and you will have to decide whether to close it or not."

The next day was Monday, and the appointment was for Wednesday evening. At our group worship we talked over the matter and prayed about it. I knew that most of the team had never been to a rock concert, and I certainly didn't feel comfortable about introducing them to one. But one of the young men in our group said, "You know, Brother John, we are told to witness in season and out of season."

Wednesday afternoon came, and I still wasn't clear about what to do. As evening approached, the pastor said, "Let's go over to the park and talk to the man in charge. Maybe he will help you decide." I agreed, and we all drove to the park.

Talk about loud music! As we got close, we could hardly hear one another talk. We drove around to the back, got out of our cars, and huddled together to talk. I still didn't feel clear. Just then a nice-looking young man came over to where we were standing and introduced himself as the one in charge of the program. He said, "You must be the group of Christian young people who have come to sing for us." I replied, "Let me ask you a question. If you were me and you had a group of Christian young people who sing soft songs with simple melodies centered on the saving grace of Jesus, would you not feel a little out of place? Your city young people come to hear rock and to dance."

The young man's reply was right to the point. "I'm a Christian and very concerned about today's youth. I was pleased that the city fathers chose to have a Christian group. You were the ones they chose. The opportunity is here, and you are the only ones that can fill it. Think it over. I'll be back in ten minutes for your answer."

We prayed together, for we were now down to the final decision. After our prayer, Greg, our college speaker for the summer, urged us to take the opportunity. Before finding Christ, he himself had been in the world of rock and drugs. We took a vote and found that all were in favor of witnessing.

The young man came back for our answer, and after

we said we'd do it, he informed us that we would be on right after the present band had finished. We unloaded our equipment and set it in place as the band completed its final number.

When our turn came, Greg stepped to the mike and said, "Would you please be quiet?" But there was still quite a bit of noise. Then he said something to that wild crowd that amazed me. "I believe that Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords, and we have come to sing for you in His name." Philippians 2:10 says that "at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow," and, sure enough, the crowd grew still. Then Greg invited everyone to come and sit right in front of the team. He went on to say, "I want you to listen to the words of the songs. We do not sing loud; our music is soft and meaningful." The team then sang for about twenty minutes with testimonies interspersed among the songs.

After our last number Greg stepped to the mike again. This time he had a shopping bag over his shoulder, and he said, "I have been where you are tonight. I have tried to make deals with girls just like many of you have. I've had the same pills in my pockets that you have tonight; and I've been so low that I didn't care if I lived or died. My life was meaningless. I had no goals to reach; and then I found the way out. Now I have peace and a reason for living. In this shopping bag is the way out." He had filled his bag with application cards for the "Way Out" Voice of Prophecy youth Bible lessons. "Now as you go back to your music and dancing," he continued, "our team will come around and sign you up for the Way Out."

Dramatic results

Within twenty minutes our team had signed up over two hundred young people! Later, I saw Greg praying with several young men who had asked if God could change their lives the way He had his.

What an experience it was to see our youth witnessing for Him! What a difference in their music and demeanor from the music and demeanor of the other young people that were playing in the rock bands that night. I believe the youth of that city saw Jesus in our Seventh-day Adventist youth. **E**

Adapted from a book on music being prepared by John Thurber. Used by permission.

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The Value of Making Disciples

James A. Cress

The goal of the gospel commission is to continue the work that Jesus began by following the same strategy. Make disciples! Teach them! Enable them to reproduce their lives and faith in the lives of others for whom they labor. The ministry of discipling has value to the disciple, to the discipler, to the church, and to the world. For the new believers, values of discipling are many. Their rate of spiritual growth is increased. Their wrong behavior patterns can be arrested and stopped. They are better protected from the enemy. They are provided with a personal friend who emulates Jesus' friendship to them. And they are provided with spiritual counsel.

The value of discipling for the disciplers is that it brings joy to them (3 John 1:4; 1 Thess. 2:19-20). It purifies their lives. It develops their ministerial skills, and it provides an outlet for the knowledge that they have gained.

The value of discipling for the church is that it strengthens the body, develops godly leaders, and perpetuates God's mission to the world.

The value of discipling to the world is that individual lives are changed—lives of individuals who will inhabit Christ's kingdom!

Seventh-day Adventists have historically accepted the goal of the great commission as being to so proclaim Jesus Christ as God and Saviour that men and women will place their trust in Him through faith and become responsible members of His church. However, for an ethically-oriented, behavior-measuring group of conservative Christians, the "responsible" portion of this definition has sometimes been lacking in the lives of new members at the precise moment that existent members feel it should be most evident. Notwithstanding that the fruits of the Spirit are sometimes unobservable in the lives of "older members," we have been too quick to assign blame for this lack in the lifestyles of new members. We

blame it on either insufficient consecration on the part of the baptized or insufficient preparation by the pastor or evangelist.

Much of this problem grows out of a misperception of baptism (which for Adventists occurs simultaneously with entrance into the church) as a culminating, graduation-type event in response to appropriate doctrinal instruction, rather than understanding it as either the beginning of the Christian's life in Christ or even as another step in an ongoing process. We wish new believers would walk the Christian walk simultaneously with acceptance of Jesus Christ and being baptized. This problem, regarding new member assimilation for Seventh-day Adventists, is aptly stated and the solution ably suggested by Win Am's discussion of a subtle, but fundamental distinction between evangelism and disciple-making:

"Evangelism: Success is achieved when a verbal response is given by the non-Christian which indicates his/her personal endorsement of a new set of convictions reflective of the Christian faith. A 'decision' centers around a point in time.

"Disciple-making: Success is achieved when a change is observed in the behavior of an individual which indicates his/her personal integration of a new set of convictions reflective of the Christian faith. A 'disciple' centers around an ongoing lifestyle.

"But because the goals are different, the *process* employed in achieving each goal is different?" Peter Wagner calls this difference between those who make decisions and those who ultimately become responsible church members the "Follow-up Gap."³ The product of evangelism must be disciples, not decisions. Failure to recognize this is a failure to fulfill the great commission through which Jesus sent His disciples into

continued on page 30

Health and Religion

Fred Osbourn

Seventh-day Adventists teach that good mental health principles and sound religious principles go hand in hand. In Titus 1:9 the man of God appeals for a ministry that will teach “sound doctrine.” The original text is correctly translated “wholesome” or “health-giving” doctrine; that is, teaching that is whole-making and health-producing. Consequently, it seems both reasonable and profitable to explore an assessment of doctrine from the viewpoint of mental health. It is the purpose of this article to encourage the reader to attempt an evaluation of his personal beliefs, his private interpretation of doctrine from the pragmatic perspective of personal experience, and to ask the question “Does my personal faith, when put into practice, produce a life that is characterized as ‘healthy’ and ‘whole-making?’ ”

William Glasser has emphasized man’s two basic personality needs to be self-worth and love.¹ Every person, he insists, must possess a strong sense of self-worth, and experience an adequate amount of love to be a healthy person. Howard Clinebell reduces these two basic human needs to one when he suggests the primary factor to be responsible love in at least one dependable relationship.² All other personal needs, he claims, are derivative of this one basic need for responsible, loving interaction.

The psychology of Jesus stands in bold summation when He gathers the whole of God’s law into this one word “love”. When responding to the query concerning the “greatest commandment,” He sums up the dimensions of mental health by pointing out the need for love directed toward God supremely and toward the world of people in which one lives (Matt. 22:35-40). Man, by nature, needs to love and to be loved in order to experience health and wholeness. Ellen G. White endorses this when she appeals for “mutual love” and “mutual forbearance”³ and notes that God “would have man obey the commandments . . . because it is for the health and

life of all human beings.”⁴ Isaiah emphasizes this relationship between doing good and obtaining health, or wholeness (chap. 58:6-8). And Christ continually emphasizes the inseparable relationship between commandment keeping and love (John 14:15; 15:10, 17).

The term mental health has two dimensions, both of which in the Christian sense are encapsulated in the concept of a right relationship with God, or righteousness by faith. Mental health indicates a person’s ability to relate realistically and responsibly to oneself and to one’s world. The “responsible” person is responsible; he is able to respond to life’s demands in ways that tend toward wholeness, toward integration; he tends to be a person of integrity and to have the characteristic of self-acceptance. When Glasser indicates self-esteem to be a basic personality need, he is emphasizing the need for a healthy self-acceptance as prerequisite for dropping one’s defenses and giving oneself in love.

The antithesis of mental health is often characterized by a reality-denying and destructive reaction to one’s world, tending toward fragmentation and irresponsibility. The alienation is experienced in every dimension of experience. Because the irresponsible person has behaved contrary to his God-given nature by responding without love, he experiences an inner contradiction and is at war with himself; he feels threatened, anxious, against himself; he suffers loss of self-esteem. Attempting to compensate for the deficit in his self-image, he is inclined toward increased selfishness, using persons as things and manipulating his world in order to gain the advantage he demands regardless of cost or consequence. So the vicious spiral of alienation continues. The alienation is both within himself and between himself and his world.

Someone has quipped, “We are all a little neurotic.” We are all a mixture of the creative and the destructive elements; the reconciling and the alienating; and the

degree in which one is inclined toward the latter is the degree to which he is neurotic. Said the apostle Paul, "We are sinners!" There is the war within.

Erich Fromm, in his discussion of psychoanalysis and religion, poses as the goal for psychotherapy that of enabling the person to "live, love and think truth."⁵ Living love and thinking truth go hand in hand, for the former depends upon the latter inasmuch as love that is not mere sentimentality involves a realistic appreciation of life.⁶ This suggests, then, that the primary mission of the church is to provide the model, the climate, the matrix, for expressing responsible love and pursuing truth.

Is it inevitable that the teachings of the church, as experienced in the "nitty-gritty" of daily living, result in a life that may be characterized as creative, whole making, reconciling—"the abundant life" of Jesus? In searching for an answer to this question, I would like to suggest that you ask yourself four interdependent questions that have been found useful in separating healthy from unhealthy religion.⁷

Question one

Does my understanding and practice of religious doctrine tend to build bridges or barriers between myself and others? Wayne Oates writes: "in essence . . . healthy religion binds people together." He goes on to emphasize, however, that it accomplishes this "in such a way that their individuality is enabled both to be realized and to be consecrated to the total community . . . to which they belong. This is a religion of mature and responsible relatedness."⁸

If one's sense of religious identity, when lived out in the community, tends to express an exclusivism that denies the universality of God's concern, then the very spirit of Christian love described in 1 Corinthians 13 is denied.

Question two

Does my understanding and practice of religious doctrine tend to stimulate or hamper the growth of inner

freedom and personal responsibility?

Closely related questions are these: Does it encourage unhealthy or healthy dependency relationships? Mature or immature relationships with authority? The growth of mature or immature consciences?

Clinebell notes that "one of the most common errors found in the churches is an unhealthy authoritarianism."⁹ This kind of dependence is a block to growth and can be seen at times in virtually every religious organization. Unhealthy dependence patterns emerge when clergymen, by virtue of their own insecurities and compensating drive for power, gain neurotic satisfaction by keeping their congregations dependent. In both extremes, persons "escape from freedom" to use Erich

Fromm's apt term, into the security of an authority-centered religious group.

All of us are dependent to some degree. A key difference between healthy and unhealthy dependence is that the former is best described as interdependence and the latter as a symbiotic relationship in which the believer gains a neurotic sense of power by identifying with the leader. The leader, on the other hand, finds his sense of power in the fact that others are dependent upon him.

In regard to this abuse of power, Seventh-day

Adventists have been counseled that "there is an individuality in Christian experience that must be preserved in every human agent."¹⁰ The man who is "responsible" will be that man who recognizes the "right to himself, to the control of his own mind to the stewardship of his talents."¹¹

Question three

Does my understanding and practice of religious doctrine provide effective or faulty means of helping persons to move from a sense of guilt to forgiveness? In other words, does it provide well-defined, significant, ethical guidelines, or does it emphasize ethical trivia? Is its primary concern for surface behavior or for the underlying health of the personality?

*Personal faith,
when put into practice,
should produce a life
that is characterized in
psychological terms as "healthy"
and "whole-making."
Religious principles and
sound mental health
go hand in hand.*

Erik H. Erikson has shown that ethical guidelines and ideals are vital elements in ego strength.¹² It is crucial, according to this famous psychoanalyst, that people feel and respond to guilt about significant things, that is, those misuses of freedom that hurt others. The capacity to experience appropriate guilt is one of the signs of mental health.

How guilt is handled depends upon whether it is normal or neurotic. Actually most of us probably experience a mixture of both. The neurotic elements can be recognized by the following elements: a failure to respond to forgiveness, a failure to motivate to make amends (restoration), a tendency to focus on surface behavior (ethical trivia), and a tendency to be linked with perfectionism.¹³

On the other hand, normal or healthy guilt is reduced by following the biblical prescription outlined by Jesus when confronted by the superficial moralists. He once stated, in essence, why are you so concerned with only surface behavior while ignoring the underlying causes in this man's inner life? (See Matt. 12:34 ff.) Moralism's attempt to control surface behavior is comparable to changing each distorted copy rather than correcting the stencil. Morality, on the other hand, is concerned with the stencil, the inner life in which the person is alienated from himself and others.

Question four

Does my understanding and practice of religious doctrine tend to increase or lessen the enjoyment of life?

Let it suffice to say that the various forms of the word joy are used 192 times in the Bible. And Jesus seems to be pro-life, deeply appreciating and enjoying fellowship and communion with others and with God. In fact He points to "joy" as one of the primary reasons for the gospel: "These things have I spoken unto you, that your joy might be full" (John 15:11). Unhealthy religion contradicts the spirit of Jesus' life by fleeing from real religious enjoyment into exclusivism or asceticism.

Healthy religion involves the whole person in the religious quest. It not only brings the intellect fully into play in the quest for truth but also recognizes the importance of feelings and emotions in a healthy personality, consequently avoiding both intellectualism

on the one hand, and emotionalism on the other. Positive Biblical faith respects man's deepest freedom—the freedom to think, imagine, fantasize, feel, and choose on the basis of the weight of evidence provided through these God-given means for arriving at truth.

This approach of asking positive health questions in evaluation of personal understanding and practice of faith tends to encourage a continual refining of one's theology. Doing so has helped me personally in guarding against moralism, legalism, pharisaical judgment, and the authoritarianism of both perfectionism and liberalism, those corruptions of loving behavior that tend

to dog my steps. Further, this approach has helped me transform doctrine from mere legal demands to an experience that brings wholeness. Finally, this experiential approach to truth has strengthened my faith in both the Bible and Ellen G. White, as I have discovered that principles suggested in these inspired sources, when correctly understood and applied, produce creative, health-building results. To

sum it up, a healthy, positive faith in God provides the milieu for a healthy, positive life. **E**

Notes

¹William Glasser, *Reality Therapy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965).

²Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., *Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966). By "responsible" love Clinebell means *agape love: unconditional acceptance, respect, and appreciation for the personhood of the other.*

³The Ministry of Healing, p. 360.

⁴Ellen G. White manuscript 63, 1900.

⁵Erich Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p.

⁶Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 123ff

⁷The source for these questions is Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., *Mental Health Through Christian Community* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), pp. 31ff

⁸Wayne E. Oates, *Religious Factors in Mental Illness* (New York: Association Press, 1955), p. 113.

⁹Clinebell, *Mental Health Through Christian Community*, p. 32.

¹⁰Ellen G. White manuscript 6, 1889.

¹¹*Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 7, p. 180.

¹²Erik H. Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1964).

¹³Perfectionism can be defined as setting up an impossibly high and unrealistic standard that makes continual failure inevitable and tends to involve the individual in continual self-punishment, or atonement.

Fred Osbourn, Ph.D., was professor of marriage and family counseling, at Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California, when he wrote this article.

Our Part in an Unfinished Work

Dollis M. Pierson

I have been asked to discuss practical ways we wives could help our husbands as they carry the burden of finishing the work God has entrusted to this people. We women are eager to do our part. We want to help! What can we do? What is our part in this tremendous yet glorious assignment?

We all realize that when a country is at war, women play an important part in helping to achieve ultimate victory. We need to keep in mind that we are in a war—a spiritual war, a war against the forces of evil—and our husbands are soldiers of the cross, fighting on the front lines.

They need our prayers

While our husbands are preaching and we sit in the congregation, we can silently, earnestly pray for the Holy Spirit to bring conviction to the listeners and to convert souls. When they struggle with problems in committees, we at home can lift our hearts in prayer asking God to give special help and wisdom. When our men travel from place to place, we should pray for their protection. Eternity alone will reveal how many times their lives have been spared and they have been permitted to continue their work and return home to us. Let us pray constantly for them and let them know that we are praying.

They need our encouragement

At times our husbands' work is most difficult and often they come home extremely weary. It is then that our very attitude should breathe courage and confidence. We know their greatest strength and courage must come from God so we guard their periods of rest and study and prayer even at the expense of our desire for companionship and conversation. At times they need to be alone to commune with God to renew their strength.

If we are to bring encouragement and strength to our husbands, our own Christian experience must remain warm and constant. If we should be depressed or discouraged, it is bound to reflect in their lives. If we have a daily rich experience with our Savior, we can share our courage, our hope, our joy with them. The influence of the fruits of the Spirit will grow in us, so that we can be an encouragement to our families and to all whose lives touch ours.

They need nutritious food

Our husbands, like soldiers in any army, not only need encouragement, they need simple, nutritious food attractively served. Nutrition is a very interesting, rewarding study. How fortunate we are to have the Spirit of Prophecy writings and other reliable authorities we may turn to for counsel in this important matter. If in our cooking we follow this instruction, our husbands' minds, bodies, and hearts will benefit. Time spent in seeking to keep our husbands healthy, as well as happy, will be time well spent, and God will surely bless our efforts along this line. The cause of God will, in turn, benefit from longer and more effective service because we have done our part.

They need us to set a good example

Our example before those around us will either help or hinder our husbands. The apostle Paul's admonition to young Timothy may well be applied to us: "Be thou an example of the believers" (I Tim. 4:12). People watch the worker's wife closely. Sometimes they are more demanding with us than with other church members. We have high standards to live up to. In order for our husbands' preaching to be as effective as we would like,

continued on page 31

Making Sermons Interesting for Children

Victor Hulbert

Family Celebration. That slogan enticed me to visit a nearby church to see what ideas it might have for reaching children. I was impressed. There was a magnificent children's story, and the sermon was family-centered. But then I noticed that my children, along with other children nearby, were taking little interest in the message preached. Actually, I could not blame them. The pastor's long words went way above their heads. While the sermon was *about* the family, it was not *for* the family.

My mind flashed back to my childhood years. Church services for me meant listening for peculiarities in the preacher's voice, or surreptitiously scribbling in the back of the hymnbook. Sermons were endured rather than enjoyed. I would time the pastoral prayer with a stopwatch. Eight and a half minutes was the record.*

Making church both interesting and a learning experience for adults and children is quite a challenge—one that is unmet and perhaps largely unrecognized. In the current debate on worship, children are left on the fringes. They have their five-minute storytime, and everything else is targeted toward adults.

Is it any wonder that many youth drop out of the church? Not primarily because they disagree with its beliefs, but rather because they are bored with its practice. This fatal boredom begins while sitting by mother's knee in church.

What is the solution? How can we make the church service interesting to the whole family, including the children, while still communicating the great themes of salvation and our distinctive Adventist message?

Christ's example in reaching children

Jesus succeeded in reaching both children and their

parents. He spoke in simple terms and told stories. Those stories had a simple meaning for the children and a deeper meaning for the deeper minds.

In secular communication, one of the broadcasting principles used by the BBC is that all programming should be understandable to a 14-year-old, even the deepest documentary. How much more so for Christian sermons! Some preachers seem to relish exhibiting the prodigious eloquence of their extensive vocabulary. But in Christlike communication, a short word is better than a long one.

The use Jesus made of illustrations shows how they can clarify a message and drive it home, carrying the audience all along the way. Illustrations also provide a

breather between two deep thoughts. Children—along with many adults—will remember your stories long after your sermon notes have turned yellow.

Another communication tool Jesus employed was humor. Can you imagine someone trying to take a plank out of his own eye? Or

a camel squeezing through the eye of a needle? Can you imagine a father giving his son a stone to eat? Or that persistent widow continually banging on the judge's door, with the bleary-eyed judge, nightcap on and candle in hand, eventually promising justice? Jesus no doubt told these stories with a smile on His face. Appropriate humor remains an effective tool today, even with the important and serious messages we must preach.

*It's not enough
to preach
about the family.*

Children's work sheet

One method I have found especially helpful in keeping the attention of children is to provide them with a work sheet for the sermon. I design it immediately upon finishing my sermon preparation while the ideas

are still bubbling through my mind. It takes only a half hour and access to a photocopier, but the dividends are immense. The work sheet does not have to be a technological masterpiece or even particularly creative. Yet to my amazement, children use it to follow along with every word of the sermon.

Benefits realized far surpass the sermon itself. The children even relate to me as their pastor in a more positive way, realizing that I care enough about them to provide for their interest.

Preparing a work sheet

Here are some suggestions useful to me in preparing the work sheet and to others in using it:

1. It must directly relate to the sermon.
2. The flow of questions and ideas should follow the flow of the sermon. For example, the first question should find its answer somewhere in your introduction, and so on throughout the sermon.
3. If you have artists available, ask them to add some little drawings. I use a simple desktop publishing program with religious graphics, but before I had a computer the children were just as happy with my printing.
4. Make sure the children receive the work sheet. Some deacons may not be convinced of its importance, so ask the children to raise their hand if they need one. Have pencils available as well.
5. Encourage parents to help their children with the work sheet, perhaps going through it with them later in the day. This way both parents and children retain more of the sermon content.
6. Let the children know that this is not a test to prove themselves; it is all for fun and learning. You are not going to check their answers, though you will be delighted to see their work.

Content of the work sheet

Here are particular features I include in my work sheets:

1. Texts with words missing for the children to fill in.
2. A question about a passage or illustration in the sermon. For instance, while preaching about Christ's visit to Bethany in Luke 10, I asked them to listen for the names of the three characters in the story.
3. Multiple-choice questions based on the thoughts in the sermon. This is especially helpful when using long theological words that need explaining. Given three

Maintaining Interest During the Sermon

- Use visual aids. When I preached on forgiveness, I had a stone with the word "FIRST" painted on it. I asked the congregation what it meant—and it was the children who came up with the answer first. (If you are still wondering, check John 8:7.)
- Use overheads or power-point presentations. The eye remembers more than the ear. The two together are most effective.
- Use children. Involve children as part of the sermon. For example, a week in advance you might hand those who wish to participate a numbered Bible text. Then during the next week's sermon, each participating child can stand and read out loud the text at the appropriate moment. Another idea is to have children help with holding up a chart or conducting some experiment.
- Listen to them. When did you last visit the cradle roll or kindergarten Sabbath school? Sit with children on your knee. Listen to their wisdom. They may give you the topic for your next sermon! At the least they will appreciate your interest in them.
- Make the children's corner interactive. Ask the children how their week has been. Involve them in the story. Ask if a boy or girl would like to pray for the congregation before the children return to their seats.
- Divide your sermon with special music or by using different speakers. My wife and I sometimes preach together. The change of flow, the different style, and the different voice add interest and variety.

—ED editor

alternatives to choose from, a child may for the first time realize what “sanctification” means.

4. A box for marking the number of times they hear a particular word in the sermon. This is great for topical sermons, such as when preaching on the Holy Spirit or on baptism. Or you might have them write in the box how many times they hear a Bible text quoted.

5. Questions that cause them to think but that are not so difficult that they get bored.

6. A challenge at the end of the sheet. This should be related to the sermon, but may differ from the challenge you are giving their parents. If the sermon is a call to commitment, you may write out a short prayer, asking them that if they agree with the prayer, to sign their name at the bottom. If you are preaching about the family, ask them to make a secret commitment to do something special for mommy and daddy this afternoon. (Next week in the children’s corner you can ask them what they did.) Sometimes I give them a task that they can do only with adult help. Thus the message of the sermon truly becomes a family affair.

Worth the effort

If you accept the challenge of providing the children with a work sheet for your sermons, I guarantee you will be impressed by the response. They will be sitting, pencils poised, ready to answer your next question. They will come up afterward to thank you or to show you their work. And you will find yourself becoming more aware of their needs and interests in the content of the sermon itself. The week you forget to do a work sheet, you will make a vow never to let it happen again.

Encouraging youth and child participation in the worship service takes time and effort, but the rewards and the satisfaction are immense. “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:40). **E**

** Years later as a theology student, I was surprised and delighted to find Ellen G. White’s admonition that “one or two minutes is long enough for any ordinary prayer” (Testimonies for the Church, vol 2, p. 581).*

Victor Hulbert was pastor in the South England Conference of Great Britain when he wrote this article.

Sermon Seeds

Henry Feyerabend

If you feed these seeds with the soil of God’s Word, the refreshing water of the Holy Spirit, and the shining glory of Jesus, they will become a living sermon.

1. “The visions of God are seen only through the lens of a pure heart.”
2. “Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves.”
3. “Never hold on to the failures of yesterday.”
4. “Worrying is like a rocking chair. It will give you something to do, but will get you nowhere.”
5. “You cannot get anywhere today if you are still mired down in yesterday.”
6. “Defeat must be faced, but it needs not be final.”
7. “Lord, help me remember that nothing is going to happen to me today that You and I can’t handle.”
8. “Tomorrows are only todays waiting to happen.”
9. “Happy hearts make happy homes.”
10. “Patience endures today, while it works for tomorrow.”
11. “A house is built by human hands; a home is built by human hearts.”
12. “God helps the helpless.”
13. “When you are hemmed in, the only way to look is up.”
14. “We must nourish the roots of faith before we can expect the fruits of action.”
15. “The impossible is often the untried.”
16. “Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow, it only robs today of its strength.”
17. “The Lord gives us talents, but we have to develop them.”
18. “There is no better exercise for the heart than reaching down and lifting someone up.”
19. “God’s assurance gives us endurance.”

20. "God does not love you because you are important. You are important because God loves you."
21. "Don't be weakened by too much week end!"
22. "Good friends are sunshine on a rainy day."
23. "We can measure our likeness to Christ by our sensitivity to the pain, trials, and loneliness of others."
24. "Prayer is the key, but faith turns the knob that opens the door to heaven's blessings."
25. "Walking with the Lord is the best exercise to build a healthy soul."
26. "Success is not measured by heights attained but by obstacles overcome."
27. "Every day brings a child of God one day nearer home."
28. "The safest hiding place in the world is in the center of God's will."
29. "What we weave in this world, we shall wear in the next."
30. "There is only one place in which success comes before work—that is in the dictionary."
31. "You can never do a kindness too soon because you never know when it will be too late."
32. "God still speaks to those who take time to listen."
33. "Kind words never die."
34. "Fear and faith travel the river of life, but only faith should be allowed to anchor."
35. "Worry pulls tomorrow's clouds over today's sunshine."
36. "When God gives burdens, He also gives shoulders."
37. "The Lord washes away our faults with a soap called Forgiveness."
38. "When praying, do you give instructions or report for duty?"
39. "The word which God has written on the brow of every man is Hope."
40. "Formula for living: 'Keep your chin up and your knees down.'"
41. "There is nothing so kingly as kindness, and nothing so royal as truth."
42. "Love is the master key that opens the gates of happiness."
43. "A world without a Sabbath would be like a man without a smile or like a summer without flowers."
44. "Regret and fear are twin thieves who would rob us of today."
45. "God in our heart can mean the difference between despair and victory."
46. "The true measure of love is loving without measure." **E**

Henry Feyerabend lives in Waldheim, Saskatchewan, Canada.

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The Legacy of the Good Shepherd

Scripture Reading

Psalm 23; 2 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 21:1-5.

Suggested Hymns

“Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me”

“A Song of Heaven and Homeland”

Text Psalm 25:1; John 10:14-15.

A. Introduction

During the years of our childhood we learn to quote this beautiful Shepherd Psalm. Then, in the middle years, when we grapple with the problems of family, home, and our busy lives in general, we find ourselves returning to this psalm in moments of exasperation and frustration, finding a new sense of comfort and strength. We come to understand more about a Shepherd who will guide us through difficult times. But then, as the years pass and the autumn and winter of life come upon us, the words of this lovely psalm become more meaningful than ever. Loved ones are taken away. The emptiness, the void that is left behind, is sometimes almost unbearable. Then we find ourselves quoting with an even deeper understanding: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.” There is little doubt that David wrote this Psalm during the sunset years of his life. He is reflecting, thinking back on the countless ways in which the Lord God was a “shepherd” to him.

B. Key to the Psalm

The key to the Psalm is found in the first verse: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” Who is the Lord? Let us allow Jesus Himself to answer for us with the words He spoke to those who listened to Him one day long ago: John 10: 14, 15. Isn’t this, in essence, what David was saying? Because the Lord was to him as a true shepherd is to his sheep, he would not want for that which was needful for his soul. When he walked through the dark valley of sorrow, he would not want for grace and strength to carry him through the long and weary days. Furthermore, not only did the shepherd know his sheep in those lands, but the sheep also knew their shepherd; they would not follow a strange shepherd. Jesus expressed this idea in John 10:2-4. Indeed, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

C. But that is not all

“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul.” Here, in essence, is the life story of a child of God. He begins life with the morning and the labor and toil of the day. But then come the resting periods, the times for communion with God, for getting in touch afresh with heaven. “He maketh me to lie down.” Could it be that this is what weariness is for—perhaps even illness? In the hustle and bustle of life, we sometimes forget how to relax, to have time to think, to enjoy the God who created us to serve Him.

Then David tells us that God is able to transform the most difficult situation into a “green pasture” and the most violently tossing waves into “still waters.” Green is the most restful of all colors and, at the same time, the most hopeful. The “green pasture” requires clouds and showers and then the sunshine. The storm clouds are often necessary to bring the rain, but there always comes the sunshine.

Inevitably God leads us “in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” By this, David means “straight paths,” paths with direction, leading somewhere. Life, when it is directed by God, is never without direction. It is always moving toward a goal. Likewise, when God calls one of His own to rest, He is fulfilling His plan and completing His purpose in that person’s life.

D. Yea, though I walk

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” Note that the refreshing time beside the still waters and in the green pastures came before the most difficult part of the journey with the Shepherd—that part which leads “through the valley of the shadow of death.” Tests of life—the hard stretches on the road—do not often come in the morning years of our lives. Rather they come in the afternoon, after we have had time to become acquainted with our God as Friend and Lord, as well as Savior. We have had time to walk and talk with Him, and to hear Him tell us that we are His own.

E. Last verses prepare for journey’s end

The last two verses of this delightful psalm prepare us for the journey’s end. Here the imagery changes abruptly from that of the Shepherd leading His sheep through the

wilds of life's wilderness to that of a kindly Host providing lovingly and generously for His guests. The Good Shepherd has brought His flock home, and the idea of home is made all the more appropriate by the picture of the spread table and the lavish provisions made ready by a most fatherly Host. The sheep are safe in the fold: the enemies are outside, glaring but helpless. Truly, one's "cup of joy" overflows at the prospect of our Good Shepherd's thoughtful and loving care for His sheep.

F. Conclusion

Not only is our Shepherd the One who leads and guides us and goes before us to smooth the rough path and lighten the dark way, He also sees to the "rear guard." He takes care that we shall not be "abused" from behind by evil. For His twin courtiers, "goodness" and "mercy," are following us all the days of our lives; and in the end, we are assured of "dwell[ing] in the house of the Lord for ever." **E**

The Beauty of Death

Scripture Readings

Ecclesiastes 1:1-11; 1 Corinthians 15:51-58

Suggested Hymns

"Nearer My God to Thee" Hymn 473

"Balm in Gilead" Hymn 475

Text 1 Corinthians 15:55-57

A. Introduction

1. Sometimes, out of the darkness of our sorrow in the face of death, we find ourselves asking:
 - a. "Is there anything logical about death? Why do we die? Is death just a tragic waste?"
 - b. The apostle Paul tells us that death is the means whereby we shed our bodies of corruption in order to receive bodies which are not subject to decay.
 - c. When man sinned, his body became subject to disease, pain, decay, and the ravages of time.
 - d. God did not intend that man should live forever in such a body.
 - (1) Suppose man could not die, but was fated to live forever in a body which grew ever older, weaker, and more painful, an eternal victim of disease and corruption?
 - (2) So, while death is an enemy, God causes even this enemy to serve us for our good.
 - (3) In this sense, therefore, death is a blessed release, offering the anticipation of a resurrected body that is incorruptible and immortal .

2. The great problem with human life, for those of us who remain, is our ability to see only one side of it.
 - a. In a sense we see the underside of life.
 - (1) Truly, we "see through a glass darkly," and we "know in part." But in the midst of these human questions and doubts, we hear this promise buried in the ancient Book of Ecclesiastes, "[God] hath made everything beautiful in his time" Ecclesiastes 3:11.

B. God's own time and His own way.

1. God gives us the perspective to see things as they truly are, and as He intended them to be.
 - a. This principle operates in nature.
 - (1) Consider the seed as an example. A seed looks dry and ugly and dead—shriveled and lifeless.
 - (2) Could you imagine a person giving a packet of flower seeds in memory of a departed loved one or friend?
 - (3) And yet, the seed contains within itself all the beauty of the flower. In the orderly processes of nature, the seed puts forth the shoot, the shoot becomes the plant, the plant bears the bud, and the bud breaks open into glorious blossom.
 - b. "God makes all things beautiful in his time."
2. Notice also the beauty in the cycle of our seasons.
 - a. We naturally enjoy the beauty of springtime, as all nature seems to throb with returning life.
 - b. In summer, the fields are golden with their ripening grain.

- (1) Then the season moves on to autumn. The trees turn to scarlet and gold, and we bow our heads in humble thanksgiving for the harvest of the earth.
- (2) But then winter comes, with the glistening magic of icicles and snow.
- c. Each part of the year has its own beauty—how can we compare them?
 - (1) We can only agree that “God makes all things beautiful in his time.”
- d. The same principle can be seen in human life.
 - (1) Which of the ages of mankind is most beautiful?
 - (2) We think of the dimpled smile of the tiny babe in its helplessness and innocence.
 - (3) Then there is the school girl with her hair in pigtails and braces on her teeth, running down the walk to meet her dad.
 - (4) Or the young man dressed in his academic cap and gown.
 - (5) Then the time moves on to motherhood and fatherhood and to the busy years of building a home and family.
 - (6) Finally the wrinkles of old age appear—the face is creased with lines drawn there by love. Every age seems to offer a greater beauty than the age before. “God makes all things beautiful in his time.”
- e. But then, one day long ago, an ugly cross was raised on the outskirts of an ancient city.
 - (1) Upon that instrument of torture was nailed the mangled body of a young Galilean prophet who had been stripped and beaten.
 - (2) A crown of thorn branches was crushed down upon His head and a sarcastic inscription placed above Him: “This is the King of the Jews.”
 - (3) Could anything change such a picture into a thing of beauty?
 - (4) Yet three days later His tomb was empty! God made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus who was crucified.
 - (5) Today, lives are devoted in humble and loving service in the name of this same Jesus. Even His cross has become a thing of beauty to us. “God makes all things beautiful in his time.”

C. “Oh grave, where is thy victory?”

1. In the face of this, we can grasp something of the challenge of Paul’s words in 1 Cor. 15:55.
 - a. Where is the sting of death?

- b. It is the terror of the person who approaches God unforgiven of his sins. It is the fearful anticipation of an unknown and mysterious future.
- c. What is the victory of the grave? It is the eternal claim upon the soul unsundered to God—the hopeless, endless imprisonment in a Christian eternity.
 - (1) Apart from God, death is indeed a fearful state; there is an awesome finality about it.
- d. But, thank God, Paul does not leave us there.
 - (1) To learn the secret of his courage and the courage and strength of every child of God, we must consider these words: 1 Cor. 15: 57.
 - (2) Paul anticipated death—not with a morbid desire to escape from life, but realizing its inevitability (for the Scriptures declare that “it is appointed unto man once to die”).
 - (3) Paul delighted in the fact that Christ had removed from death all the fearful and chilling aspects which once accompanied it.
 - (4) He came back from death not only to tell us that there is more beyond, but to promise us: “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” John 14:2, 3.

D. Conclusion

1. Certainly every living Christian anticipates the return of Christ.
2. This is the abiding hope of the New Testament.
3. But our human bodies grow tired and weak.
4. Jesus comes for His children also in death. And there, in the presence of God, they will no longer “see through a glass darkly,” and they will no longer “know in part.”
5. The mysteries of life which perplex us are revealed to them. If they could speak to us today, no doubt they would echo the words of Paul: 1 Cor. 15:58. **E**



Guidelines for the Communion Service

Joel Sarli



1. Importance

Communion is an occasion of solemnity and heart-searching, of rejoicing and anticipation. "Everything connected with it should suggest as perfect a preparation as possible." "This ceremony is not to be performed listlessly." *Evangelism*, pp. 277, 278. Properly planned and conducted, it brings encouragement and spiritual renewal to the congregation. Conducting communion service is, therefore, one of the most sacred duties of a pastor or elder.

2. When should it be held?

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church the Communion service customarily is celebrated once per quarter.

3. Foot-washing ceremony

Foot-washing should always be included.

4. How far in advanced should it be announced?

Communion should be announced at least a week in advance, preferably more, so members can prepare themselves, and deacons and deaconesses can prepare the emblems and equipment.

5. Who officiates?

An ordained elder is qualified to officiate a communion service. Always the elder should communicate with the minister in planning the communion service. Deacons assist by distributing the bread and wine.

6. Who participates?

Jesus' example of including Judas at the first communion proves that participation should not be limited only to exemplary Christians. "Christ's example forbids exclusiveness at the Lord's Supper. It is true that open sin excludes the guilty one. This the Holy Spirit plainly teaches. But beyond this none are to pass judgement. God has not left it with men to say who shall present themselves on these occasions. For who can read the hearts?" *Desire of Ages*, p. 656.

7. The sermon

Traditionally the communion sermon is given just before separating for the foot-washing service. The sermon should be short but meaningful. The communion service lasts longer than other worship services. However, the elder must be sensitive to the feelings of the members in general. **E**

Funeral Service Orientation

Elder's Digest Collection

Suggestions for appropriate procedures

As soon as the elder knows that he is to have charge of the funeral service he should hasten to the home of the deceased to offer comfort to the bereaved. He should ascertain the wishes of the family concerning the funeral arrangements and carry out these wishes in a manner to give confidence, comfort and complete satisfaction. This service calls for good taste and tact. It is, in all probability, the time when the elder gets closest to his people—when the heart strings are vibrant.

The simpler the burial service the better. Let the service be full of heart power and sincere sympathy. The elder does not speak as a judge in relation to the deceased, but rather as a comforter to the bereaved. Because the elder will probably address more people in the funeral, or memorial service, than on any other occasion, he should make ample, thoughtful preparation. A brief obituary may be read to bring before the assembly of relatives and friends a few essential facts regarding the deceased. A brief story of the life of the deceased, spoken in high appreciation of the good qualities of character exemplified, will often be very appropriate. In any event the elder will do well to make ample preparation for a funeral service that he may say and do that which is right.

It is a kindness for the elder to return with the family to the home of the deceased after the memorial service. Some of the most effective ministries of comfort and understanding can be offered at this time. The tension has been released; there is the satisfaction that all that is possible has been done to honor the loved one in dignity and order. The hearts of relatives are open for kindly suggestions from the elder. It will be possible for the elder to get acquainted with other members of the family and circle of friends. Lasting and helpful contacts will be possible.

The funeral or memorial service program

1. The order of service for a funeral should be simple.

2. Several factors must be taken into account;
 - a. It is wise to honor requests of the family wherever possible.
 - b. A service held in a home will usually be less formal and quite brief.
 - c. Local practice is usually a sufficient guide.

Suggested program one

1. Music
2. Opening Scripture
3. Invocation
4. Hymn
5. Scripture Lesson
6. Pastoral Prayer
7. Funeral Message
8. Benediction

Suggested program two

1. Instrumental Music (Hymns of Comfort)
2. Scripture Reading
3. Prayer of invocation
4. Hymn
5. Scripture Selections
6. Pastoral Prayer
7. Hymn
8. Obituary or Life Story
9. Memorial Address
10. Hymn
11. Benediction
12. Instrumental Music

Suggested program three

1. Hymns of Comfort
2. Scripture Reading
3. Prayer
4. Funeral Message
5. Prayer

Suggested grave side service

1. Scripture Reading
2. Poem, or reading of specific Bible passages
3. Benediction

Spirit of Prophecy counsel

On a number of occasions Mrs. White speaks of meeting death. A few selected passages follow:

Jesus, the minister's model, wept in the face of death

"Christ was a close observer, noticing many things that others passed by. He was ever helpful, ever ready to speak words of hope and sympathy to the discouraged and the bereaved. He allowed the crowd to press round Him, and complained not, though sometimes He was almost lifted off His feet. When He met a funeral, He did not pass by indifferently. Sadness came over His face as He looked upon death, and He wept with the mourners." *The Upward Look*, p. 57.

Death, in the presence of the Lifegiver, is only temporary

"In a clear, authoritative voice the words are spoken, 'Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.' That voice pierces the ears of the dead. The young man opens his eyes. Jesus takes him by the hand, and lifts him up. His gaze falls upon her who has been weeping beside him, and mother and son unite in a long, clinging, joyous embrace. The multitude look on in silence, as if spellbound. 'There came a fear on all.' Hushed and reverent they stood for a little time, as if in the very presence of God. Then they 'glorified God, saying, that a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited His people.' The funeral train returned to Nain as a triumphal procession. 'And this rumor of Him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.'" *Desire of Ages*, p. 318.

A Christian's funeral can provide a powerful witness for Christianity

"When we called at night we found the young man

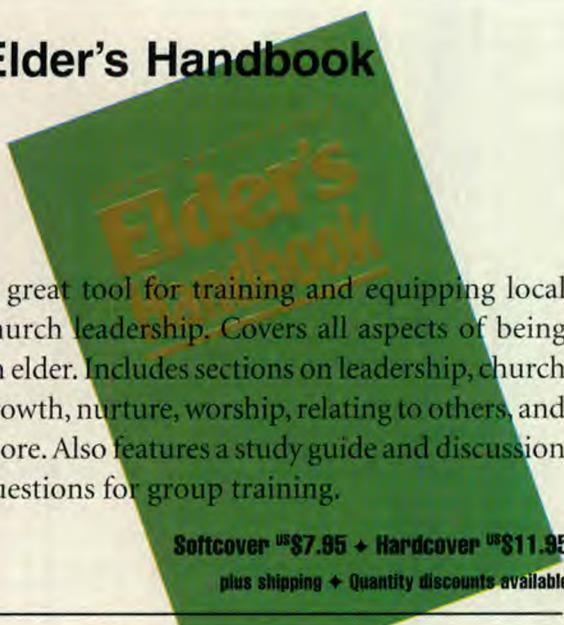
very near his end. His mortal frame was racked with pain. We prayed with him, and his heavy breathing and groaning ceased while we were praying. The blessing of God rested down in that sick room, and we felt that angels were hovering around."

"He was relieved a little, yet knew that he was dying. He tried to have us understand that hope lightened up the future, and that to him it was not a dark uncertainty. We understood from broken sentences that he should have part in the first resurrection, and then he made immortal. Said he, 'Tell Bro. Bates that I will meet him then.' His faltering tongue

often spoke that dear name, so precious to the dying Christian—Jesus—in whom all his hope of eternal life centered. He fell asleep in Jesus a few hours after we left." *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, p. 92. **E**

*His faltering tongue
often spoke that dear name,
so precious to the dying
Christian—Jesus—in whom
all his hope of eternal life
centered.
He fell asleep in Jesus.*

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Freedom from Fear

Paul Moore

Introduction

Fear has so dominated the mind of modern man that it is nearly impossible for him to believe anything absolutely or to have complete confidence in any person. Fear has presented itself in many colors, but the most destructive is that which comes from uncertainty. Because of this it is almost impossible for some people to make definite, lasting decisions for God. It is the purpose of this study to free those people from their fears.

A. Fear hath torment

1. Prov. 12:25, R.S.V. "Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down."
2. James 1:6. The man who does not trust is "driven with the wind and tossed."
3. 1 John 4:18. "Fear hath torment."

B. Fear is not God's plan

1. Testimony of Paul.
 - a. 1 Cor. 7:32, R.S.V. "I want you to be free from anxieties."
 - b. Phil. 4:6, R.S.V. "Have no anxiety about anything."
2. Counsel of Jesus.
 - a. Matt. 6:25, R.S.V. "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious."
 - b. Mark 13:11, R.S.V. "When they . . . deliver you up, do not be anxious."
 - c. Luke 10:41, R.S.V. "Martha, Martha, you are anxious . . . about many things."

C. Fear can be overcome

1. We must first realize our own weakness.
 - a. Matt. 14:30. Peter exclaimed "Lord, save me" when he realized his helplessness.

- b. Rom. 7:24. Paul cried, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" as he realized his own weakness.
- c. Isa. 6:5. Isaiah realized that he was "a man of unclean lips."
2. We must realize the extent of the strength Christ offers us.
 - a. Matt. 28:18. "All power is given unto me."
 - b. Jude 24. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling."
3. We must look to Jesus for the help He offers.
 - a. Matt. 14:28-32. Peter began to sink when he took his eyes off Jesus, but was saved when he called on Him.
 - b. 1 John 3:1. "Behold, what manner of love the Father has for each one of us."
 - c. John 1:29. "Behold the Lamb of God." The One who will take away all our fears and our sins.
4. We must believe His promises.
 - a. Matt. 11:28. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."
 - b. Acts 3:19. "If we will repent, He will forgive us our sins."
 - c. Rev. 22:17. "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

D. Appeal

- 1 John 4:18. "Perfect love casteth out fear."
 1 Peter 5:7. "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." **E**

Paul Moore writes from Trinidad, Texas.

Questions and Answers About Miracles and the End of Time

Ellen G. White

1) Question

Is it true that as we near the close of time, there will not be any religious organization, and each believer will act independently?

Answer

“Some have advanced the thought that, as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man being independent. The stars of heaven are all under law, each influencing the other to do the will of God, yielding their common obedience to the law that controls their action. And, in order that the Lord’s work may advance healthfully and solidly, His people must draw together.” *Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 406.

2) Question

What about miracles that are being performed in charismatic churches? Should Seventh-day Adventists believe in these miracles?

Answer

“Let none cherish the idea that special providences or miraculous manifestations are to be the proof of the genuineness of their work or of the ideas they advocate. If we keep these things before the people, they will produce an evil effect, an unhealthful emotion. The genuine working of the Holy Spirit on human hearts is promised, to give efficiency through the Word. Christ has declared the Word to be spirit and life. ‘The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea’ (Hab. 2:14, A.R.V.).

“Satan will work in a most subtle manner to introduce human inventions clothed with angel

garments. But the light from the Word is shining amid the moral darkness; and the Bible will never be superseded by miraculous manifestations. The truth must be studied, it must be searched for as hidden treasure. Wonderful illuminations will not be given aside from the Word, or to take the place of it. Cling to the Word, receive the ingrafted Word, which will make men wise unto salvation. This is the meaning of the words of Christ in regard to eating His flesh and drinking His blood. And He says, ‘This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent’ (John 17:3).

“We shall encounter false claims; false prophets will arise; there will be false dreams and false visions; but preach the Word, be not drawn away from the voice of God in His Word. Let nothing divert the mind. The wonderful, the marvelous, will be represented and presented. Through satanic delusions, wonderful miracles, the claims of human agents will be urged. Beware of all this.

“Christ has given warning, so that none need accept falsehood for truth. The only channel through which the Spirit operates is that of the truth. . . . Our faith and hope are founded, not in feeling, but in God.”—*Letter 12, 1894. Selected Messages*, Vol. 2, pp. 48-49.

3) Question

What is the standard of God for us to know the origin of the power of those working miracles?

Answer

“The voice of a stranger is the voice of one who neither respects nor obeys God’s holy, just, and good law. Many make great pretensions to holiness, and boast of the wonders they perform in healing the sick, when they do not regard this great standard of righteousness. But

through whose power are these cures wrought? Are the eyes of either party opened to their transgressions of the law? and do they take their stand as humble, obedient children, ready to obey all of God's requirements? John testifies of the professed children of God: 'He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him' " (1 John 2:4).

"None need be deceived. The law of God is as sacred as His throne, and by it every man who cometh into the world is to be judged. There is no other standard by which to test character. 'If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' Now, shall the case be decided according to the Word of God, or shall man's pretensions be credited? Christ says: "By their fruits ye shall know them." If those through whom cures are performed, are disposed, on account of these manifestations, to excuse their neglect of the law of God, and continue in disobedience, though they have power to any and every extent, it does not follow that they have the great power of God. On the contrary, it is the miracle-working power of the great deceiver. He is a transgressor of the moral law, and employs every device that he can master to blind men to its true character. We are warned that in the last days he will work with signs and lying wonders. And he will continue these wonders until the close of probation, that he may point to them as evidence that he is an angel of light and not of darkness.

"Brethren, we must beware of the pretended holiness that permits transgression of the law of God. Those cannot be sanctified who trample that law under their feet, and judge themselves by a standard of their own devising." —*The Review and Herald, Nov. 17, 1885. Selected Messages, Vol. 2, pp. 50, 51.*

4) Question

How does God work today concerning healing people? Why are miracles not in God's plans today?

Answer

"The way in which Christ worked was to preach the Word, and to relieve suffering by miraculous works of healing. But I am instructed that we cannot now work in this way, for Satan will exercise his power by working miracles. God's servants today could not work by means of miracles, because spurious works of healing, claiming to be divine, will be wrought.

"For this reason the Lord has marked out a way in which His people are to carry forward a work of physical

healing, combined with the teaching of the Word. Sanitariums are to be established, and with these institutions are to be connected workers who will carry forward genuine medical missionary work. Thus a guarding influence is thrown around those who come to the sanitariums for treatment.

"This is the provision the Lord has made whereby gospel medical missionary work is to be done for many souls."—*Letter 53, 1904. Selected Messages, Vol. 2, p. 54.*

5) Question

In the final conflict, what will distinguish the genuine followers of Jesus? Will it be the working of miracles?

Answer

"It is impossible to give any idea of the experience of the people of God who will be alive on the earth when past woes and celestial glory will be blended. They will walk in the light proceeding from the throne of God. By the means of the angels there will be constant communication between heaven and earth. And Satan, surrounded by evil angels, and claiming to be God, will work miracles of all kinds to deceive, if possible, the very elect. God's people will not find their safety in working miracles, for Satan would counterfeit any miracle that might be worked. God's tried and tested people will find their power in the sign spoken of in Exodus 31:12-18. They are to take their stand on the living Word—"It is written.' This is the only foundation upon which they can stand securely. Those who have broken their covenant with God will in that day be without hope and without God in the world.

"The worshipers of God will be especially distinguished by their regard for the fourth commandment—since this is the sign of His creative power and the witness to His claim upon man's reverence and homage. The wicked will be distinguished by their efforts to tear down the Creator's memorial, to exalt the institution of Rome. In the issue of the contest all Christendom will be divided into two great classes—those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark." *Letter 119, 1904. Selected Messages, Vol. 2, pp. 54, 55. E*

Ellen G. White, the Lord's messenger, was one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.



Nurturing the Little Ones of the Lord

Sharon Cress

Spending time with the little ones may not seem to some to be as important or stimulating as the mental exercise of discussing great theological issues and doctrines with adults. But in many ways interacting with children can be even more rewarding.

Imitation is still the greatest form of flattery. The greatest compliment I ever received was from a little girl who remarked, "When I grow up I want to be a pastor just like you!" And, in the years since, her life has developed in such a way that there is a good possibility she will someday be a pastor.

As leaders in congregations, we have the burden and responsibility to place before the people the necessity of positively ministering to our children. We need to make sure the members receive proper training so they know how to relate to these precious kids so that church services and other programs leave positive, lasting impressions of Jesus, His local church, and the people who present the programs.

Teachers, facilitators, and mentors stand in the place of Jesus to these little ones. Unfortunately, many members are well-meaning but boring. Others have been known to use children as a sounding board for their own agendas. Such encounters may be quickly forgotten by adults, but they tend to be remembered by children. Last week two Junior youngsters were visiting in our home. Remarking about their Sabbath School class that morning, one boy exclaimed that it was the best class he had ever been to. I asked what made it "the best." Eyes sparkling, he replied, "Oh, we got to do things! Not just sitting and being talked to." He then proceeded to tell

me all the activities, one by one, that the children had participated in with the organizer. "She did everything we did, and it was so much fun!"

Children's Ministries can provide valuable resources and training, but the key is to have people to implement these programs who are themselves teachable in the tender art of molding characters. Children have a sixth sense. They can quickly detect phony piety. They can sense in a moment if we really love them. And they will put that impression into their own little hard drives and retrieve it over and over in years to come.

Reaching children at their level

A few weeks ago my husband and I listened to the narrator of the children's story during the worship service. The story was told in adult words, not children's. The storyteller's sense of humor went right over the children's heads. And the story dragged on for 15 minutes! After the service one member lamented "taking so much time out of the worship service for these kids, and they don't even appreciate it. That's obvious because they were tickling and teasing each other, and climbing up and down the platform stairs during the story."

Neither the storyteller nor the critic seemed to realize where the fault lay. At the 14 minute mark, even I was having strong urges to pester my husband, scribble on the bulletin, or run to the bathroom. I remembered my friend Cheryl Retzer's sage advice: "Remember that children can only listen for one minute for every year of their age!" Thus a four year old can listen attentively for no more than four minutes!

continued on page 30

The Hebrew of Exodus 20:10

Francis D. Nichol

A brother writes that he has been informed that if the original Hebrew is literally translated, part of the Sabbath command will read thus: “The seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord thy God” (Ex. 20:10). He is greatly troubled, because it seems to him that the definiteness of the seventh-day Sabbath thus disappears.

First let me confess that I am not an authority on Hebrew. I must find my answer to the first part of your question by inquiring of someone who is well schooled in this ancient language. The answer is that “a sabbath” is a possible translation of the Hebrew, for the definite article “the” is not present in the original. However, in the Hebrew there are other means of showing definiteness than by the definite article. The construction in Exodus 20:10 is such that definiteness is possible, though in the context, not probable.

However, granting for the sake of argument that “a Sabbath” is a correct translation in this text, this still does not take from the Sabbath command its definiteness. The point of controversy between Sundaykeepers and Sabbathkeepers is not over whether a Christian should rest—“not do any work”—one day in the week, but which day of the week that should be, the *first* or the *seventh*. The commandment answers explicitly, “the seventh day.” The command divides the week into two parts: (1) “six days shalt thou . . . do all thy work,” (2) “the seventh day . . . thou shalt not do any work.” And why this prohibition of work on “the seventh day”? Because it is a “sabbath of the Lord.” The word Sabbath is from the Hebrew *Shabbath*, which means “rest.” Thus the command prohibits work on the seventh day because it is a *rest day* of the Lord. This takes us back to the origin of the Sabbath, when God “rested on the seventh day” (Gen. 2:2).

It is therefore plain that the contrast is not between “the” and “a,” but between “work” and “rest.” “Six days,”

says the command, are *work* days, but “the seventh day” is a *rest* day. That “the seventh day” is uniquely God’s rest day is made evident in the opening words of the command: “Remember *the* sabbath (rest) day, to keep it holy.” In this sentence the Hebrew has the word “the.”

Luke 2:11 is translated from the Greek: “For unto you is born a Saviour.” We do not therefore conclude that Christ was simply one of many saviors. We capture the meaning of the angels’ words when we put the emphasis on the word “Saviour.” Christ came, not as a military conqueror or an earthly king, but as a *Saviour*. Numerous other passages deal with the uniqueness of His salvation and with the fact that we can be saved by none other.

Thus with the matter of the fourth command. The seventh day was blessed and set apart, not as a work day, but as a rest (a Sabbath) day.

The variant use of “the” and “a” in connection with the word “sabbath” in the fourth command in Exodus 20 finds a parallel in the statements concerning the Sabbath in Exodus 16. Note for example: “A sabbath unto the Lord” (Ex. 16:25). “The Lord hath given you the sabbath” (verse 29). In the twenty-fifth verse the definite article “the” is not in the original, in the twenty-ninth verse it is, and the translators of our King James Version made their translation accordingly. But the reader of verse 25 is in no doubt as to the particular *day* intended for the Sabbath. That day is uniformly described in the sixteenth chapter as “the seventh day.” (See verses 26, 27, 29.)

No, we need not fear that the definiteness of God’s holy Sabbath is endangered. (Francis D. Nichol, *Questions People Have Asked Me*, pages 261-263.) **E**

Francis D. Nichols was editor of The Review and Herald, the official magazine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, when he wrote this article.



The Bible

From the Editor's File

The Bible

George Muller, after having read the Bible through one hundred times with increasing delight, made this statement: "I look upon it as a lost day when I have not had a good time over the Word of God. Friends often say, I have so much to do, so many people to see, I cannot find time for Scripture study." Perhaps there are not many who have more to do than I. For more than half a century I have never known one day when I had not more business than I could get through. For four years I have had annually about 30,000 letters, and most of these have passed through my own hands.

"Then, as pastor of a church with 1,200 believers, great has been my care. Besides, I have had charge of five immense orphanages; also, at my publishing depot, the printing and circulating of millions of tracts, books and Bibles; but I have always made it a rule never to begin work until I have had a good season with God and His Word. The blessing I have received has been wonderful."

The transforming power of the Bible

Though accounts of the demise of Fletcher Christian vary, the outcome of the *Bounty* mutineers is well known. After nine mutineers, twelve Tahitian women and six Tahitian men were put ashore on Pitcairn Island in 1790, jealousy, treachery, drunkenness and murder took over.

Ten years later, only two white men survived, surrounded by native women and half-breed offspring. When one of them died in 1800, he was the first man on the island to die a natural death. When the sole remaining mutineer was discovered in 1808, it was found that he had at one point discovered a Bible. By reading it and teaching it to others, he had instituted a simple, pious little community with no jail, no whiskey, no crime, and no laziness. Such is the transforming power of the Word of God.

*"I look upon it
as a lost day
when I have not had
a good time
over the Word of God."*

Love for the Bible

A man in Kansas City was severely injured in an explosion. Evangelist Robert L. Summer tells about him in his book *The Wonder of the Word of God*. The victim's face was badly disfigured, and he lost his eyesight as well as both hands. He was just a new Christian, and one of his greatest disappointments was that he could no

longer read the Bible. Then he heard about a lady in England who read braille with her lips. Hoping to do the same, he sent for some books of the Bible in braille. Much to his dismay, however, he discovered that the nerve endings in his lips had been destroyed by the explosion. One day, as he brought one of the braille pages to his lips, his tongue happened to touch a few of the raised characters and he could feel them. Like a flash he thought, I can read the Bible using my tongue. At the time Robert L. Summer wrote his book, the man had "read" through the entire Bible four times.

Let the Word of God do its work!

- If you are cold, let it WARM you.
- If you are asleep, let it WAKE you.
- If you are a backslider, let it WARN you.
- If you are defiled, let it WASH you.
- If you are disobedient, let it WHIP you.
- If you are uncertain, let it WITNESS to you.
- If you are unsaved, let it WIN you.

Position wanted

- I would like a job as tutor, teacher and advisor to your family.
- I will never take a vacation.
- I will never be out of humor.
- I don't drink or smoke.
- I won't borrow your clothes or raid your refrigerator.
- I will be up in the morning as early as anyone in the household and will stay up as late as anyone wishes.
- I will help solve any problems your children might have.
- I will give you the satisfaction of knowing that no question your children ask will go unanswered.
- For that matter, I will answer any of your own questions on subjects that range from "How we got here?" to "Where are we headed?"
- I will help settle bets and differences of opinion.
- I will give you information that will help you with your job, your family and all of your other interests.
- In short, I will give you the knowledge that will insure the continued success of your family.
- I am your Bible.
- Do I get the job? **E**



The Value of Making Disciples

continued from page 9

all the world to make disciples of all people, teaching them to observe all things that He had commanded.

Waldron Scott presents a balanced and interdependent relationship between evangelism for decisions and evangelism for discipleship, which he calls *discipleship evangelism*. He advances three theses:

- "1. Discipleship is the true and ultimate objective of biblical evangelism.
- "2. Qualitatively, evangelism is shaped—both as to content and style—by one's concept of discipleship.
- "3. Quantitatively, biblical discipleship multiplies the fruit of evangelism."⁴ **E**

Endnotes

¹Hadidian, 12-20
²In C. Peter Wagner, Win Arn, and Elmer Towns, *Church Growth: The State of the Art*, 58-59.
³C. Peter Wagner, *Your Church Can Be Healthy*, 69.
⁴Sherwood Eliot Wirt, ed., *Evangelism: the Next Ten Years*, 103-104.

James A. Cress writes from Silver Spring, Maryland. He is the Ministerial Secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Nurturing the Little Ones of the Lord

continued from page 27

Those who are invited to work with children and youth should have clearly shown a talent for this ministry, or should be provided with training to develop these skills. Having well trained, caring members working with our children can be a wonderful blessing to all, now and throughout eternity. **E**

Sharon Cress is Associate Ministerial Secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and director of Shepherdess International.

Our Part in an Unfinished Work

continued from page 13

we must live what they preach. When we are perplexed, a bit anxious as to just what our example should be, it is comforting to know that the Holy Spirit will be our Guide. He will give day-by-day instruction in even the smaller details of our daily living. He does this through the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. We have a never-failing source from which we may draw. The precious promise is "If any... lack wisdom, let him ask of God." If we but follow His leading, we may be assured that our example will be such as will draw men and women closer to the Savior.

Reach out to others

After we have done our best for our own households—our husbands and our children—the Lord expects us, as true mothers in Israel, to reach out beyond our own family circle. Every night millions lie down cold and hungry. I have seen thousands of such unfortunate people in lands afar, while we here in the homeland are often too warm and have a tendency to overeat. God expects us to do what we can for the needy and the stranger. What a responsibility is ours! But what a glorious privilege!

There are other ways wives can help their husbands in the work in these closing days. I have mentioned only a few. These are such simple things—praying, encouraging, studying, cooking, watching our example, and working for the needy—but these are ways we can help in finishing the work. There is nothing difficult about God's way into the kingdom. The Sermon on the Mount is not complicated. Likewise, the helps I have mentioned are simple. But as we all well know, it takes the grace of God and complete surrender of self to put these things into practice.

If we do our part we need never fear. Our Great Helper will do His. Then we will truly be "helpmeets" to the men whom we love and whom we desire to help finish God's work in our day. **E**

Dollis M. Pierson is living in Hendersonville, North Carolina.

Elder's Digest

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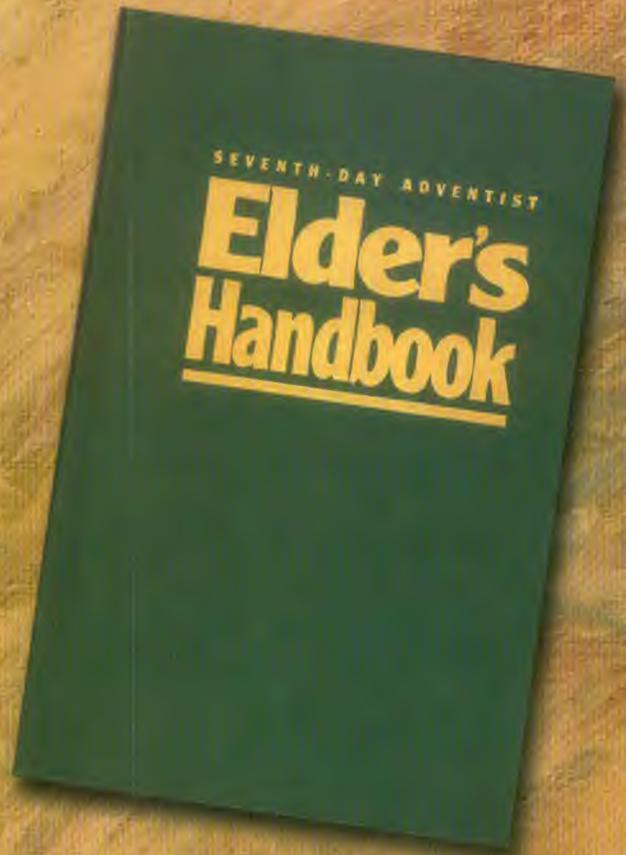
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