

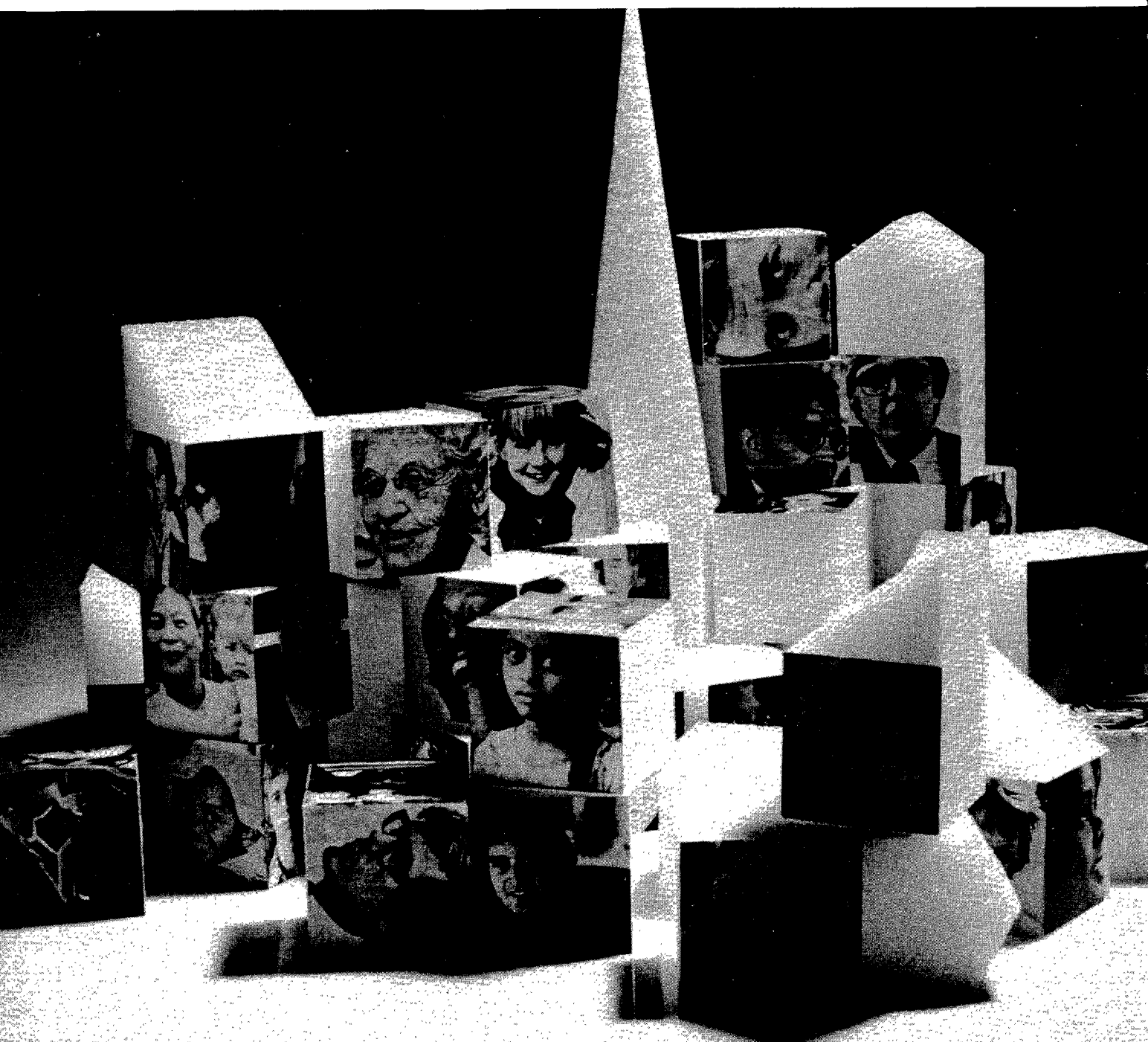
MINISTRY

A MAGAZINE FOR CLERGY



FEBRUARY 1981

Equipping
your members
to minister



Policies alone are not enough/See page 4

LETTERS

Reactions to October issue

Your editorial is the latest of the long line of evidence that has emerged to reveal that Des Ford is not the one on trial today, but rather it is the church leadership itself! Your editorial, as you surely must have been aware when you wrote it, is overkill. Your attempt at sentiment was perceived by many as a cloak whereby you tried to hide the dagger, which you so nicely used in the appropriate places.—Michigan.

Except for some of its content, MINISTRY's coverage of the Des Ford story reaches a high-water mark in Adventist journalism. I especially appreciated the editorial. It was balanced, fair; and, while I do not agree with some of your opinions and observations, I believe they are honestly held and presented.—Tennessee.

We appreciate the October issue of MINISTRY, devoted entirely to the Glacier View meetings. It is refreshing to see the church struggling with Biblical issues and inspiring its membership to explore the Word. Truth can and will stand up to the closest scrutiny.—Ohio.

I am returning this issue of the MINISTRY as I feel that this is just one more piece of propaganda to put Mr. Ford away. I have always enjoyed the few scholarly articles in the MINISTRY, so I have been deeply disappointed with this issue. I have read everything in all the articles and have seen a tremendous amount of pettiness, so much going round and round without any truly scholarly conclusions. There are too many things left to take for granted. I have not washed my hands of the MINISTRY and am hoping that future issues will be more scholarly.—California.

For many years I have regarded MINISTRY as the premier Adventist publication. However, I was appalled by your treatment of Des Ford in the post-Glacier View issue. What happened to your fair, even-handed policies?—Michigan.

I am certain that this well-researched issue will be a blessing to literally thousands of workers and members around the world. The Lord will surely use it to stir us to greater study and active witness for the message that has been entrusted to us.—Oregon.

Since first learning about the special MINISTRY issue on the Des Ford controversy, I have looked forward to reading the report. However, I must confess that the special issue disappointed me. I do not feel that it measures up to the high editorial standards that MINISTRY has shown lately. Rather than

being a report, it was propaganda.

I submit that MINISTRY has not played fair with the facts of the case. Although many of us do not feel comfortable with all or any of Dr. Ford's proffered suggestions, we are less than candid if we behave as though Dr. Ford hasn't a leg to stand on. The evidence for our traditional positions is *not* that coercive.—Tennessee.

Instead of the "We have all the answers" attitude, why can't we be honest and open and admit that there are areas in which we are not certain and more study is needed? It is crucial at this point in time that study be encouraged and that problems with which we are faced not be swept under the carpet.—Australia.

As you editorialized, the stand that you have taken will be seen by some to be "reactionary." So be it. We must recognize that stand, for the stands for truth in the future will cause greater negative reactions than that.—Massachusetts.

The above is a sampling of reader response to the October issue—"Christ and His High Priestly Ministry." All the letters were signed; however, we felt that we could provide a more representative cross-section of response by deleting the writers' names. The April MINISTRY will contain a summary and assessment of the many letters we have received commenting on this issue.—Editors.

Blueprint for the cities

The December article dealing with Mark Finley's evangelistic methods, including medical evangelism, was excellent in portraying the way God is using these means to reach the cities. We want to see this plan duplicated more and more, and are trying in our area to be a part of this blueprint.—Richard A. Hansen, M.D., Wildwood, Georgia.

Objective and subjective blend

In response to Donald D. Weaver's letter (December, 1980) commenting on Beatrice Neall's article, "The Dragon Fighters," I would like to say that God, as He is presented in the Scriptures, seems to be a God of perfect symmetry and balance. Why, then, should we not expect God's purpose and plan for us to be a blend and balance between the objective and subjective experiences?

No doubt it is true that both Paulinists and Johannists are emphasizing opposite perspectives, as the author of the original article pointed out. However, might it not be a bit arbitrary to therefore conclude, as does Dr. Weaver, that Paulinists "believe that our standing before God even in the judgment and after the close of probation is based entirely

on Christ's completed work for us"? Perhaps in actuality, although somewhat obscured by semantics, there is considerable continuity and even consensus of thinking within our church that our ultimate salvation is contingent upon a harmonious relationship between the objective and the subjective experiences.—Lee Kinsli, Loma Linda, California.

Language of worship

Thanks to Kenneth H. Wood ("Awe—an Essential of Worship," November, 1980) for pointing up the danger in a present trend on the part of some ministers to cheapen worship by their palsy-walsy approach to God. The habit of addressing God as "You" in pastoral prayer is, to me, a deplorable example of this trend. "Thee" and "Thou" may sound strange to some modern secularists, but for me it is the language of worship and suggests something of the otherness and awe in which God should be held.—Perry D. Avery, Claremont, California.

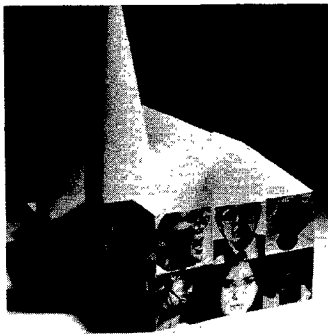
Whence come fightings?

Who are the ones responsible for all the commotion within our church at the present time—lay members or ministers? All the debate over the proportions of justification and sanctification, literary dependency in the writings of Ellen White, and the sanctuary and judgment makes it seem that ordained ministers have nothing better to do than to set up and attend conferences to settle what wasn't settled at the previous conference! If the ministry would follow the counsel to work aggressively in evangelizing new fields rather than continuing to hover over churches, going over the same ground again and again (see *Evangelism*, pp. 381-383), they would not have time to be forever upsetting the church and laity with commotions, notions, and an ever-increasing flow of tapes and written material promoting a particular side of some issue.—Robert E. Kameils, Moorpark, California.

The Spirit's leading

I want to congratulate you on the December editorial, "What Can Glacier View Teach Us?" It certainly points out ever so clearly how the Spirit of God should lead in the minister's life. I think it is a most timely statement. I liked so much the pointed, spiritual way in which it states that regardless of how bright the intellect or great the talents, without the leading of the Holy Spirit in his life a minister will be overwhelmed by his own intellect and his own accomplishments. I know that the Lord will use these thoughts to help men and women in the remnant church to find strength.—Duane H. Anderson, Portland, Oregon.

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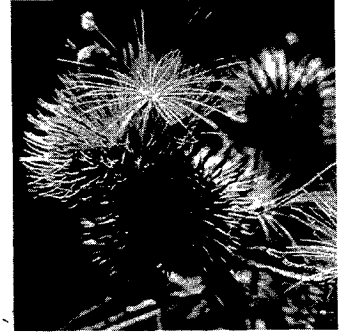
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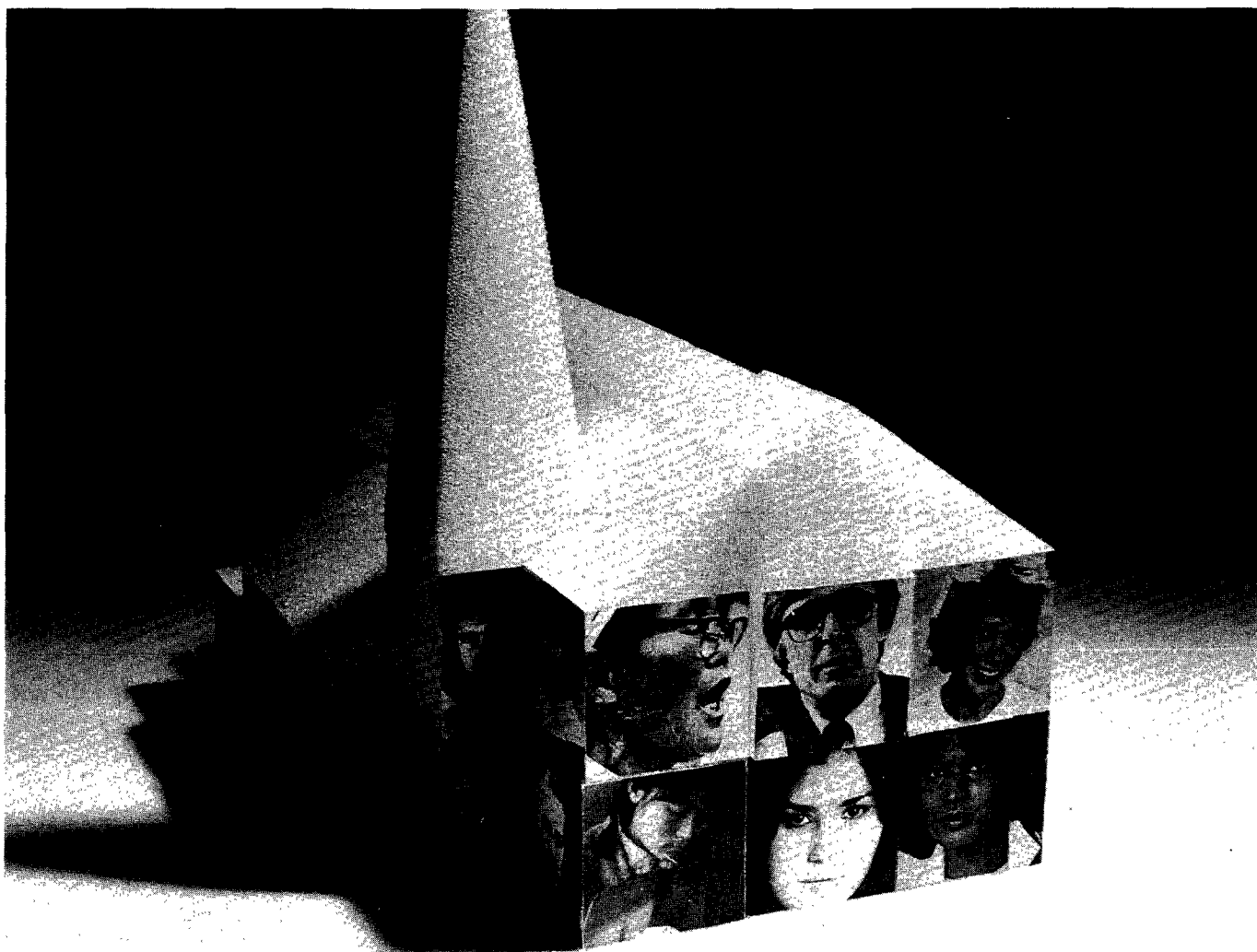
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VERNON TOOLEY PHOTO

J. R. Spangler
interviews
Warren Banfield and
Elias Gomez,
directors of the
General Conference
Office of Human
Relations.

One conclusion: love,
not policies, is what
it is all about.

Policies alone are not enough

Spangler: I'm talking to two good friends, Warren S. Banfield, who is director of the Office of Human Relations of the General Conference, and his associate, Elias G. Gomez. Pastor Banfield has served as a pastor, a conference president, and as an associate secretary in the Southern Union Conference. Pastor Gomez has been a pastor-evangelist, chairman of the theology department at Northeast Brazil College, and most recently has served as director of the office of Spanish affairs in the Central California Conference.

Now, Warren, tell us something about the Office of Human Relations. It's a newcomer to the General Conference, isn't it?

Banfield: Yes. The office was organized by the Annual Council action of

1978. It is not a department in the traditional sense, because it has to operate across departmental lines and also deal in areas of administration, so it is actually a service organization for all entities of the church.

Spangler: Aren't you also, in addition to being director of the Office of Human Relations, a secretary of the General Conference?

Banfield: Yes, and that gives the office some administrative authority, as an extension of the North American Division.

Spangler: But what you are doing—your goals and objectives—probably would apply to the entire world field, wouldn't it?

Banfield: In principle, but our particular area of service is limited to North America.

Gomez: It isn't that North America is the only place that needs our attention, but we had to start somewhere.

Spangler: What are the objectives of the Office of Human Relations?

Banfield: Well, one of our objectives is to help the church determine the best ways to meet the spiritual, economic, social, and organizational needs of the rapidly growing ethnic and cultural groups in our church. Also we want to help determine what improvements are needed in our changing society to provide opportunities for women to serve in the church.

Spangler: So the problems you deal with cross more than national or racial lines. Your office is to help any person or group who has particular needs in human relations, is that right?

Banfield: Minorities include more than racial and cultural groups. Women may not be a minority, but they are a segment of the church that has concerns that the church needs to be more aware of and to relate to. Handicapped people may be considered a minority. They're not a cultural or racial minority, but they are a minority that needs attention. I believe that the church has a responsibility in utilizing the talents and skills of the functionally handicapped members of our family.

Gomez: Coming back to the objectives of the office, I have come up with one that I think encompasses all of them. We are hoping to create such a sensitivity to the needs of others that we can relate to one another as Christ would. From our point of view this is the objective of all that we do.

Spangler: Now, Elias, since you have made that statement, may I ask you a loaded question? Aren't we all Chris-



"Christians have not always loved everyone as their brother. And this feeling is not unknown even in the Seventh-day Adventist Church."

tians? Don't we all love one another? And isn't it the duty of every minister and member in this church to love his brother? Surely this is so. Then why should we go to the trouble and the expense of organizing a separate office for human relations? After all, isn't that really what the whole business of Christianity is all about—to effect a reconciliation between God and man and between man and his fellow man? Do we need a special office to accomplish something so basic?

Gomez: It's true that the purpose of Christianity is just as you have said. However, theory and practice have not gone hand in hand, as you know. The greatest wars and the bloodiest battles have been fought by Christians. Christians have not always loved everyone, even other Christians, as their brother. And this feeling is not unknown even in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, unfortunately. We may say that we love one another, but when it comes right down to practicing that love, we sometimes fail. This is a sin problem, and because of this problem we're not able to relate to one another as Christ would have us. We need Him to create in us this sensitivity so that we can see one another as He would. This is what we are trying to do.

Banfield: There is another factor here that I think is important for us to realize. Many of the conflicts that exist between cultural and minority groups often do not arise because of some overt, sinful attitude. Many times it's just a lack of understanding. People with different backgrounds, different cultures, different styles of living, don't usually communicate with one another. The result is often conflict. You can have an honest heart and a loving spirit, but if you don't understand these cultural differences, you can unintentionally rub people the wrong way. Our concern is to deal with situations of that nature so that honest-hearted people will not have such a difficult time expressing their love because they misunderstand the needs of others. I really don't think most of our problems

are a result of real, hard-core racism or bias. It's a lack of understanding of people.

Spangler: Now, tell me what methods or ideas you gentlemen have to help effect this understanding, this unity, this brotherhood, among us.

Gomez: One of the tools that we hope to use is a workshop in which we call in administrators, workers, and other interested people and give them some guidelines from the social sciences and from the Spirit of Prophecy on how small groups can discuss issues without getting upset at one another, thereby creating group cohesion.

Sometimes when we lecture, subgroups already exist in the main group. We have blacks together; Hispanics in a cluster; and groups of whites. What we would like to do is divide the larger group into groups of six or eight persons who are of differing backgrounds and races and who don't know one another very well, and have them become acquainted. They could work on some of the issues that we face as a church or that they're facing, and then create an understanding of how each one would attack the same problem. In a workshop we would be able to do this. We feel that a spirit of unity would be created where individuals could understand how people with different backgrounds could work together and solve the problems that we all face in the church.

There are many people who really don't know what the theological and religious teachings of this church are when it comes to their responsibility for Christian brotherhood and fellowship. The brotherhood of man is a fundamental doctrine of all Christian bodies, but somehow, in the minds of some, other doctrines take precedence, and it gets lost in the maze. So there are people who are unaware, and it's our job to disseminate this kind of information.

Also, we get many calls from administrators for a person from some minority group to fill a position of leadership, a person who is oftentimes hard to find. One of our responsibilities is to develop



"Conflicts that exist between cultural groups often do not arise because of some overt sinful attitude. Many times it's just a lack of understanding"

a job-skills bank that we can draw from.

Spangler: Let me pose another question, one dealing with the minorities in our country. Warren, how many black church members do we have in the North American Division?

Banfield: The latest figures indicate that there are approximately 122,000 to 125,000 black church members in North America. That is about one fifth of our church membership.

Spangler: Elias, what are the numbers for the Spanish membership in North America?

Gomez: I don't have the latest figures. In 1978 there were 23,000. I suppose there are about 25,000 by now.

Banfield: There is another significant factor, Bob, and that is the fact that most minorities are very aggressive when it comes to soul winning and evangelism. They have a burden in this area.

Spangler: Why do you think that is so?

Gomez: I believe that minorities feel a greater need for God; they often depend upon Him for needs that others are prone to take for granted. They see that God is working for them, and they work for God. Those people who don't feel such a great need of God—financially or otherwise—are not so prone to look to Him or to work actively for Him. The same factors make minority individuals outside the church more receptive to the gospel.

Spangler: Do you find that as an individual from a minority group achieves a more affluent status, he or she becomes less aggressive in soul winning and more indifferent to God? Also, is it harder to reach such an individual who is not a Christian?

Gomez: I think so. If you check the growth of the church among Hispanic people, you'll discover that membership in this country is growing most rapidly among people who are new arrivals to the United States. Third- and fourth-generation Hispanic Americans are as difficult to reach as whites.

Banfield: Evangelism and soul winning is probably the number one objective in all black conferences.

Spangler: Hope it doesn't change.

Banfield: One reason is that they don't have a lot of financial resources or other institutions to take their time and attention. Soul winning is the only thing they can really concentrate on.

Spangler: Other conferences should have these "problems"! Now, let's look at some practical points for our readers. What ideas can you men share that will help an individual who sincerely wants to be unbiased in his attitudes toward those of a different culture, race, or national background? What pitfalls should he avoid?

Banfield: Bob, that's not an easy question to answer. It's hard to give advice in this area. Some people are so eager to befriend a minority group that they overplay it and turn folk off. Others are so fearful they'll do the wrong thing that they keep a distance that makes it hard to communicate. But if people can understand when they meet someone that he or she is really honest and sincere in wanting to understand, a lot of unintentional mistakes will be overlooked. There will be mistakes and misunderstandings. It's a process of trial and error. But if one has a desire, a willingness, to put forth the effort, he will soon grow to where he begins to get the feel of communicating with others. I don't think anybody can lay down principles in a one, two, three, four, five outline for good human relations. We should take advantage of opportunities of meeting together so that we can be in contact with one another.

Gomez: Communication—verbal communication, at least—is not everything. You may understand the word, but not know the hidden meaning. Association brings out real understanding. When you live with a person of a particular ethnic group, you learn to appreciate his background, and you gain insight in dealing with others who are different in some respects than you.

Banfield: There are one or two specific things I think we can do. We should avoid all racial jokes or slurs. We should also try to avoid stereotyping people and

recognize that good and bad exist among all groups. Judge each person according to your individual knowledge of him. Don't condemn a whole group because of a few people in the group.

Spangler: Warren, you handed me a sheaf of actions on human relations that the church has taken.

Banfield: Actually, Bob, I don't think we need any more actions. If we just implement the ones that we've already voted, we'd be in good shape.

Gomez: I agree. I think, though, that the policies we have need to be distributed to our workers more generally. Many are not aware of the specific stands and positions our church has taken in this area. These need to get out to the church at the grass roots.

Banfield: It's one thing to have an action, but it's another thing to implement it. Some policies and actions require a change from the normal way of doing business. Whenever a change is introduced, some people become upset. Sometimes those who are responsible for implementing policies wish to rock the boat as little as possible, because they want to avoid change and the anxieties it produces both in themselves and others. So it's not enough just to have policies. We must have courageous leaders who are willing to stand by policies and to support those who are seeking to enforce them.

Furthermore, people—especially God's people—must be willing to become obedient to the unenforceable obligations that are beyond the reach of the policies of the church or the laws of society. These inner attitudes and expressions and compassions cannot be regulated by policies or ratified by discipline. Such obligations are met by an inner law written in the heart. Human problems cannot be solved without the spirit of love and brotherhood. Love is still our most potent weapon for personal and social transformation.

Spangler: What you're saying, then, is that we all need a big dose of conversion on a daily basis.

Banfield: That's right. Policies alone will not do the job.

The complete fifty-minute interview of J. R. Spangler with W. S. Banfield and E. G. Gomez from which this article was prepared was included in the May, 1980, ASPIRE Tape of the Month. The single month's release, consisting of two C90 cassettes, is available for \$5.00. Send check or money order to ASPIRE, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

PREACHER'S PROGRESS

What! Fire a pastor?

In some quarters of the church the once-unthinkable idea is being discussed more freely.

by Ron Runyan

Should unproductive ministers be invited to exercise their talents in some other line of work?

In the Adventist ministry the traditional answer has seemed to be No. Firings are rare. Trading problem workers from conference to conference—or to a nonpastoral institutional position—is the more common practice. Unless a minister practices bed hopping or till tapping, he has usually had reason to feel secure in his job, whatever his productivity.

But times are changing. A combination of economic retrenchment and increased emphasis on leadership responsibility may lead to more than a few requested "retirements." Says one conference president: "More than half our pastors are nonproductive, and some are actually counterproductive." In some quarters of the church, a once-unthinkable idea is being discussed more freely—if a minister does not produce, if he does not lead souls to Christ, if he doesn't demonstrate a closeness to the high standards and principles of the church, it would be better to let him go and find something to do with his life other than spend it in the gospel ministry.

Fire a minister? Yes, some are saying it should be done, and some conferences are actually doing it!

A look through the Spirit of Prophecy Index reveals repeated pleas that leaders work determinedly—a favorite word is

"labor"—with nonproductive workers. Here is a typical suggestion: "Ministers who are neglectful of the duties devolving on a faithful pastor, give evidence that they are not sanctified by the truths they present to others, and should not be sustained as laborers in the vineyard of the Lord till they have a high sense of the sacredness of the work of a minister."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 132.

Another suggestion is equally pointed: "The converting power of God must come upon the hearts of the ministers, or they should seek some other calling."—*Evangelism*, p. 643.

She even recommends that if a worker is unproductive after a twelve-month trial, his calling should be reexamined. "If after laboring for twelve months in evangelistic work, a man has no fruit to show for his efforts, if the people for whom he has labored are not benefited, if he has not lifted the standard in new places, and no souls are converted by his labors, that man should humble his heart before God, and endeavor to know if he has not mistaken his calling. The wages paid by the conference should be given to those who show fruit for their labor."—*Ibid.*, pp. 686, 687. The minister who neglects his work "has no right to the name of minister" (*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 416).

"Shape up or ship out" has long been a slogan in the business world. It may soon become much more familiar in the Lord's business.

Power for success

"All heaven is interested in the work going on in this world, which is to prepare men and women for the future, immortal life. It is God's plan that human agencies shall have the high honor of acting as co-workers with Jesus Christ in the salvation of souls. The word of God plainly reveals that it is the privilege of the instrument in this great work to realize that there is One at his right hand ready to aid him in every sincere endeavor to reach the highest moral and spiritual excellence in the Master's work. This will be the case with all who feel their need of help. They should look upon the work of God as sacred and holy, and should bring to

Him, every day, offerings of joy and gratitude, in return for the power of His grace, by which they are enabled to make advancement in the divine life. The worker should ever take humble views of himself, considering his many lost opportunities for want of diligence and appreciation of the work. He should not become discouraged, but should continually renew his efforts to redeem the time.

"Men whom God has chosen to be His ministers should prepare themselves for the work by thorough heart searching and by close connection with the world's Redeemer. If they are not successful in winning souls to Christ, it is because their own souls are not right with God. There is altogether too much willing ignorance with a large number who are preaching the word. They are not quali-

fied for this work by a thorough understanding of the Scriptures. They do not feel the importance of the truth for this time, and therefore the truth is not to them a living reality. If they would humble their souls before God; if they would walk according to the Scriptures, in all humility of mind, then they would have more distinct views of the pattern which they should copy; but they fail to keep their eyes fixed upon the Author and Finisher of their faith. . . . All who by faith have Christ abiding in them carry a power into their labor which makes them successful. They will be constantly growing more and more efficient in their work, and the blessing of God, shown in the prosperity of the work, will testify that they are indeed laborers together with Christ."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 573-575.

Time had worn deep ruts of exposition across the passage that I had chosen. With God's help, could I blaze a new path through a story as old as Christianity? Could the vehicle of Biblical exposition be driven out of the ruts?

A sermon for Sabbath

by Walter R. L. Scragg

Time had worn deep ruts of exposition across the passage that I had chosen for my Sabbath sermon at Newbold College. Yet the conviction had settled that the parable of the prodigal son should be the topic.

The decision itself was somewhat alarming. A great many years had passed since last I took a parable and used it for an expository sermon. To leave the writings of Paul and the major prophets, my usually productive sermon-hunting territory, and take up such a well-worn story appeared foolhardy. With God's help, could I blaze a new path through a story as old as Christianity? Could the vehicle of Biblical exposition be driven out of the ruts? One thing at least was sure—I would not have to tell the story, and that would leave more time for explaining God's Word.

I don't know how it is with you, my fellow preacher, but for me the hardest part of preaching is deciding what to preach about. I know not whether all preachers have this difficulty, because I hear men say that they have a thousand sermons yet unpreached. That may be true, but no one has handed me my list yet!

The preaching life of an administrator can be relatively easy. After all, he appears in different congregations week after week, and one good sermon may be effectively peddled from church to church. I do, in fact, have a few emergency sermons of that kind tucked away

in my memory banks, to be produced as needed. Years ago, while still a novice in departmental work, I traveled extensively with a visitor from another division. In less than four weeks I heard the same sermon twenty times! Quoting parts of that sermon presents no problem even today. Such a pattern cakes dust on everybody's shelves, and I have attempted to avoid stultifying repetition.

At any rate, I chose to preach on the parable, and now, having completed that assignment, I've decided to take a look back, revealing a little of what a sermon means in study and preparation.

Versions and the Spirit of Prophecy

Basic to any Biblical exposition is a clear view of the Scripture message itself. Reading the passage in several versions gives the shades of meaning that one might also obtain from a good lexicon, but it has the advantage of giving them in the context of the living Word, not as isolated dictionary definitions.

Three weeks before the sermon date my desk groaned with Scripture versions. The King James Version, *The New English Bible*, the *New American Standard Bible*, *The New International Version*, the Revised Standard Version, Moffatt, Weymouth, *The Jerusalem Bible*, *Today's English Version*, and *The Living Bible* all contributed their view. Someone will surely say that Bible reading is best done in the original language. Perhaps so for a scholar, but with my stilted Greek translation process that allows my mind to encompass only one or two English meanings for each word, I find the New Testament Greek too slow

and limited for an initial grasp of the story. I have to go frequently to a lexicon to broaden the context and establish the etymology of the words. Therefore, I find it more effective to read English versions first and then consider the Greek.

After all that reading I felt fairly comfortable with the story. I understood the context (as well as many of the nuances), and I was ready to head off to word study, exegesis, commentators, and the Greek New Testament itself.

At this point the Spirit of Prophecy came to the fore. What did Ellen White have to say about my passage? As so often happens, she surprised me with her insights and crystal-clear grasp of the elements of the subject. Strangely enough, *The Desire of Ages* was little help, with less than a page devoted to the story. But *Christ's Object Lessons*, a favorite of mine for its crisp, concise writing, provided several pointed observations and quotations, as did *Steps to Christ* and, to my surprise, the third volume of the *Testimonies*.

All this time I was jotting down random notes, ideas, and thoughts from the versions and the Spirit of Prophecy that might later be useful. A choice quotation I would write out. A thought gained would be noted, and the insight offered by a particular version spelled out. No particular order was attempted at this point; I just put down page after page that might prove useful.

Commentators

Every year I budget between \$600 and \$800 for new religious books. At the moment I am in the process of building several modern commentary sets to supplement such older ones as Clarke's and Barnes's. For this sermon I found the *New International Commentary on the New Testament*, Black's *New Testament Commentaries*, and Barclay's *The Daily Study Bible* particularly useful, with the honors going to the *New International Commentary*.

My experience with the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* fluctuates. Sometimes I find it highly productive; at other times it glosses over passages on which I would dearly love a clear exposition. Usually, however, it makes a valued contribution, and this time was no exception. It also serves as a conservative counterbalance to some of the more liberal, critical studies that find their way onto library shelves.

But my most exciting and rewarding moments came from what I call special-

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"For me, to preach is the essential experience of my calling. To be called for such a task is the greatest honor God and His church can bestow."

ist books. What a gold mine of treasure on the subject came from Joachim Jeremias' *The Parables of Jesus*! Who else could have proved that the prodigal was only 17 or 18 when he left home? Or defined so clearly the legal situation that evolved from the father's decision to split his capital assets between the two sons?

Well, one man could! J. Duncan Derrett provided even more detail in his *Law in the New Testament*. He offered the clearest definition of exactly how the prodigal sinned against his father. And he also served as a counterbalance to some more extreme interpretations espoused by other scholars. Victor Paul Furnish strengthened the view of divine love portrayed in the story with his comments in *The Love Command in the New Testament*.

Now came a critical moment in any expositor's preparations—word study. It was time to examine the parable's key Greek words and phrases to determine flow and counterflow of concepts in this tightly woven story.

As I sit at my desk writing this article, right in front of me are my favorite tools for word study. I prefer Arndt and Gingrich's *A Greek-English Lexicon* chiefly because it confines itself to the New Testament and early-Christian literature. My interest in classical Greek is limited to the light it throws on New Testament usages. And for a detailed view of both classical and New Testament usages, what better source than Kittel and Friedrich's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*? To support this basic tool, Colin Brown's *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* has its own invaluable contribution.

Now someone (especially presidents and departmental leaders) will no doubt ask me how I made time for this study. Most of it came at night, after work at the office. That's one difference between administrative personnel and pastors—on the whole, administrators have more nights free for study, while the pastor can find more time during the day. Reading a serious or scholarly book every week or two seems a reasonable goal for any minister, whatever his re-

sponsibilities. It is interesting, for me, to note on the front page where and when I began the book, and where and when I finished it. I'm not very interested in owning a book unless I've read it or at least browsed through it.

Putting it together

At this point I had more than twenty-five pages of disordered notes, bearing no resemblance to a sermon. Having approached the parable with an open mind as far as the sermon product was concerned, the jumble of ideas was horrifying. Now the task was to bring order out of chaos.

But first a word. At this point, more than anywhere else, I felt the need of prayer and guidance. To lay before the Lord all you have been able to find out about the topic is a comforting thing. You have done your part. Surely if there is any moment when the Spirit must be free to work in the preacher's mind, this is it.

It seemed to me that the best way to group the material into some order would be on the basis of the three main characters. So I wrote "Prodigal Son," "Older Brother," and "Father" at the top of three separate pages and went through my notes rewriting and grouping the material accordingly. It soon became necessary to add two more pages, one for "Context" and one for "Application."

I now had excellent quotations; I had decided on *The New English Bible* as my preaching version; I had fresh ideas that were quite new to me and hence could be new to at least some of the people to whom I would preach. But even at the end of this process the result was still far from a sermon.

I decided that I would cross section the story at four points: (1) the moment when the son takes farewell, his asses loaded, and he gives that last, long look at the farm, with the father and elder brother watching; (2) the moment when the prodigal has snatched the carob pods from the pigs and in revulsion lets them fall back to the snuffling swine; (3) the moment before the embrace, with the father, gown flapping, running toward

the startled prodigal, who is already on his knees ready to utter his well-practiced repentance speech; (4) and, finally, the moment when the older son plants his feet, stiffens his back, and shouts angrily at his entreating father.

I plucked a metaphor from the world of film and television to deal with these cross sections. Just as the visual media will suddenly stop an action picture at a critical point of climax, so each of these moments was to be a "freeze frame."

Now the final hours came, and the typewriter became my tool as I took each of these points and made them a part of the exposition, building a sermon that displayed the tension in the home prior to the prodigal's departure; the depth to which the prodigal sank in dishonoring God and his father; the father's prodigal unselfishness; and the older son's own departure from sonship.

And, thus, at last, a sermon for Sabbath.

In all, it had taken fourteen hours of immediate study and prayer to bring the sermon to paper. I say "immediate" because every sermon builds on the years of study and reading that undergird a preacher's life. It would be used two or three times at most, by which time it would be preached without notes, a point where I consider a sermon ready for joining the fat file that only rarely hears the resurrection call. At this rate of usage it would equal that of an average pastor who can take his sermon from congregation to congregation, adapting it to local circumstances. It might, perhaps, even join the group of "emergency" sermons for those unexpected demands.

The initial preaching is past now, and I believe the Lord blessed. I know I have been blessed deeply by the study and the prayer. For me, to preach is the essential experiencing of my calling. To be called for such a task is the greatest honor God and His church can bestow. And now I am thinking and planning for the next sermon. Already the ideas are starting to crystallize.

Would you like to hear this sermon?

Walter R. L. Scragg's sermon on the prodigal son is included in the February 1981 ASPIRE Tape of the Month. If you are not a regular subscriber, you may obtain the February cassettes by writing to ASPIRE, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012. Enclose \$5.00 (check or money order) for each set ordered.

Most methods of mobilizing laity for ministry fail on one of two counts: either they require too little of the member or too much from the pastor. This plan avoids both flaws.

Equipping your members to minister

by Monte Sahlin

Pastors generally agree that if the church is to accomplish its mission the laity must become involved in ministry. Indeed, the Scriptures underscore the fact that each member of the body of Christ has been given a special gift for Christian service and for building up the church (Eph. 4:7-12). Yet, when it comes to actual practice, it often seems easier and quicker for the pastor to attempt to do the work of ministry himself than to equip and train his members to share it with him.

The few effective tools for equipping members to minister usually have two fatal flaws—they require either too little from the lay minister or too much from the pastor. It is easy to make lay ministry too simple, to ask the motivated lay person who truly wants to share in the mission of the church to do something so simplistic that it quickly becomes boring and kills enthusiasm. Every member of the congregation is asked to do the same mechanical, repetitive job that neither

engages the imagination nor the commitment of those involved. Often no attempt is made to match tasks with the gifts of individuals.

On the other hand, those lay ministry programs that require a degree of professionalism and serious engagement usually insist on a large amount of involvement and supervision from the pastor. Training through tutorial or on-the-job processes is often demanded, necessitating an unrealistic amount of time out of the pastor's schedule. In fact, the major reason such programs are not put to greater use in the church is because of the slow start necessitated by the commitment of so much pastoral time.

To be usable, then, a lay ministry program should give both the pastor and the people a certain amount of freedom, while maintaining a necessary degree of organization. Church members should be free to work in areas where their gifts provide the needed interest and willingness, and they should be free to develop activities and goals at their own pace without having to wait on their pastor's schedule. Pastors should be freed of a growing burden of administrative minutiae, so that they can give spiritual and emotional support to the efforts of lay

ministers. At the same time the ministries of laity and clergy must come together as a unified whole—a strategy that knits together the separate roles played by different members of one team. Experience has shown that the use of small groups within the congregation is the most successful means of meeting these criteria.

Small groups provide the breadth of opportunity necessary to deal with the many different gifts that people have, and they also allow for leadership to be delegated so that the pastor does not have to do all the training and administration. In my experience when a small-group program has been pursued for at least two years, the congregation has experienced unprecedented growth both in numbers and in the spiritual life of the members.

Despite the ideal nature of the small-group strategy, many churches that try to initiate it do experience certain problems. Groups can become exclusive instead of inclusive—so centered on Bible study or prayer or sharing that they make no attempt to attract outsiders. Visitors may feel as if they are intruding. Groups can become scenes for conflict rather than concerted action—so heterogeneous that goals cannot be agreed upon or even approached. The promise held out by the small-group idea has soured in the minds of many because of these problems.

Difficulties in a small program can be traced to three items. First, the groups are begun with little or no preparation or education. Second, everyone is expected to participate. Third, groups are assigned from a list instead of allowing individuals to voluntarily group themselves around goals. To be effective a small-group strategy must provide adequate orientation for people before they move into groups, and must keep the groups mission-centered and voluntary.

A design that has been developed and field tested in a half-dozen Adventist churches over the past five years and that provides for the initiation of small groups in a well-planned, effective manner is called "Workshop for Mission." It includes ten class sessions and a week-end or one-day retreat. It can easily be implemented during prayer meeting time or on Sabbath afternoons. As a result of this process, between 10 and 25 percent of the church membership can be expected to become involved in active small groups.

Each of the ten weekly class sessions involves an hour and forty-five min-

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utes—thirty minutes for discussion and Bible study, an hour for a lab session, and fifteen minutes for reviewing what has been learned. A moderate amount of assigned reading is involved between classes.

The pastor's role in these classes is that of a coordinator and not a lecturer. The lecture input comes entirely from the readings, and therefore it is important to insist that the class members do the readings. Much of the learning is experimental and comes from the open discussions and the lab sessions. It is more important to get a general feel for the nature of a good small-group program than to learn specific skills.

An outline of the ten class meetings is given below. The reading assignments are taken from *Mission: Possible*, by Gottfried Oosterwal (Southern Publishing Association, 1972), *Target Group Evangelism*, by Ralph W. Neighbour, Jr., and Cal Thomas (Broadman Press, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tennessee 37234, 1975), and *Christ's Object Lessons*, by Ellen G. White (Pacific Press). Most of the lab learning sessions are described in the standard reference for adult, small-group education—Jones and Pfeiffer's *Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training*—and the related *Annual Handbook(s) for Group Facilitators* (University Associates, 7596 Eads Ave., La Jolla, California 92037).

The emphasis throughout the workshop is that these are working sessions, moving toward an action program of small groups. This design features a combination of education and actual preparation for the small-group program. In fact, the small-group strategy of the church is designed in the workshop sessions. Nevertheless, some of those who attend the classes will intend simply to hear and learn without any intention of getting involved in the program. It should be made clear repeatedly during

the class that those who do not want to actually join small groups are welcome, and that this is actually a testing period for people to sample the small-group idea and see if they like it. But it should also be pointed out that those who do not plan to actually participate will be expected to drop out at a time to be announced at one of the last sessions. In the meantime, all those in attendance will be expected to participate in the discussions and lab sessions. "Sitting out" a lab exercise is unfair to those participating.

The retreat becomes even more fully a working session. During this time the small groups actually meet in their more permanent form for the first time to set goals and minimum requirements for themselves. They will be asked to write a statement of mission, including a definition of their target audience and the specific tools they are going to use in the first year of their ministry.

In the retreat environment the groups are asked to do their planning with a deep awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Time for meditation and prayer is essential so that the plans of the groups are a result of really listening for God's call in their lives and not just human constructions. Here the spiritual leadership capacities of the pastor will reach their highest level. Preaching the Word will be essential, but much greater time must be put into the leadership of silent meditation and prayer sessions that are not routine.

At the retreat it is also essential that the pastor "let go" of the groups. The groups will have to spend a good portion of this time without the presence of the pastor, meeting separately and taking on a life of their own. The rule should be announced that in keeping with his role as coordinator, the pastor will come into a group meeting only when invited, and only when a very specific request for help has been framed by the group.

There will be a real temptation for the pastor to overcontrol this process. He can resist that temptation by spending time in prayer and meditation while the groups have their planning meetings.

An outline of the retreat program is given on page 12. If a facility is not available for a weekend, the same program can be used for daytime meetings, with the members going home at night. Or the program can be compressed a bit and fitted into a Sabbath or Sunday one-day retreat. (Those who have never led a retreat before might do well to review the material in *Retreat Handbook*, by Virgil and Lynn Nelson, published by Judson Press in 1976.)

During the field testing of "Workshop for Mission," more than forty small groups were organized in both large and small churches, including white, black, and Spanish-speaking congregations. A number of these groups met for a short time and accomplished little or nothing. Several groups functioned for more than a year and sponsored active outreach programs. In two cases they helped to plant new churches in unreached communities. One group developed a prison ministry. Another developed a health ministry that equals the output of a professional, hospital-based health-education department. Another group developed a college-level training center that affiliated with a denominational institution.

Not every group is going to survive. Not every group is going to be truly creative. But the power of the Holy Spirit, working through the lay ministers of the church, will be released, and growth, excitement, and progress will be seen.

A Xeroxed packet of the materials used by the author in field testing this program is available in English, Spanish, and French, at cost. Inquiries can be addressed to the author in care of MINISTRY.

Outline of Classes

Session One

Advance Reading: None.

Theme: The "salty" Christian (see *Salty Christians*, by Hans-Ruedi Weber [Seabury, 1963]).

Discussion and Bible Study Focus: Luke 10:1-20; *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 641.

Lab Learning Session: A. (10 minutes) Pass out two sheets of paper and have each person

write answers (one to a sheet) to these questions: (1) What are some things you would like to see the members of our church do in outreach to the community? (2) What do you personally want to get out of this class? B. (20 minutes) Have everyone pair up and exchange papers. Each person interviews his partner about what he has written on his sheet. C. (30 minutes) Half the group takes question one and makes a summary of the

answers on a large sheet. The other half does the same with question two.

Session Two

Advance Reading: Oosterwal, *Mission: Possible*, chapter 1.

Theme: Servanthood—how can we know the needs of others?

Discussion and Bible Study Focus: John 13:1-6; Isaiah 42 and 58; Phil. 2:7, 8.

Lab Learning Session: A. (20 minutes) In groups of four, make collages that represent the surrounding community. B. (20 minutes) Have the groups present and explain their collages. C. (20 minutes) Go back into the groups of four and make a list of the important needs in the community on a large sheet of paper. (Reference: *Training Volunteer Leaders*, by National YMCA [291 Broadway, New York, New York 10007], p. 114.)

Session Three

Advance Reading: Oosterwal, chapter 5.
Theme: Living from a position of humility and weakness.

Discussion and Bible Study Focus: Mark 8:34-38; Matt. 10:34-36.

Lab Learning Session: A lab session on "active listening" can be drawn from many sources. Many pastors have training in this skill. A specific reference is Jones and Pfeiffer, *Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training*, vol. 1, p. 31; also their 1978 *Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators*, p. 119.

Session Four

Advance Reading: Oosterwal, chapter 7.
Theme: The ministry of the laity.

Discussion and Bible Study Focus: Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12 and 13; Ephesians 4; Acts 2.

Lab Learning Session: Analysis of lay leaders in the congregation, using the material on pages 109 and 147 of *Ten Steps for Church Growth*, by Donald A. McGavran and W. C. Arn (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).

Optional: Analysis of small groups in the present church program using the material on pages 220-222 of *Value Clarification as Learning Process: A Handbook for Christian Educators*, by Brian Hall and Maury Smith (New York: Paulist Press, 1974).

Session Five

Advance Reading: Neighbour and Thomas, *Target Group Evangelism*.

Theme: What is church?

Discussion and Bible Study Focus: John 17; Eph. 3:14-21; Acts 2:42-47.

Lab Learning Session: The Tinker Toy Church Game. (See *Youth Ministry Accent*, Issue G, p. 43. Order through local conference youth department.)

Session Six

Advance Reading: Christ's Object Lessons, "Talents," pp. 325-365.

Theme: Spiritual gifts and how they structure the church.

Discussion and Bible Study Focus: Matt. 25:13-30; Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4.

Lab Learning Session: The Charis Game. (See *Discovering My Gifts for Service*, by Knofel Staton and Steven Hancock [Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co.], p. 20 of instructor's edition.)

Session Seven

Advance Reading: Neighbour and Thomas,

chapter 2.

Theme: The small-group approach.

Discussion and Bible Study Focus: Matt. 4:18-22; Luke 6:12-16; 12:49-51; Mark 9:43-50.

Lab Learning Session: Role-play the call, regular meetings, and death of a small group.

Optional: Have people work in twos and write a list of minimum spiritual disciplines for small-group members.

Session Eight

Advance Reading: Oosterwal, chapter 4.

Theme: What is the mission of the church?

Discussion and Bible Study Focus: Isaiah 58 and 61; Matt. 25:31-46; Luke 4:18; John 17:21-24; 1 John 3:16-18.

Lab Learning Session: Provide reference books in the room and have groups of two or four develop profiles of the different neighborhoods or other community subgroupings in the missionary territory of the church. These should include population, families, education, occupations, and socioeconomic facts, as well as religious profile, community needs, and other information the group wants to include. Have each group report and share their profile with the other groups in combined session.

Retreat Schedule

Friday

5:00 P.M. Registration and supper.
7:30 P.M. Hand out and read the list of groups (compiled from the responses received at the last class session).
7:45 P.M. Review the purpose of the weekend along with appropriate Scripture passages and readings.
8:00 P.M. Move groups into circles and do the Quaker Questions (see Neighbour and Thomas, *Target Group Evangelism*, p. 33, footnote 4).
9:00 P.M. Group singing as the small groups come together. Silent meditation by everyone. Ask the group not to talk to anyone until the silence is broken at breakfast the next day.

Sabbath

7:30 A.M. Devotional and breakfast. (Silence is broken when breakfast is over.) Have the groups share how they felt during the silence.
9:30 A.M. Sermon on the mission of this local church, reviewing what was learned in the ten weeks of classes and restating the purpose of this retreat.
11:00 A.M. Study of Sabbath school lesson in small groups. During the last

Session Nine

Advance Reading: Have each person pick a chapter from 4 to 14 of Neighbour and Thomas.

Theme: The roles of words and deeds in witnessing.

Discussion and Bible Study Focus: Same texts as previous session; *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143.

Lab Learning Session: Exercise on helping relationships and verbal and nonverbal communication. (See Jones and Pfeiffer, *Handbook*, Vol. V, p. 13.)

Session Ten

Advance Reading: Oosterwal, chapter 6.

Theme: The city as our mission field.

Discussion and Bible Study Focus: Jer. 29:1-20.

Lab Learning Session: Have people work in groups of four or six and write a list of specific missions that the church should be sponsoring in the community. Then have the groups report and collate the lists on a large sheet of paper.

Special: Pass out a sheet asking each person to evaluate the classes and indicate his interest in joining a small group. Invite all to the retreat.

15 minutes, ask the groups to develop a statement of the day's lesson as it would be best communicated to their target audience.
12:00 noon Lunch.
2:00 P.M. Groups meet separately to write their statement of mission.
4:00 P.M. General meeting. Each group reads its statement of mission to the whole meeting and listens to the evaluations of the others.
5:30 P.M. Supper.
7:30 P.M. Groups meet separately to develop their statement of minimum requirements or disciplines.

Sunday

7:30 A.M. Devotional talk and breakfast.
8:30 A.M. Groups meet separately to establish their regular weekly meeting times, assign each group member a role in the group and select leaders, and lay out a general plan of activities for the next year.
11:00 A.M. Groups come together to give a brief report of their plans, announce when they will be meeting, and introduce their leaders. This is followed with a general session of prayer in which each person can take part.
12:00 noon Lunch and departure.



The devotional use of the Bible

A minister must especially guard against a "professional" use of the Scriptures in his work.

by Hans K. LaRondelle

How can a ruler remain sensitive to the needs of his people, wise in his decisions, humble in the exercise of his power, and committed to peace and justice throughout his country?

The same way that a preacher can remain vital in his ministry. The same way that a Christian layman can testify of a growing relationship with Christ. Through the devotional use of the Holy Scriptures.

Millennia ago the Lord stipulated that the king in Israel should make himself a copy of the law of Moses: "'And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them; that his heart may not be lifted up above his brethren . . . so that

he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel'" (Deut. 17:19, 20).*

The king of Israel was especially obliged to read the Sacred Scriptures daily. Only then would he know the sovereign will of the King of kings and be able to rule Israel with wisdom. Only then would he be kept from the tyranny of self-deification. Only then would his heart remain humble and sensitive to the needs of his fellow men and be the promoter of peace and justice in Israel. Only then would he learn how to fear the Lord and represent the kingdom of God on earth correctly.

To Moses' successor, Joshua, the Lord gave an explicit injunction to meditate on the Torah day and night as a condition for the victorious conquest of the Promised Land: "'This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success'" (Joshua 1:8).

The secret of Joshua's success, then, was to make the Torah his guide and counselor. Not to speed-read Scripture, but to meditate on it day and night.

From the counsel given to the king and to Joshua, we may conclude that God intended Scripture to serve a very practical purpose. It was to be a guide and counselor for statesmen. Through it they would learn how to rule a nation and command an army in a manner to be approved by the Ruler of the universe. Thus the Bible is first given as marching orders for an army, not as bedtime reading to help one sleep more soundly.

The book of Psalms, on the other hand, was intended primarily for the communal worship of the people of God, as it is used still. The major letters of the apostles likewise were directed toward churches. The last Bible book explicitly blesses him who reads aloud the apocalyptic messages in the presence of church congregations (Rev. 1:3).

Today, all too often, there is a strange silence in the church: from the pulpit, where topical sermons often promote the preacher's word rather than God's; from the pew, where saints doze fitfully.

In his book *The Strange Silence of the Bible in the Church*, Dr. James D. Smart warns that the church can remain the body of Christ only when it remains "open, responsive, and obedient" to the witness of Scripture. "Let the Scriptures cease to be heard, and soon the remem-

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“Christ comes to us in the garment of Scripture. To know the Scriptures means to know Christ. And to know Christ means to move to the heartbeat of Scripture.”

bered Christ becomes our imagined Christ, shaped by the religiosity and the unconscious desires of His worshippers.”—Page 25.

God intends that the Scriptures instruct not only political and religious leaders but the individual believer, bringing him life, joy, and wisdom. Psalm 19 promises, “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart” (verses 7, 8).

The book of Psalms is the devotional book par excellence for both the individual and the worshiping community. From this book of songs and prayers has poured out all conceivable emotions of the human heart—joy and fear, exaltation and depression. This most religious book of Israel’s worship opens with a firm assurance of God’s blessing on a certain kind of worshiper:

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers” (Ps. 1:1-3).

The Biblical secret for cultivating love for God and His Word and for victorious living is not the occasional reading of a few texts, but *constant meditation on God’s Word*. Only thus is the soul filled with the presence of God.

“We should meditate upon the Scriptures. . . . We should seek to comprehend the meaning of the plan of salvation. . . . By constantly contemplating heavenly themes, our faith and love will grow stronger. Our prayers will be more and more acceptable to God, because they will be more and more mixed with faith and love. They will be more intelligent and fervent.”—*The SDA Bible*

Commentary, Ellen G. White Comments, on Ps. 19:14, p. 1145.

What a tremendous blessing is connected with meditating on the Scriptures! How we need to revive our determination to know the Scriptures and their power! We must *cultivate* love for Bible study and meditation on God’s Word and its heavenly themes. There is no substitute for Bible reading. We need to learn to meditate on Scripture, to memorize its words, to assimilate its messages into our very soul until they are flesh and blood of our thinking and living.

Notice the experience of the prophet Jeremiah, who wrote: “Thy words were found, and I ate them, and thy words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart” (Jer. 15:16). Here is the order: finding, eating, delighting.

Ezekiel was called to be God’s prophet with the words, “‘Eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.’ . . . Then I ate it; and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey” (Eze. 3:1-3). A man called to be God’s mouthpiece is first to eat and taste the sweet word of the Lord and to be imbued with the unction of the Holy One. The Advent pioneers ate the books of Daniel and Revelation; the result was the rise of the great Advent Movement. God’s Word is given for practical purposes. To believe the Word is to act upon it, to submit to it, to follow it.

Have we so pondered Holy Scripture, so integrated the divine words in our existence, that the Word of the Lord has become to us a joy, our heart’s delight, the all-consuming fire in our bones? Does our heart respond to David’s song when he sings of the Scriptures, “More to be desired are they than gold, . . . sweeter also than honey” (Ps. 19:10)?

Holy Scripture: the presence of God in Christ

How can ancient words of old scrolls be food for our present needs? The answer is one of profound mystery: In Holy Scripture God Himself is present in Christ through His Holy Spirit.

The Word of God is “the sword of the

Spirit” (Eph. 6:17) and therefore “sharper than any two-edged sword” (Heb. 4:12). “‘Is not my word like fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer which breaks the rock in pieces?’” (Jer. 23:29). If we approach the Holy Scriptures, we are coming to God Himself. In it, said the reformer Calvin, we are, as it were, “gazing upon the majesty of God Himself” (*Institutes*, 1, 7, 5). He explained that the Scriptures were the living oracles of God because they contained Christ.

Ellen White saw every chapter and verse of the Bible as a communication of God to man (*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 449). Through them we stand “in the presence of God and holy angels” (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on 2 Peter 1:21, p. 944). The believing child of God beholds in God’s Word “‘the glory of a divine power, full of grace and truth’” (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 26).

“The Scriptures are to be received as God’s word to us, not written merely, but spoken.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 122.

In the promises of God’s Word “He is speaking to us individually, speaking as directly as if we could listen to His voice. It is in these promises that Christ communicates to us His grace and power. They are leaves from that tree which is ‘for the healing of the nations.’”—*Ibid*.

Christ comes to us in the garment of Scripture. To know the Scriptures means to know Christ. And to know Christ means to move to the heartbeat of Scripture. The purpose of the Bible is not to convey merely moral values, but above all to bring us into contact with its divine Author. The Bible is first of all a disclosure of God Himself and His love for us.

What good would it do if we knew the letters of the Scriptures but not the Christ of Scripture? Of what avail is it for the cause of God if we have cultivated much *head* knowledge about the doctrine of Christ, but have little *heart* knowledge of Christ? If we could but behold more the glory of Christ, how we would be changed from glory to glory! Surely it is a sin to neglect study of the Word while attempting to teach it to others.

The devotional use of Scripture

For the true devotional use of Holy Scripture we find an example by David, the king of Israel and a man after God’s heart, when he prays to God in Psalm

"The purpose of the Bible is not to convey merely moral values, but above all, to bring us into contact with its divine Author. The Bible is, first of all, a disclosure of God Himself."

119:18: "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

A right attitude toward Scripture recognizes a living connection between the Word and God. It depends on God's Spirit for the right understanding of the Word of God. It acknowledges that human reason cannot grasp the deep truths of Scripture. David had the Scriptures before him. Yet he recognized a problem. Not in Scripture, but in himself, in his own eyes. "Open my eyes," he prays earnestly. In other words, he confesses that he feels spiritually blind, unable to see what is there. The problem is not in God's Word. The problem is in our hardened heart and our darkened mind (cf. Eph. 4:18).

It is undoubtedly true that the historical-grammatical method of study dispels much ignorance and misunderstanding of the Scriptures. But even David himself felt that he needed more light, that he needed to see deeper in order to discover the wonderful things of the Word of God. The reason is that One was revealed in Scripture whose name is "Wonderful" (Isa. 9:6).

Here is recognition that man can stand in awe and wonder before God's revelation of Himself. The feeling of wonder is a precious gift. It is the parent of our desire to know and of our urge to inquire.

We should expect wonderful things from Scripture, because we serve a God greater than all our concepts of Him. We receive according to our faith, according to our perseverance in knocking on the door of Holy Scripture.

Luther pounded a long time on that door. He believed there was something there that he had not seen yet. Time after time, day and night, he wrestled with God, seeking the real truth of the phrase "the just shall live by faith." When his eyes were opened, he saw the glory of the Lord in the understanding that God justifies the believer through faith in Christ, by grace alone. With the open Bible before him, Luther wrote later: "Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates."—*Luther's Works*,

vol. 34, p. 337.

The Bible is the key that opens the gates of paradise to sin-sick souls. But many do not walk by faith in heavenly places. They fail to cultivate the habit of staying with the Lord in His audience chamber.

"Many, even in their seasons of devotion, fail of receiving the blessing of real communion with God. They are in too great haste. With hurried steps they press through the circle of Christ's loving presence, pausing perhaps a moment within the sacred precincts, but not waiting for counsel. They have no time to remain with the divine Teacher. With their burdens they return to their work."—*Education*, p. 260.

Jesus' use of Scripture

Jesus' use of the Sacred Scriptures is an inspiring example for young and old today. From childhood on, Jesus was not interested in the rabbinical requirements—only in the Hebrew Scriptures. He trained Himself to learn Scripture by heart. The words "Thus says the Lord" were ever upon His lips (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 84) to justify His conduct. "Jesus seemed to know the Scriptures from beginning to end, and He presented them in their true import."—*Ibid.*, p. 85.

Often He was reproached and intimidated even by His own brothers. "Of the bitterness that falls to the lot of humanity, there was no part which Christ did not taste."—*Ibid.*, p. 88. But Christ knew His mission and what God wanted Him to do.

"When the priests and teachers required Mary's aid in controlling Jesus, she was greatly troubled; but peace came to her heart as He presented the statements of Scripture upholding His practices."—*Ibid.*, p. 90.

To Him, what Scripture said, God said! How did Christ Jesus attain the moral power and wisdom to live such a holy life? "In His youth the early morning and the evening twilight often found Him alone on the mountainside or among the trees of the forest, spending a quiet hour in prayer and the study of God's Word."—*Education*, p. 185.

When Jesus was asked why He was so different, His answer was often a quotation from Psalm 119:9-11: "'How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to thy word . . . I have laid up thy word in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.'" On other occasions He loved to recite verses 1-3 and verses 14-16 of the same psalm (see *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 88, 89).

Later, when He had been ordained as the Messiah in His baptism and met Satan in a hand-to-hand struggle, His only weapon of warfare was the Word of God (*ibid.*, p. 120). Satan asked for a miracle in order to be convinced. But a greater sign was given him, a firm reliance upon a "Thus says the Lord."

"'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'" (Matt. 4:4). Christ teaches us that the only thing in the world upon which we can rely is the Word of God. He teaches us that the true devotional use of the Bible is to obey its counsels and to trust its promises.

How about us today? How can we come to know Scripture and its Christ?

"It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 83.

"Neglect the exercise of prayer, or engage in prayer spasmodically, now and then, as seems convenient, and you lose your hold on God."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 255.

"God's messengers must tarry long with Him, if they would have success in their work. The story is told of an old Lancashire woman who was listening to the reasons that her neighbors gave for their minister's success. They spoke of his gifts, of his style of address, of his manners. 'Nay,' said the old woman, 'I will tell you what it is. Your man is very thick with the Almighty.'"—*Ibid.*

Do we want to be "thick with the Almighty"?

The book of Psalms invites you with the words: "The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant" (Ps. 25:14).

* Bible texts used in this article are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

Losses of new members would indicate that too many are not sufficiently prepared prior to baptism. What can we do in the adult baptismal class to prepare for church membership those who have studied and accepted Christ and His way of life?

Preparing adults for baptism

by Carl Coffman

Are we getting too streamlined today in our soul-winning methods and in our preparation of candidates for baptism? Are we trying to move people too fast, beyond the limits of the most rapid spiritual growth experienced even by especially receptive individuals? When we baptize them, are they really prepared, both in understanding and experience, for church membership?

Losses of new church members would appear to say that many are *not* ready. Is there anything we can do to lessen these losses, and the trauma that these dear, but partially prepared, new members so often experience? If people grow as do things in nature (see *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 33-89), our Bible studies, evangelistic series, and baptismal classes should be in harmony with these principles of growth. The special concern of this article is: What can we do in the adult baptismal class to prepare for church membership those who have studied and accepted Christ and His way of life?

Current practice in the church varies greatly both in the content and concept of the adult baptismal class. In some cases there is no class beyond the Bible study series or the evangelistic cam-

paign. Others simply review the thirteen points of the baptismal vow or review the fundamental beliefs as given in the center spread of the baptismal certificate. Some place a brief printed booklet in the hands of each candidate, ask him to study it, and arrange time for questions. Some use their own mimeographed outlines of cardinal points. These many methods provide widely differing degrees of thoroughness. How thorough shall we be? How long should we take? Do we have a clear purpose for such a class?

After the presentation of the basic Bible truths is complete, and *after* a commitment has been made to join the church, I feel there is need of a class with the emphasis and purpose of preparing the candidate to enter intelligently into church membership. I call it the "Introduction Into Church Membership" method, and after years of experimentation, I feel it is of extreme importance and value. It is not simply a review of the basic study series. Rather, it is an attempt to set all truth into the framework of the real nature of church membership, and to clarify the responsibilities of the member to his Lord and to his Lord's church. I have found that I need seven studies to accomplish this purpose. These can be done in a week, seven Sabbath afternoons, seven Monday nights, or as fits into the local program.

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1

The first presentation, "The Church and Its Lord," is based on the problem that is brought to view in *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 6, page 371. Ellen White wrote in 1900: "The Lord does not now work to bring many souls into the truth, because of the church members who have never been converted and those who were once converted but who have backslidden." She is discussing the health-reform message in the context. However, her emphasis on conversion in relation to baptism cannot be misunderstood. Elsewhere she says, "Apart from Christ, baptism, like any other service, is a worthless form."—*Evangelism*, p. 318. She adds: "God would be better pleased to have six truly converted to the truth . . . than to have sixty make a nominal profession, and yet not be thoroughly converted."—*Ibid.*, p. 320.

Thus, the key concept of the first study is that church membership is for the converted, not for those who plan to become converted. Sin is presented as an incurable disease, the inability to love in a way acceptable to God. The only cure is to be found at the office of the Great Physician (see Luke 5:30-32), where man is made a "new creature" (see 2 Cor. 5:17). God is able to begin re-creating the ability to love in the now-believing sinner (see 1 John 4:7, 8, 19), and this love becomes the motivation for obedience (see John 14:15).

Such an approach allows the pastor to make certain of the candidate's relationship with Christ as Saviour (particularly when someone else has given him the Bible study series), and cements in the candidate's mind the centrality of conversion both to his own eternal destiny and to the success of his part in the witness of the church to the world.

2

The second study is titled "The Church and Its Doctrines." Its purpose is not to review all the doctrines that the candidate has previously been taught. Instead, it is to help him see more clearly that all the teachings of the Bible exist to define the way of life that the Christian

church member should live. Thus the candidate can become an intelligent Christian, knowing not only in whom he believes but also what he believes and why it is important. Great stress is placed on the fact that the real purpose of each doctrine is to mature one's conversion experience. This principle is demonstrated in connection with the Sabbath, tithing, and health. As Seventh-day Adventists, we have not always made this clear. It helps the person who is becoming a member to understand each doctrine as a means to an end, thus avoiding the mistake of seeing salvation as the result of what we know or do.

3

In study three, "The Church and Its Divine Commission," I raise the question: Do we choose our church because it is better by comparison than another or closer to the Bible than another? This study clearly presents the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a church of prophecy, appointed by God to arise at a given time, to bear a particular message, and to accomplish a certain work. The origin of the church, both in and after William Miller's day, is clearly studied. The prophecies of Daniel 8:14 and Revelation 14:6-12 are carefully reviewed, particularly in the Millerite context, with emphasis on the developing understanding of the third angel's message as the Sabbath came to be understood and accepted in the years immediately following the 1844 disappointment. It is important to attempt to insert some of the "flavor" of this formative period into the hearts of those soon to be baptized. If the candidate can sense that he is joining *the* church of God, not a church that is more Biblical than others, great strength is gained.

4

Study four is exciting. I call it "The Church and Its Divine Gift." The books of the Spirit of Prophecy are displayed across a table in front of the room. In the center is a beautiful Bible, with a red rose in a vase immediately behind it. With the help of those present, I write on a blackboard all the terms we normally use in connection with these books—

"pen of inspiration," "Spirit of Prophecy," "servant of the Lord," "red-leather books," "the Lord's messenger," "gift of prophecy," "Ellen G. White," "Sister White." The Biblical evidence for this gift in the church is briefly reviewed. Then the books are actually used to show Mrs. White's attitude toward the Bible, and what she taught on salvation by grace, the Second Coming, and other key doctrines. The general areas in which she wrote (such as education, health, youth, evangelism, et cetera) are pointed out, and questions are welcomed. I do not cover the basics of the prophetic gift; these have been studied previously in the Bible study series. The baptismal class simply attempts to amplify the content of that gift and reveal its beauty and blessings.

5

In the fifth study, "The Church and Its Administration and Finance," I use 1 Corinthians 14:33 as a basis for presenting the way in which the church is organized, from the member and the local church to the General Conference. This session covers how the tithe is used, the equality of the minister's salary, and the support of local and foreign missionaries. Tithe envelopes are distributed, and class members are shown how to mark them properly. The support of local expenses, the church school, and the budget is explained. Emphasis is placed on the responsibility of the church member to support the church in doctrines and standards, in regular attendance at Sabbath school, church, and prayer meetings, in business meetings, in witnessing, and in praying for the work of God. The candidates are told how to contact the pastor and church officers when they need counsel or help.

6

The sixth study deals with "The Church and Its Standards." I ask: Is a "standard" something that the church decides on and enforces, or is it a Biblical principle, a part of the Christian's way of life as set forth by God Himself? Is God, through standards, trying to limit the joy in our lives, or is He trying to show us the levels at which joy is really

found? I cover the standards of true Sabbathkeeping, dress, food, recreation, reading, music, et cetera, in connection with a genuine Christian life style. Jewelry and the wedding ring are studied from the Biblical principles of internal and external adornment and from the writings of Ellen White. I do not study the jewelry-ring problem in the basic Bible study series, finding it far more impressive to include it at this point when there has already been commitment to Christ, to His church, to basic doctrines, and to the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy. Discussion time is vital here.

7

The seventh and concluding study of the baptismal class is titled "The Church and Its Ceremonies." The meaning of baptism is made clear. The ordinance of humility is discussed, with an attempt to show its place in the Christian life as a "rebaptism." The Lord's Supper is studied in order that it may become all that God intends it to be to the new member. At this final session, I distribute baptismal certificates and review the vow. The candidates are then invited to sign it, and instructions regarding the baptism itself are given. Next I take the class into the sanctuary and show the candidates where to stand when examined. They see the dressing rooms and are assigned to one by the deacon or deaconess present, and finally they are shown the baptistry and how to stand when baptized.

It is a good policy, incidentally, for the pastor to present to his church board *only* the names of those who have signed the baptismal vow and to secure the approval of the board members prior to the baptism. This builds much confidence in the pastor's leadership and safeguards him from occasional unknown problems in a candidate's life that should have been taken care of before baptism.

I am very much aware that such classes take time. But I consider it the most valuable time that I have ever invested. And I believe that every minute is more than repaid in the far smaller amount of time that I must spend after baptism to help these new members mature in their church experience. I have, as well, built a confidence between them and myself that has opened the door wide for me truly to be to them the earthly shepherd of the Lord.

The pastor and church finance

Three principles can help take the financial hat off your head and free you for the primary purpose of your ministry.

by Milton E. Erhart

A pastor may find himself wearing the hat of church financier reluctantly, especially in our world of spiraling inflation, yet both the church and the conference normally expect him to give financial leadership.

During sixteen years as a pastor, I have found some basic principles that have worked successfully for me and that I believe can work for any pastor. The construction paving the way for a new church and a new school have, in those sixteen years, testified to the effectiveness of these principles. None of these congregations has been wealthy, and in most instances considerable motivation was necessary to achieve results. Yet the congregations were financially sound after these undertakings.



Principle number one: the treasurer's report. Immediately upon arriving at one new pastorate, I found the congregation \$5,000 behind in church expense and \$20,000 in arrears on payments for school land. Visiting with the church treasurer, I learned of a \$6,000 savings account not listed on the report. We quickly made one back payment with the cash from this unspecified fund. The \$6,000 was continued on the books as a reserve, and the land fund was now listed as a \$6,000 deficit. Ultimately the \$20,000 was raised and the deficit in the land fund erased.

Another church desperately needed additional space for youth divisions. For several years the board was unaware of \$10,000 in reserve that had not been included on the treasurer's report. Once a complete report was made to the board, the church was able to move quickly and make a down payment on a large house across from the church, which provided the needed space. Later a fund-raising campaign provided the necessary amount to pay off the house.

Thus the treasurer's report often becomes the first key to financial success for your church. In far too many churches the treasurer's report is incomplete, with no sense of organization or readability. On assuming a new pastorate, one priority should be to work

with the treasurer to develop a simple, easily understood, and *complete* report that is shared monthly with the entire church board. It need not list every expenditure, but it needs to be complete to the point of listing all the church's funds and balances. A complete report creates confidence, whereas secrecy breeds distrust. A complete report also allows the church to make intelligent decisions based on the total picture of its financial and spiritual health.

Sometimes church boards will actually transfer money from one fund to another in the face of a pressing need. Unless the fund is no longer active, such transfers are inadvisable. They are prone to create misunderstandings and lessen the giving habits of members. Sometimes these funds are not paid back. It is much better to pay the bill and have the fund from which the bill is paid show a deficit. Then the board knows that the money has simply been borrowed and must be raised to pay back the depleted account.



Principle number two: communication. The financial troubles of most churches can be traced to a lack of communication. As simple an item as the *church newsletter* can be essential. Each newsletter should contain a short treasurer's report, with comments by the pastor. Commend church members for a balanced budget and encourage them to do better when it is not. The newsletter can also be used to promote various campaigns and explain special needs. But such reports must be brief, or members will complain that all the pastor talks about is money. To balance the financial emphasis, short spiritual articles should be included.

Effective communication is absolutely essential for a successful land purchase or a building program. First, the pastor and the church board should discuss the idea carefully. If the board is in general agreement, a special committee should be selected. This committee should be composed with care, because its attitude will make or break a successful program. This committee's progress should be reported faithfully to the church board, and at times it may be wise to call a business meeting for additional input. Once the committee has a report, it

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should be discussed by the board, not necessarily to approve the committee's recommendation, but to approve the inclusion of the recommendation on the business-meeting agenda.

The standard complaint concerning the business meeting is that too few attend, and that certainly is a problem. But publicizing the meeting thoroughly and having a well-planned, fast-moving agenda can increase attendance. Regardless of attendance, no financial program should be undertaken until the church in business session approves. This is especially true if real-estate transactions or building programs are involved. If the recommendation calls for a major outlay of funds or a long-term commitment by the congregation, it may be wise to have at least two business sessions—one for discussion of the recommendations, at which time the church may have some additional suggestions for the committee, and a follow-up session to call for a vote. The vote should be taken by secret ballot to allow the members to vote for or against without jeopardizing relationships with fellow members.

Unless your church is different from most, there will be some opposition to anything that is proposed. Should the recommendations pass, however, most of the opposition will join the majority in a short time, provided adequate communication has been maintained throughout the entire decision-making process.

In your efforts to maintain good communication, don't leave out the need to communicate with the conference administration. If yours is a major project, administration should be kept informed of the process step by step. Sometimes church members go directly to the conference to criticize or complain. Proper communication with the conference administration will bring credibility to the church and its pastor and discount such criticism.



Principle number three: maximum utilization of the church's financial assets.

Special gifts and reserve funds should never be used to pay for normal operating expenses and maintenance projects. When a pastor or the building committee approaches the church about its needs to

expand or improve its facilities, immediately there will be those who say that it is difficult enough just to pay the bills. Current bills and small debts will always be with a church. Yet too often a church will use its assets or special gifts to cover these normal expenses. This is a critical psychological and financial mistake. A congregation should be responsible for its day-to-day operating expenses, including major maintenance projects.

The key to a \$100,000 land purchase by a 200-member congregation was a \$14,000 bequest. It would have been very easy for us to say that \$14,000 wasn't enough even to consider purchasing land and that it should be spent on a new roof for the school instead. Yet because the members refused this option, the gift became the catalyst for the land purchase, and now a beautiful, representative church is being built on that choice site.

At Christmas time my congregation once received an unexpected \$3,000 check from a nonmember. The church had some remaining school-land debt and, at the same time, a desperate need for a new press. The board had been wrestling with both problems. It seemed inappropriate to buy a press when the church still owed money. Yet the board concluded that the congregation ought to raise the money for the debt it had incurred, and voted to use the \$3,000 to buy a press in honor of the donor.

Several months later the church sold its youth lodge. Again the question came up, "Should we use the proceeds from the sale to pay the land debt?" Once again the answer was No. The congregation had incurred the debt without planning to sell the lodge, and it was inadvisable to use the proceeds of this sale to pay its debt.

Today that church still has a small land debt, but it is dwindling each month, and from the sale of the youth lodge it has funds with which to consider seriously a land purchase for a new church. Had its assets been siphoned off to pay smaller obligations, it would not be in a good

position to consider building a new church.

Proper utilization of the church's assets also involves maximizing the return on every dollar the church receives. My current congregation has between \$85,000 and \$100,000 drawing daily interest at 13 percent to 15 percent. The church invests every available dollar with a nationally recognized investment firm, which in turn places the funds in treasury notes and bonds. Each account with this firm is insured for \$500,000. This safe and financially rewarding program yields the church \$1,000 a month in interest income.

The money that comes in each Sabbath is put into these funds. When the monthly conference check is due, the amount is withdrawn to cover the check. Then, again, each week during the month the funds build up. Interest from this process is listed separately on the treasurer's report under earnings. A small portion of these earnings is being used to purchase a memory typewriter to save on the number of hours the secretary works. If a new church is built, it will be possible to provide most of the furnishings with the interest income. Congregations in small cities may not be able to get the same high return that is available in large places, but six- and twelve-month certificates are available at attractive interest rates, in addition to normal passbook interest.

You may think I am spending an inordinate amount of time on finance. Actually, the opposite is true. After setting up the treasurer's report and arranging for a good investment program, I spend no more than one hour a month on church finance. That hour I use to check the treasurer's report for discrepancies and to answer occasional calls from the treasurer about bills. The treasurer and assistants take care of the financial details of the church. A careful, well-planned program takes the financial hat off my head and frees me to spend more time for my primary purpose—soul winning. It can do the same for you.

You may think I spend an inordinate amount of time on finance. Actually, after setting up the treasurer's report and arranging for a good investment program, I spend no more than one hour a month on church finance.

PERSECUTING THE PROPHETS

We should not be surprised at attacks from within the church itself when we remember the experiences of the ancient prophets.

Clive S. Lewis, in replying to those who were ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher but not as God, said: "A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."—*Mere Christianity*, pp. 52, 53.

I would like to use somewhat similar logic in reference to the role of Ellen White. Was she an inspired messenger of God? Or was she a lunatic or something worse? Whatever we do with her, we must not come "with any patronizing nonsense" about her being a charismatic leader like Martin Luther or John Wesley. According to her own testimony, her work included more than that of a prophet. She claimed that God spoke through her. Either He did or He didn't. It is just as simple as that. We can either accept it or reject it, but we cannot compromise it!

She stated unequivocally: "Some have stumbled over the fact that I said I did not claim to be a prophet; and they have asked, Why is this?"

"I have had no claims to make, only that I am instructed that I am the Lord's messenger; that He called me in my youth to be His messenger, to receive His word, and to give a clear and decided message in the name of the Lord Jesus.

"My Saviour declared me to be His messenger. 'Your work,' He instructed me, 'is to bear My word. Strange things will arise, and in your youth I set you apart to bear the message to the erring ones, to carry the word before unbelievers, and with pen and voice to reprove from the Word actions that are not right. Exhort from the Word. I will make My Word open to you. It shall not be as a strange language. In the true eloquence of simplicity, with voice and pen, the messages that I give shall be heard from

one who has never learned in the schools. My Spirit and My power shall be with you.

"Be not afraid of man, for My shield shall protect you. It is not you that speaketh: it is the Lord that giveth the messages of warning and reproof. Never deviate from the truth *under any circumstances*. Give the light I shall give you. The messages for these last days shall be written in books, and shall stand immortalized, to testify against those who have once rejoiced in the light, but who have been led to give it up because of the seductive influences of evil."

"Why have I not claimed to be a prophet?—Because in these days many who boldly claim that they are prophets are a reproach to the cause of Christ; and because my work includes much more than the word 'prophet' signifies."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 31, 32.

Some have had their faith shaken by recent attacks on Ellen White. We may regret such attacks, but we should not be surprised. Before becoming the first Christian martyr, Stephen asked, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" (Acts 7:52). He perceived the murderous attitude of the council and that his defense had failed to change their minds. So, filled with the Holy Spirit, he stopped his discourse and hurled the fiery indictment at his accusers. He wanted to underscore the standard fate of prophets in the history of Israel in order to show that their crucifixion of "the Just One" was nothing unusual, and only to be expected. Their attitude toward Christ was merely a continuation and an additional exhibit of how the Jewish prophets were generally treated by their own people. Remember, Stephen was not defending himself before the Roman senate; he was standing before his own fellow church members.

Should we be appalled at attacks on Ellen White from *within* the church? True, had these attacks come from *without* we could easily dismiss them with the thought "Well, this is to be expected. The critics do not understand the work of God's messenger for His people today. They are unaware of the tremendous spiritual impact her writings have made on the lives of thousands. They do not realize that without her writings today's church with all of its faults and defects (which, by the way, can gener-

ally be traced to our rejection of God's pointed testimonies to us through Ellen White) would in all probability be as insignificant, or even more so, as other groups that trace their roots to the Millerite advent movement." Thus, we would excuse these opponents on the grounds of their ignorance of the developmental and unifying role of the Spirit of Prophecy in our church. But for a Seventh-day Adventist minister, teacher, or leader—knowing the great influence of God's gracious gift of the Spirit of Prophecy on the church's growth, expansion, and worldwide thrust—to undermine subtly (and not so subtly) the authority and blessings of this gift is an unfathomable mystery to some minds.

A brief look at the way prophets have been persecuted in the past can be helpful. If God's Old Testament church (not the world) treated prophets so despicably, why do we think it strange that there are those in the church today who persecute the prophet? This is to be expected. In fact, we can expect increased activity in undermining faith in both her life and her work. As the time for our Lord's return draws near, Satan's frenzied attacks on the church will increase. He will utilize every possible means to destroy our faith, including attacks from within the church itself. He knows that if he can shatter our confidence in the Advent Movement, which includes its message, messenger, mission, structure, and history, it won't be long before we will be walking "in the counsel of the ungodly," standing "in the way of sinners," and sitting "in the seat of the scornful." Our delight will no longer be "in the law of the Lord," and we will be "like the chaff which the wind driveth away." We "shall not stand in the judgment," and finally we "shall perish." (See Psalm 1.) What a terrifying, solemn thought!

Spiritual destruction among Adventists often is inaugurated by a loss of faith in the Spirit of Prophecy, followed by a loss of faith in the church, then in the Scriptures, and eventually in God Himself. I have witnessed this repeatedly. If one's belief in the inspiration of the present-day gift of prophecy begins to waver, spiritual shipwreck is the usual fruitage.

As an example, a good friend with

whom I have been corresponding for several years regarding doctrinal matters, recently wrote the sad news that he and his wife had asked the church to drop their membership. They no longer believe that this is God's divinely ordained movement. Prior to this, I had repeatedly appealed to him to maintain his faith. But gradually his letters revealed an increasing hostility toward Ellen White, followed by animosity toward the church and its leadership. After much thought and earnest prayer, I wrote in my last letter to him, prior to his leaving the church, that unless his attitude changed drastically, it wouldn't be long before he would leave. A few months later I received his letter renouncing his church membership. For years this good brother had been a faithful church worker. I remember him as one who, during his years of service, stoutly defended the faith, one whose belief in the Spirit of Prophecy was unshakeable. Had you told me that someday he would turn against Ellen White, I would have said, "Never—maybe someone else, but not him!"

Observe the fate of a few of the prophets at the hands of the people to whom they ministered. Moses, one of

the greatest prophets, was under continual persecution from his own people from his earliest attempts to deliver them until his death. Indeed, he suffered such harassment that I have often wondered whether Hebrews 11:25 should not read that Moses chose rather to suffer affliction from the people of God, instead of the actual wording—"with the people of God."

Elijah certainly qualified as a member of the Persecuted Prophets Association. Imagine how he felt when a ranking member of the church denounced him by asking "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" It is amazing how warped minds can become! King Ahab—who along with his miserable wife, Jezebel, was the main cause of Israel's problems—accuses the prophet of God as the troubler of Israel!

Elisha, the greatest miracle-working prophet of all time except our Lord, likewise experienced persecution. Although a prophet of peace compared with Elijah, Elisha was not free from attacks. A gang of forty-two ungodly Bethelite youths jeered him: "'Go on up, you baldhead! . . . Go on up, you baldhead!'" (2 Kings 2:23, N.I.V.).* One wonders what inspired these young

people to be so disrespectful. Do you suppose they had heard their parents, or certain church leaders, ridiculing and undermining the prophet's work?

Isaiah was an educated, cultured prophet of God who lived in Jerusalem. He was fearless in his work during the turbulent years of the dissolution of the northern kingdom of Israel, and his reformatory leadership greatly influenced King Hezekiah. Yet, tradition claims that he lost his life by being sawn asunder at the hands of Manassah, Hezekiah's son. What thanks for a man of God who loved his church and did everything possible to save it from ruin!

Jeremiah, one of the most colorful of Old Testament prophets, is next on our list of persecuted ones. Only the sustaining power of God enabled him to perform his work under terrible circumstances and to endure the most violent opposition from within the church! When one reads of his pain and agony of spirit, as well as of body, it is small wonder he was known as the weeping prophet. Listen to his lament: "I am ridiculed all day long; everyone mocks me. . . . So the word of the Lord has brought me insult and reproach all day

(Continued on page 25.)

An unwitting testimony

In his book *Why I Believe in Mrs. E. G. White*, pages 126, 127, F. D. Nichol tells the story of a conversation he had many years ago with an aged leader of the Advent Christian Church, probably the largest of the groups outside of Seventh-day Adventism that remain as descendants of William Miller's movement. Indeed, both the Advent Christian Church and the Seventh-day Adventist Church were organized approximately at the same time. Membership in the Advent Christian Church, however, peaked about the turn of the century at 30,000, and has remained approximately at that level ever since.

Brother Nichol was doing research at the Advent Christian College in Aurora, Illinois, which has a large collection of Miller's original writings. The elderly

church leader assisting Elder Nichol had formerly been president of the college. During the days of their fellowship together, this man was most gracious in his assistance, and proved to be quite knowledgeable regarding the growth of Seventh-day Adventists and the different branches of our work throughout the world. One evening near sunset as they were in the car together, he said to Brother Nichol, "Your church leaders through the years have been wiser men than ours. They saw the need of a publishing work and started it, the need of medical work, of educational work, and of a great mission program. And they also saw the need of a close knit organization. And so today you are strong and growing rapidly while we are not."

Nichol replied, "My dear brother, I don't think that is quite an accurate statement. Our leaders were not wiser than yours, nor more far-visioned. The record will show that they were ordinary flesh-and-blood, like your men, with great limitations of vision and faith. But the difference was that we had in our midst a most singular woman. She

marked out what we ought to do in the different branches of our work. She was specific, emphatic, insistent. We accepted her counsel and direction, for we believed she had visions from God. That is the reason we have this marvelous organization and why we have grown."

In recalling the incident, Brother Nichol said that a great silence descended, for the dear Advent Christian people had ever refused to accept our belief that Mrs. White possessed the gift of the spirit of prophecy. The two men rode on in silence for a time, while Brother Nichol wondered what the thoughts of the other man were. Finally he broke the silence with a gesture toward a grove of trees: "Aren't the trees beautiful at sunset?" Brother Nichol agreed and refrained from saying more. Their fellowship continued unbroken.

Thus this man, though not accepting the fact that the gift of prophecy was manifested in the work and life of Ellen White, eloquently, though unwittingly, gave a most impressive testimony of her singular qualities.

CONSTANTINOPLE—THE NEW ROME

Constantine, who figured so prominently in fourth-century church affairs, established a new imperial capital named for himself.

by Orley M. Berg

With the breakup of the old pagan Roman Empire the eyes of the emperors turned eastward. Diocletian, coming to the throne in A.D. 284, divided the empire and established a second capital at Nicomedia, modern Izmit, in Turkey, on the eastern extremity of the Sea of Marmara. From here he ruled the Eastern Empire, and under his direction the city was enlarged to become the fourth city of the empire.

The new ruler exceeded all others in his efforts to destroy Christianity. When the capital city of Nicomedia burned to the ground, he, like Nero before him, blamed the Christians, setting off the worst period of persecution they had known. Diocletian's imperial decree of A.D. 303 banished the practice of Christianity from the empire, and this policy continued in force under his successors until the Edict of Milan, issued by Constantine ten years later, granted full freedom to Christians.

Tradition has it that Constantine's favorable attitude toward Christianity came as the result of a dream in which he saw a cross in the sky with the words *in hoc Signo vinces* ("By this sign thou shalt conquer"). When he woke, he had the sign of the cross inscribed on the shields of his soldiers. In A.D. 312, at the Battle of Milvian Bridge, Constantine defeated Maxentius and became the emperor of the Western Roman Empire. By September, 324, he ruled the East as well, defeating his last rival to the Eastern Empire, Licinius. The battle occurred at what is now Üsküdar, on the Asian side of the Bosphorus. Thereafter he crossed this strategic waterway and, almost without a fight, took the city of Byzantium.

Constantine recognized full well the importance of Byzantium as the meeting place of Europe and Asia. Here, rather than at Rome, lay the future. So, off the shores between the Golden Horn and the Sea of Marmara, reuniting East and West, he established the capital city as the "New Rome." It was laid out in an area four times the size of Rome, and, like the old Rome, it was built upon seven hills. The Byzantine Empire that was thus born would span the next eleven hundred years.

Visiting Istanbul today, one can still see some of the remains of the ancient city of Constantine. These include the old walls, although most of them now visible were the work of Theodosius II of the next century. They include, also, the huge aqueduct with its double arches that he erected to convey water for twenty miles into the city. Today Atatürk Boulevard passes beneath it. The bottom arches are 32 feet high, and those above are another 27½ feet high. The project, begun by Constantine, was completed by Valens in 368.

One of today's busy thoroughfares leads a few blocks to the crest of the second hill. Here Constantine had his camp, from whence he directed his short campaign against the city, and here also he erected a magnificent forum.

The forum of Constantine, with its huge central column 125 feet tall and topped by a colossal bronze statue of Apollo, the sun god, was surrounded by curving colonnades and magnificent arches. Constantine, a devotee of the sun, had the head of Apollo removed and replaced with one of his own. The statue, consisting of six large drums of volcanic porphyritic stone, fell in a storm in 1105, and because of its charred condition has come to be known as the Burnt Column. The burnt condition is understandable when one considers that some sixty fires have swept through the city during its turbulent history. A portion of the column is all that remains today.

Constantine had the marble pedestal of the column enclosed with numerous relics. Since the city had previously been under the protection of Apollo, the new emperor, wishing to gain the favor of pagans and Christians alike, chose relics of both paganism and Christianity. These purportedly included the wooden image of the goddess Athene, which had stood at Troy and then at Rome; the ax used by Noah in building the ark; a part of the rock struck by Moses; crumbs from the wedding feast of Cana, where Jesus turned the water to wine; fragments of the cross; and the alabaster box from which Christ's feet were anointed by Mary. As stated in the *Newsweek* publication *Hagia Sophia*, "Constantine's column . . . thus served as an

appropriate cult object for pagan, Mithraist, and the Christian alike."—Page 18.

Down the slope from the forum, toward the Sea of Marmara, Constantine erected his imperial palace, and adjoining it was the great hippodrome. Nothing remains of the palace; however, the hippodrome is easily identifiable. Originally built by Septimius Severus in A.D. 203, Constantine enlarged it to a length of about 1,300 feet and a width of just under 500 feet. The tiers of seats were increased from 16 to nearly 40, thus accommodating up to 100,000 spectators.

Down the middle of the hippodrome was the spina, around which the track ran. This spot is marked today by the 64-foot-high obelisk of Thutmose III. The obelisk of rose-red granite from Aswan was first erected by the Egyptian king in 1471 B.C. in Heliopolis, the ancient sun city of Egypt. In A.D. 390 it was brought by Theodosius I to Constantinople and set up in the hippodrome. On its base are recorded in hieroglyphics the victories of Thutmose III, while the marble pedestal is covered with reliefs of the hippodrome, including a record of the erection of the obelisk. A mate to this monument, almost three and a half millennia old, stands today in Central Park in New York City, and another along the Thames in London. All three stood originally before the ancient sun temple of Heliopolis, where today one lone obelisk remains to mark the site.

At the far end of the hippodrome the well-worn obelisk of Constantine Porphyrogenitus still stands. It is so named because it was this emperor who restored it during the mid-tenth century A.D. It is believed to have already been in place when the hippodrome was enlarged and embellished by Constantine. It was originally covered with plates of bronze and decorated with bas-reliefs. The holes into which the pins fitted to clamp the plates in position are still clearly visible.

Also in the hippodrome, and most important of all, was the Serpentine Column. Originally 26 feet high, it was brought over from Delphi, where it had stood on the Sacred Way leading to the Temple of Apollo, where pilgrims had come for centuries to consult the sacred oracles. Set up to commemorate the final

defeat of the Persians at the Battle of Plataea in 479 B.C., the column consisted of three entwined serpents with their heads supporting a golden tripod. Today all that remains is about eighteen feet of the column, jagged and broken at the top.

The hippodrome was the heart of the secular city of Constantine and his successors. The principal attraction was the chariot race, which was almost an obsession with all classes of people. The emperor would watch from his imperial box, which fronted the palace at the top end of the track. The prestige of winning was more important than the prize—about seven or eight pounds in money, a cloak, and a wreath, all of which were presented by the emperor himself before the imperial box.

Not far from the hippodrome Constantine built what is today known as the Underground Cistern. The Turks call it the Underground Palace. Although initially the work of Constantine, what appears today is primarily that of Justinian, dating to the sixth century. Water is still in it, glimmering beneath 336 columns set in 12 rows of 28 each, all of them crowned with beautifully carved Corin-

“Although Constantine’s role as protector of Christianity brought persecution to an end, it also inaugurated an era of internal warfare over theological issues.”

thian capitals.

Constantine’s great desire was to unite the conflicting elements of the empire. This led him to steer a middle course between his pagan and Christian subjects. Although the protector of Christianity, he allowed pagan worship to continue along with the Christian religion. Old pagan temples continued to stand and new ones were erected. One, dedicated to Castor and Pollux, was erected near the hippodrome.

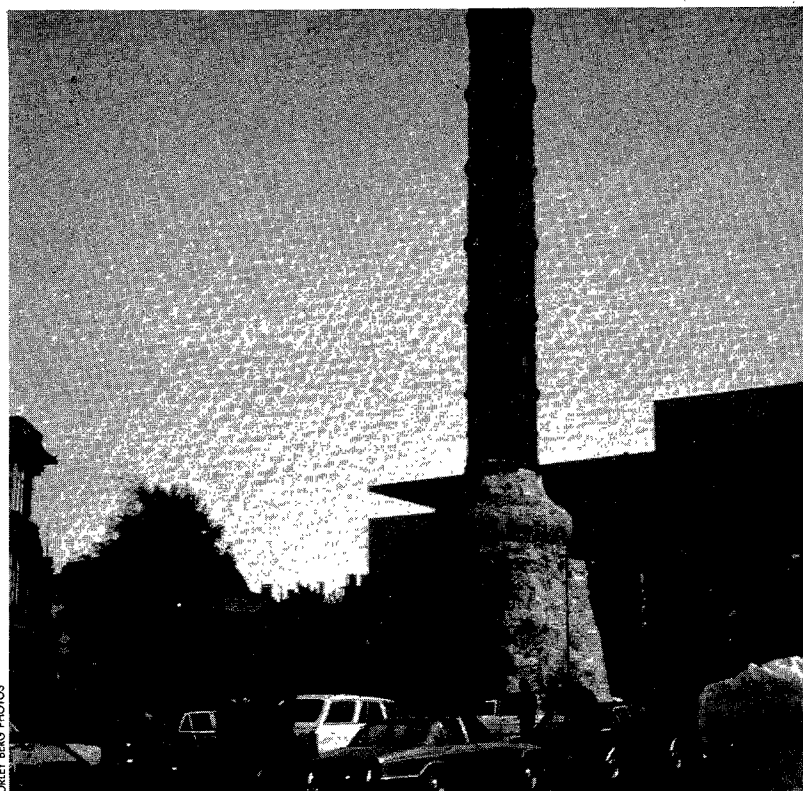
But Christian churches were also built. The first of these was Hagia Irene, occupying the former site of a temple to Aphrodite. It is approached today by entering the Topkapi Gate into the famed Topkapi Palace, then turning sharply to the left. Although believed to have been originally built by Constantine, what we see today is mostly the work of Justin-

ian, who restored it after its destruction in 532, the time of the Nika revolt. It is now the Saint Irene Museum. Adjoining it is the famed Hagia Sophia, planned by Constantine but built by his son and successor Constantius II.

In architectural style Constantine departed entirely from the pagan temple, adopting rather the design of the Roman secular building—the basilica. This was in keeping with the new political system in which the church and state were united under the emperor. Concerning the spiritual role of the emperor, the authors of *Hagia Sophia* write, “Constantine became revered as the equal of the apostles and the vice-regent of Christ on earth. Blending the temporal powers of Caesar with the spiritual authority of the church, he ruled supreme over both

(Continued on page 28.)

Left, the huge central column of Constantine’s forum once stood 125 feet tall—today only a portion remains. Right, the hippodrome, enlarged by Constantine to a length of 1,300 feet, had seats to accommodate 100,000 spectators. Down the middle of the hippodrome was the *spina*, around which the track ran, marked today by the 64-foot obelisk of Thutmose III.



VARIETY—THE SPICE OF LIFE

With more than 1.25 million kinds of animals in the world, variation is an obvious fact. But variety has sharply defined limits.

by Frank L. Marsh

One of the delightful things about the world of plants and animals is its remarkable variation in form and structure. Not only do many different basic patterns or types exist but there is also some variation within each type. Those who name plants and animals tell us that today there are more than 250,000 "kinds" of plants and nearly 1.25 million "kinds" of animals in the world. Hitchcock lists 64 species of bluegrass and 160 species of panic grass in the United States. Gray lists 17 species of common thistle, 37 species of spurge, and 51 species of violet. Sargent catalogs 24 species of willow, 54 species of oak, and 153 species of hawthorn or red haw. Hall and Kelson list for the United States 66 subspecies of deer mouse, 66 subspecies of the northern pocket gopher, and 214 subspecies of the southern pocket gopher. Walker lists 13 species of true cattle in the world. More than 30 races of the song sparrow have been listed for the United States.¹ Griffith Taylor named 160 distinct breeds of man on the earth.² Is there anyone who wishes to attempt to tell us the number of varieties of horses, cats, dogs, corn, beans, potatoes, roses, or of any other domesticated animal or plant? Surely the God who gave us this animate nature must be a great lover of variety!

Today nearly everyone agrees that the presence of variants within basic types of organisms is an axiomatic biological principle. The fact that this variation within basic types *has* occurred and *does* occur is of great importance to those who study the origin of organisms. It has not always been so.

It is difficult for us to comprehend that only slightly more than a century ago the doctrine of special creation was accepted and taught in the science departments of all European universities. Sir William Cecil Dampier states: "The emphasis laid by the Protestant Reformation on the verbal inspiration of the Bible led to a more literal interpretation, and by the eighteenth century an acceptance of the details of the story of organic creation, as given in the first chapter of Genesis, became necessary to orthodoxy. In the nineteenth it was apparently

believed by almost the whole Christian world."³

When Charles Darwin attended Cambridge University (1828-1831) he accepted without criticism the scholastic interpretation of the phrase "after his kind" in Genesis 1. The schoolmen insisted this statement meant that individuals of succeeding generations could not vary in appearance from the original organism. However, in his voyage around the world (1831-1836) Darwin, a keen observer, saw that the same basic type ("species" to him) of plant or animal *did* vary to differing degrees in appearance from country to country. This discovery disturbed him because he thought his observations were disproving assertions of Genesis. In fact, he was only disproving an extremely conservative scholastic interpretation of the phrase "after his kind" found in that book.

In making his choice between the unchanging kinds described by the schoolmen and what he saw in nature, Darwin chose the latter. At the time his *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* was published (1859) he had no body of laboratory proof to support his theory, so he fell back on speculative arguments to show, on the basis of certain facts and assumptions, how evolu-

tion might have occurred. Scientists in general laid aside their wholesome caution and enthusiastically accepted his ideas. Indeed, they have not ceased since to speculate extravagantly in the realm of origins. Darwinism won the support of the majority because it assumed and described an attractive, fundamental force of improvement, development and progress in nature.

However, in the century since Darwin's *Origin* appeared, the facts and interpretations upon which he relied have ceased to be all-convincing. Since his day long-continued investigations on heredity and variation have indicated his explanations must be modified. Today we know that variation is indeed an observational fact throughout the natural world, but as we become more intimately acquainted with the living world, we discover another fact as striking as the diversity itself. This is the *discontinuity* of the variation. Living things in their multitudinous varieties cannot be arranged in a continuous, unbroken series from the simplest structure to the most complex, nor can one variant be traced through a continuous series of intermediate stages to a markedly different variant. Instead, we observe that the variation is *discontinuous*. Rather than a progressive series of variant individuals, we find separate clusters of differing forms. This fact makes it easily possible to distinguish among our domesticated plants and animals. For example, we know the horses from the cows, the cats from the dogs, and roses from the camellias, the corn from the wheat, the maples from the oaks, and apes from men.

Darwin had no explanation for this very important natural fact of discontinuity. He observed variation occurring within basic types (microevolution) and assumed a process of unlimited change in nature that could produce new basic types. Thus, upon a few natural facts and much speculation he built his hypothesis of organic evolution.

In the century since Darwin a great body of knowledge about variation has been discovered. Scientists now are able to answer the question How far can variation go? Geneticists, studying all known changes that occur in the hereditary material of the cells (changes that produce variation in the adults),⁴ have



BILL BAYLIFE PHOTO

Frank L. Marsh is professor of biology, emeritus, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

discovered that this change in appearance *never* has been known to go further than to produce new varieties within basic types of organisms that already are in existence.

The origin of pestiferous and poisonous plant variants has often troubled the Christian scientist. Remarkably, in 1899, Ellen White commented on the source of these remarkable organisms: "All tares are sown by the evil one. Every noxious herb is of his sowing, and by his ingenious methods of amalgamation [hybridization] he has corrupted the earth with tares."⁵ Today the fact is quite well known among plant scientists that the offspring (the hybrid) of normal, non-poisonous parents may contain poisonous substances in their tissues. An illustration of the increasing awareness in this area appeared recently: "Two scientists at ANS [Academy of Natural Sciences], however, say that careless hybridization of guayule [a shrubby bush of northern Mexico and adjacent Texas from which rubber can be obtained] with any of the plant's relatives is likely to introduce plant toxins that cause a severe skin rash in humans. . . . 'The prob-

lem . . . is that people have been looking only at the rubber these plants can produce, not at their potentially toxic side effects when hybridized.'"⁶

If scientists could successfully cross two different basic types, the result would surely be a new basic type. However, all laboratory evidence unmistakably declares that if two organisms have sufficient morphological differences to constitute two distinct basic types, they *can not hybridize*. In other words, in every verified instance in which hybrids have been produced, the two partners have been sufficiently alike morphologically to belong to the same basic type. There is *no* exception to this principle in natural sexual reproduction.

After many years of practical experience and laboratory study by scientists, the conclusion is that not one method of accomplishing variation has ever produced any basically new organisms. New variants indeed do appear within existing basic types, but *no new basic types* have resulted. By present-day definition, microevolution (variation within a basic group) has occurred; but no empirical evidence exists that mac-

roevolution (formation of new basic types) has ever occurred. Indeed, the evidence is against it.

Thus, in answer to the question How far can variation go? laboratory study has shown that there is a fixity within living organisms, a natural law or principle of limitation, that decrees that *no* new basic types can be formed. This law of limitation in variation invalidates the very hypothesis of organic evolution, or macroevolution. Because of the lack of evidence for unlimited change—the molecules-to-man theory—how much better it is to stand by the opening words of Genesis, "In the beginning God . . .!"

¹ George J. Wallace, *An Introduction to Ornithology* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), p. 29.

² Griffith Taylor, *Environment and Race* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), p. 29.

³ Sir William Cecil Dampier, *A History of Science* (New York: Macmillan, 1944), p. 334.

⁴ Frank L. Marsh, *Variation and Fixity in Nature* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1976), pp. 49-79. See also his article "Variation and Fixity in Nature. A New Biological Principle" in *Creation Research Society Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 2 (September, 1978), pp. 115-118.

⁵ *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association), book 2, p. 288.

⁶ *Science*, vol. 205, no. 4406 (Aug. 10, 1979), p. 564.

Prophets

(Continued from page 21.)

long. . . . I hear many whispering, 'Terror on every side! Report him! Let's report him!' All my friends are waiting for me to slip, saying, 'Perhaps he will be deceived; then we will prevail over him and take revenge on him' " (Jer. 20:7-10, N.I.V.).

Poor Jeremiah! He was charged with duplicity and defection when he tried to leave Jerusalem to inspect a piece of recently purchased property, and was rewarded with imprisonment in an empty cistern with a miry mud floor. Almost the only good treatment he received was at the hands of the Babylonians. But he still chose association with his people in Judah rather than to go to Babylon. His end is another familiar story—according to tradition he was stoned to death by his own fellow believers at Daphnae.

One interesting departure from the usual treatment accorded prophets is that of Daniel. A highly respected counselor and statesman, Daniel lived for 90 years and, as far as we know, was not a martyr. What made the difference? Dan-

iel lived and worked in Babylon, not in Judea! Jesus underscored this point in Matthew 13:57: "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house." (Whether this statement was original with Jesus, or borrowed from another, it certainly is as true today as when He spoke it.) So when it comes to the life and role of Ellen White, we should not think it strange if some within the church try to overthrow her work.

If tempted to doubt the genuineness of this gift for the church, take another look at our history. This movement would have been miserably warped in the fires of fanaticism or slowed to a chilling crawl through the ice fields of formalism and lethargy had it not been for the firm, penetrating superintendence of the Spirit of Prophecy. From an individual standpoint, its ministry succors the faint-hearted, counsels the perplexed, convicts the erring, lifts the fallen, and guides the faltering. From a corporate standpoint, it reveals principles for success in evangelism, publishing, and medical and educational work. Only God knows how much more advanced our movement would have been had the

church more faithfully followed its counsel.

I am well aware of the misuse of the Spirit of Prophecy writings and deeply lament this. I deplore "Whiteolatry" as I do "Bibliolatry." An excessive enthusiasm for a literal interpretation and application of every jot and tittle in these writings has unfortunately turned some against them and the church. But shall we "burn down the barn to get rid of the rats"?

Finally, I realize there are other ways to persecute the prophets besides putting them to death. To ridicule or ignore the messages God sends through His prophets is a most effective form of persecution. But in effect we persecute ourselves when we do this, for we are the ones who suffer most. Do you suppose that is why God admonishes us to "'have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful'" (2 Chron. 20:20, N.I.V.)? J.R.S.

* Texts credited to N.I.V. are from *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. Copyright © 1978 by the New York International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

VISITING THE SICK

The hospital patient has a right to expect comfort and encouragement from his pastor. Here's how to make your calls effective.

by A. D. English

The most important principle in making the hospital call is: Do it! Although this may appear simplistic to the point of ridiculousness, I am convinced that such is not the case. Complaints by a significant number of church members, voiced over a considerable period of time, have led me to believe that more pastors than we might care to admit are lax in their attitude toward visiting their parishioners in the hospital.

Reasons probably include a busy schedule, uncertainty about what to say to a seriously ill patient, and perhaps in some cases, the common feeling that hospitals are uncomfortable places to visit, reminding us, as they do, of our own vulnerability to injury, disease, and death.

Whatever the reason for not making hospital calls, it is not good enough. If the pastor cannot find the time, he must *take* the time. If he is uneasy in the presence of disease and death, he must go in spite of his uneasiness. The patient is far more uneasy and has a right to expect comfort and encouragement from his pastor.

Indeed, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of the hospital call to the patient. Illness and injury tend to strip away the usual veneer of self-assurance, as any experienced pastor can verify. Even if the patient is in the hospital for the proverbial "tests," he is still somewhat nervous and apprehensive. His pastor should be there.

Admittedly pastors have difficulty visiting their hospitalized members because of the current brevity of hospital confinements. There was a time when a person admitted to the hospital, for whatever reason, was almost certain to be there at least a week. Today it is not unusual for a patient to be admitted one day and discharged the next. Many hospital stays last no more than two or three days. Thus it becomes all the more imperative that the pastor not delay when he learns that a church member is in the hospital.

Occasionally a hospital stay is so brief that the pastor does not even learn of it until the patient has been discharged and is at home again. If this happens, there is

nothing to do, of course, except call on the patient at home and explain what happened.

Such slip-ups can happen even when a hospital stay is not brief. Once, I did not learn until Thursday afternoon that an elderly member who lived in another town had been critically ill in the hospital since the preceding Sunday evening. As day after day went by and the pastor did not call, her grown children, members of another church, had grown increasingly (and understandably) critical of their mother's church and its pastor. Several church members knew of the situation, but everyone assumed that someone else had already told me. Needless to say, when I finally learned of the situation, I hurried to the hospital immediately. I explained to the children what had happened and found them very understanding, once they realized that I had not stayed away because of carelessness or indifference. However, prevention is far better than a good explanation.

The solution is very simple: tell your church members that you would appreciate being notified of *any* accident or illness, even if everyone is sure that you have already heard about it. But be prepared to get twenty-five phone calls each time someone goes into the hospital!

If you make hospital calls in the morning, you will often find that the patient is not in his room. X-rays, tests, and various kinds of therapy are usually done during the morning hours. It is impractical to wait for the patient to return, since there is no way of knowing how long he will be gone.

If you find the patient in his room, what should you do, as his pastor, to make your visit effective? Let's look, first, at some things *not* to do.

Visitation "don'ts"

Don't sit on the patient's bed or throw your coat on it.

Don't speak loudly. Loud noises of any kind can be very irritating to a sick person.

Don't tell the patient about your uncle who had the same symptoms and recovered to live another forty years (or who died in two weeks, as the case may be).

Don't comment on the patient's choice of a doctor, or on the doctor's choice of

treatment. Don't suggest treatments or remedies; that is the doctor's job, not yours.

Above all, don't imitate the pastor who made hospital calls on his way home from funerals and gave the patient all the details of the funeral service!

Don't be too quick to ask specific questions about the patient's illness. If you have not been told, it is usually best not to ask. A patient who is still reeling from the knowledge that he has a malignancy may not be ready to talk about it. If he wants you to know, he will tell you. Women, in particular, may be embarrassed if a male visitor, even the pastor, asks about their condition. A little tact will be much appreciated.

If you know the patient's illness, and it is something not generally considered dangerous, you may wish to reassure him. However, be careful not to speak of it as though it were trivial. For one thing, you do not know that it is trivial in this particular case. For another, no illness is ever trivial to the patient himself.

Don't stay long. Patients tire easily, and while they may not offend you by saying so, they will appreciate it if you stay no longer than five or ten minutes. They need the comfort and reassurance that you can give them, but they also need rest. In certain individual cases, of course, this rule may need to be modified, and you will want to spend more time with the patient, but be alert to leave when you should.

Never, under any circumstances, argue with a patient. Sick people are naturally beset by anxiety, which will occasionally manifest itself in irritability or hostility. You may even find a patient who is "spoiling for a fight." If so, try to keep the conversation on neutral subjects. If this does not work, keep smiling and tell the patient, "We'll talk about that when you're feeling better." If he still persists, cut your visit short and leave.

Don't feel that you must keep up a steady flow of questions and conversation. A moment or two of silence will give the patient a chance to say what is on his mind. He may have serious matters and questions that he will never express if there is no break in your flow of talk. Be especially alert for any hint, however tentative, that the patient wants to talk about spiritual things. If he does,

breathe a silent prayer that no one will interrupt. You might even want to close the door so that you and he can talk privately.

Don't rush the patient if he begins to speak of spiritual things. Let him go at his own speed. And above all, *listen*. Give him your undivided attention. If he has questions, answer them seriously and honestly. He may want to make something right, either with the Lord or with some person. Your assurance of God's forgiving love will do more for him at this moment than anything else.

Visitation "do's"

Now for some positive tips on making your hospital visits effective. Most hospitals will allow a pastor to see patients outside regular visiting hours. Some will allow him to park free in the hospital parking lot; a few will give him a pass permitting him to park in the employees' or doctors' parking lot. Remember that all these privileges are just that—privileges, not rights—and are not to be abused. Any time you are in the hospital, during visiting hours or otherwise, remember that the work of the hospital staff takes precedence over your visit. Don't enter a room if doctors or nurses are with the patient. If hospital personnel come into the room while you are there, offer to leave until they are finished.

If the patient's door is closed when you arrive, it is best to go to the nurses' station and ask whether it is all right for you to go in. If it is, knock on the door and wait for a response before you enter.

In cold weather, stop by the washroom and run warm water over your hands before entering the patient's room. He is accustomed to the warmth of the hospital and is in a weakened condition. The touch of a cold hand can be a very unpleasant shock.

If the patient is facing serious surgery (and any surgery is serious to the one being operated on), ask whether he would like you to come to the hospital on the day of surgery and wait with the family. The knowledge that his pastor will see him and pray with him just before his operation will have a wonderfully calming effect on an apprehensive patient.

Always pray with the patient before you leave; let nothing deter you. It is one of the most important parts of your visit, if not *the* most important part. You are a minister of the gospel. The patient knows this and expects that you will pray for him; indeed, he would be sur-

prised if you did not do so.

Even in those sometimes awkward cases when the patient is not a member of your faith, and you are calling upon him at the request of a relative or friend who is, offer to pray for him. Rarely will you meet with a refusal. Even those who profess to have no faith will usually appreciate prayer when they are ill. If the patient should decline, you must, of course, respect his wishes. But don't hesitate simply because his attitude indicates he would be annoyed or embarrassed by prayer. Many a nonresponsive or sophisticated exterior hides a frightened soul that is desperately longing for the comfort of God's presence.

Your prayer at the bedside should be brief and to the point. Ask the Lord to comfort and sustain the patient and to restore him to health, if in His wisdom He sees that it would be for His own glory and the patient's ultimate good to do so. Do not make an unconditional request that the patient be healed. Even the Lord Jesus Himself, in Gethsemane, prayed, "Not my will, but thine, be done."

Remember to include in your prayer the patient's family. A hospital stay is also stressful for the family members who remain at home. There is the strain of repeated visits to the hospital, which must somehow be fitted in between other duties; family income may have been drastically reduced, or cut off altogether; worry about the patient's recovery is a constant burden. By all means, do not fail to pray that the Lord will sustain the family, as well as the patient.

Prayer in a hospital room will sometimes have to be offered under adverse conditions. People visiting the other patient in the room may be laughing and talking loudly; a television set may be blaring rock music or a soap opera. (I cannot remember even a single instance when the patient in the other bed has turned down the TV volume when I offered prayer.) But don't allow any of this to dissuade you from praying.

If the patient in the other bed is awake and does not have visitors at the moment, introduce yourself and express the hope that he will have a quick recovery. If you have had the opportunity to do this before you pray, be sure to include him in your prayer. Often the church member I came to visit has told me that after I left, the patient in the other bed expressed surprise and pleasure that I had included him in my prayer. At times they added that while they appreciated being included in my prayer, they were

saddened that it was a pastor of another faith who had prayed for them, while their own minister had not even seen them.

Usually the pastor will be permitted to see patients even in the intensive-care and coronary-care units on the same basis as the family. Never take such permission for granted, however. Always check at the nurses' station before entering an intensive-care or coronary-care unit.

When visiting a terminally ill patient, make every effort to learn, before you visit, whether the patient knows his true condition. If so, you may speak more freely than you otherwise would. Do not, of course, try to force the patient to speak of spiritual things if he does not wish to do so; but certainly make an effort to lead the conversation in that direction. Remember that you are speaking to one whose life is drawing to a close. If he has given his heart to Christ, you have the privilege of comforting him with the assurance that his approaching death is not the end. If he has never surrendered his life to the Lord, or has once done so but since drifted away, you may have the even more wonderful privilege of leading him to the Lord. The same promise, from the same Saviour, is as open to the terminally ill patient of today as it was to the thief just before his death nearly twenty centuries ago.

If you have the opportunity at all to do so, present the gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Present it in the simplest terms you know. Do not speak of any other doctrine. This is not the time for abstract theology. It may be that the few words you are able to speak will bring one of the Shepherd's lost sheep back to Him at the last moment.

If the terminally ill patient is not aware of the seriousness of his condition, be very careful what you say. It is my personal conviction, which I hold very strongly, that a terminally ill patient has the right to know his true condition. However, this is not your decision. Unless the family has asked you to break the news to him, never take this duty upon yourself. The family's feeling in this matter may be equally deep, and you must respect it whether or not you agree.

You may find yourself in the very awkward situation in which the patient suspects that his illness is terminal but has met with evasions and silence when he has tried to learn the truth. He may ask you point-blank whether he is going to die. What can you do? If the doctor

and/or the family does not want the patient to know the truth, you must not defy this wish, however strongly you may feel that it is a mistake. On the other hand, neither can you lie to the patient, and an evasion will not only confirm his suspicions but probably cause him to distrust you, as well.

One possible solution is to tell the patient that everyone must die sometime, and that it may be God's plan to allow his life to close now, or it may not. You can say this quite honestly, since there are many cases of hopelessly ill patients recovering. Only God can know with certainty the outcome of this particular case. If he is a Christian, you might remind him of Paul's statement in Romans 14:8: "Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Point out to him that this verse says plainly

that living or dying, as important as that is, is overshadowed by the fact that he is completely in the hands of One who loves him beyond all human understanding.

It is not likely that the family will ask you to lie deliberately to the patient about his condition. But if they should make such a request, you must kindly yet firmly refuse. You can have no part in any such thing.

If you receive word that one of your members has been rushed to the hospital because of a stroke, heart attack, or serious accident, get to the hospital as soon as you can. The family members will be frightened and disoriented. Your presence will be a steadying influence for which they will be grateful. In addition, you may be able to give them such practical help as phoning other family mem-

bers or arranging for someone to pick up the children from school while they stay at the hospital. Remain with the family until the situation has stabilized. This may be in a matter of several hours, but there is probably nothing that you could do during those long hours that would benefit anyone else as much as your presence at the hospital will benefit the patient and his family. They will long remember that you were there when they needed you.

As a pastor, you have many demands upon your time. More, probably, than you can meet. You always will. Therefore, priorities must be set. I urge you to put the hospital call near the top of the list. Remember that one of the things the Saviour will say to the redeemed in the day of judgment is "I was sick, and ye visited me" (Matt. 25:36).

Constantinople

(Continued from page 23.)

church and state, an absolute oriental monarch with semidivine status."—Page 17.

Constantine's principal work of Christian architecture was the Church of the Holy Apostles, crowning the fourth hill. There Constantine was laid to rest as the thirteenth apostle, and after him a succession of emperors found a final resting place there. The Westminster Abbey of the Byzantine emperors, it was completely demolished in 1453 with the fall of the city to the Ottoman Turks.

The New Rome, or Rome of the East, was six years in building, and on May 11, 330 A.D., was dedicated in a splendid ceremony. In the inaugural procession its priests, senators, and imperial dignitaries moved up the second hill to the forum. Then the statue of the emperor, Constantine, in the guise of Apollo, the sun god, was heaved to the top of the central column. A priest proclaimed the new name of the capital as Constantinopolis.

The Christian ceremony over, there followed games in the hippodrome amid pagan celebrations. A gilded wooden statue of Constantine holding in his hand a figure of Tyche, the city's lucky emblem, was borne in procession in a tri-

umphal chariot of the sun, and then placed before the imperial box to receive the emperor's salute. Constantine decreed that the ceremonies be repeated on each anniversary of the city's inauguration.

Constantine's first devotion was to the sun. Because of this, together with his desire to unite the worshipers of the old and the new faith in one religion, he issued in 321 a law enjoining the solemn observance of Sunday, the day honored among pagan subjects as the day of the sun.

Although Constantine's role as protector of Christianity brought persecution of the church to an end, it also inaugurated an era of internal warfare over theological issues that continued for centuries. Increasingly, the debates that raged were turned to political ends. As a statesman whose goal was one empire and one religion, Constantine called the Council of Nicaea in 325, the first of seven church councils convened during the next five centuries. His astute choice of Byzantium as the capital of his empire was reflected in his choice of Nicaea, present-day Iznik, as the site for this large concourse of bishops. Situated on the shores of Lake Ascania, it was within easy reach of all the provinces.

Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, was among the 300 present at the historic council, and he described in vivid detail the proceedings. Many of the delegates showed the scars of the Dioclesian per-

secution—maimed, without limbs, eyes out of the socket, faces disfigured. From this council emerged the Nicene Creed, a ruling that became supreme in the church, both East and West.

Dominating the council was the emperor, Constantine, representing all authority, both spiritual and temporal, and claiming semidivine status. Although Constantine laid the groundwork for making Christianity the *sole* religion of the state, a condition to be inaugurated under Justinian, he continued to support both paganism and Christianity. The cross first appeared on his coins, but they carried also the figures of the pagan gods. The title Pontifex Maximus, which he assumed, was that of the chief priest of the pagan state cult. The Roman senate, following the old custom, classed him among the gods.

The transfer of the capital of the Roman Empire to the East left the bishop of Rome as the most important personage in that city and contributed much toward his elevation to the position of "head of all the holy churches," a title first conferred upon him by Justinian, who in 533 issued a decree proclaiming Christianity the official religion of the empire. The decree, however, was not enforced until 538, with the expulsion of the Ostrogoths, the last of the Arian powers that opposed the church. With that date, the history of the ancient world came to its end and the period of the Middle Ages began.

WHY THE PASTOR HURRIED

It seemed such a lovely Sabbath to spoil by letting routine duties crowd out family. What difference would a few minutes make?

by Anahid Benzatyan

Immediately following the church service, my husband was in an unusually great hurry to get home and have his dinner.

It's true we were a little later than normal because of celebrating the communion service, but we expected that. On communion Sabbath I always seem to feel the presence of angels and the closeness of Heaven in a special way as I search my heart and ask the Lord to cleanse any impurity that would interfere with my taking the bread and wine. The testimonies and other features peculiar to this special Sabbath take extra time, but they all add to the unique quality of such a sacred service.

Knowing, however, that my husband was in a hurry, I quickly put the food into the oven to heat the moment we reached home. The table had been set the night before. We were waiting only for the food to be warmed, which would take less than a half hour, but my husband insisted he had to eat right away.

"I must take the communion service to a lady in the hospital who has specifically asked that I come this afternoon," he explained.

Anahid Benzatyan writes from Redlands, California. Her husband is an associate pastor of the Loma Linda Campus Hill church.

"But," I protested, "today has been such a special day. We don't have any visitors to eat dinner with us. Let's relax and enjoy our meal together. Sabbath is the only day the children can enjoy having you here, so please don't rush. Just wait a few minutes, and we can all eat together. Then you can go."

"No," he answered, "just give me some bread and cheese. I must go right away."

"There's no hurry. Why don't you let the lady have her own dinner? Then she might take a little nap. You have all afternoon to take Communion to her."

But nothing I said seemed to make any difference.

By this time he had already asked the blessing and was starting to eat the bread on the table. Giving a sigh, I reluctantly took the cheese from the refrigerator, along with some other ready-to-eat items. I watched him somewhat sadly as he ate, but at the same time I admired his consecration. At other times I might have continued to argue, but now it was as if I were tongue-tied. Soon he was gone with the communion box in his hand.

I knew the woman he was so eager to

visit. She was a cancer patient. Baptized at the age of 14, she had turned her back on the Lord for many years. Recently she had returned fully to the Lord and to the church. Too sick to enter the baptismal pool, she had been accepted into church membership on her profession of faith. Today would be her first Communion since rejoining the church.

But why couldn't he at least have eaten dinner with us? I thought.

My husband returned home late that afternoon with satisfaction in his eyes. Just as we sat down to have our supper the phone rang. The hospital wanted him to come immediately! The same woman to whom he had served Communion a few hours before had taken a nap only minutes after he had left. She didn't wake up.

O Lord, how mysterious are Your ways, I thought as my husband left his meal for the second time that day. I know that not even one leaf will fall without Your will. What if, for my own selfish reasons, I had insisted that my husband not go right away? What if he had waited a few more hours? Dear Lord, give me more of the spirit of sacrifice and self-denial—the same spirit that You demonstrated on Calvary and that we celebrate in the communion service.

Prayers from the parsonage

by Cherry B. Habenicht

We write to friends scattered throughout the world. Some have corresponded faithfully, even though we haven't seen each other for fifteen years. Yet I've "lost" a lot of friends along the way.

Every time we move, people copy our new address and promise to write. A few sense our loss and send letters brimming with news of church and community. The others manage a card at Christmas, until even that becomes an effort. Eventually our letter isn't answered, or an envelope returns "address unknown."

I have a lot of questions, Lord—

Where is Fran, my next-door neighbor from Seminary days? Is dear Mrs. Overgaard, our first landlady, still alive? What is Jim, a young elder in our first district, doing now? Did the Dahl children grow up strong in You? How has Clara managed as a widow? Did Mr. Abner ever join the church? . . .

Thou knowest all, whether I sit down or rise up;

thou hast discerned my thoughts from afar.

Thou hast traced my journey and my resting places,

and art familiar with all my paths.

. . .

Such knowledge is beyond my understanding,

so high that I cannot reach it (Ps. 139:2-6, N.E.B.).*

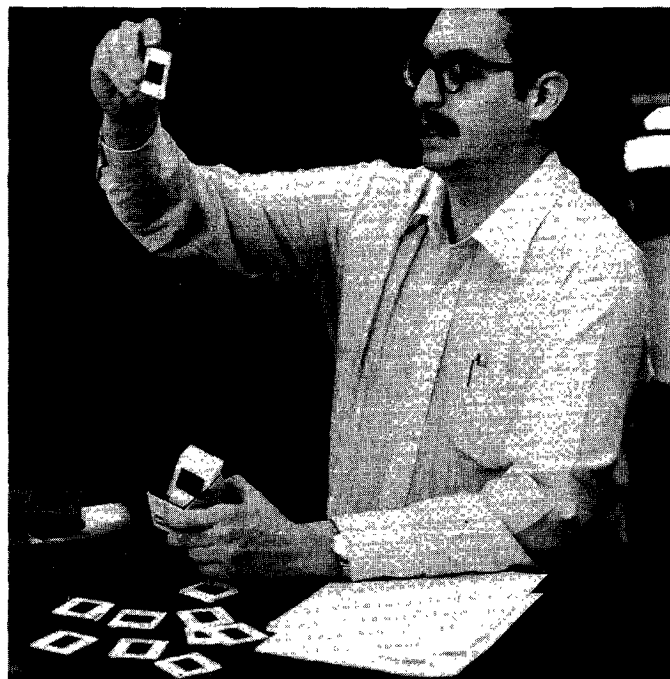
If You'll impress me about whom to contact, I can discover information on my own. Other facts may surface unexpectedly. Many answers will have to wait until those wonderful reunions in heaven.

I trust You to take care of these friends who touched our lives, however briefly. Let them know they are not forgotten, though time and distance separate us now.

* From *The New English Bible*. © The Delegates of the Oxford University Press and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press 1961, 1970. Reprinted by permission.

Supply Center for Pastors and Evangelists

The Evangelistic Supply Center has been established to provide you with materials at the lowest possible cost. The following aids to your ministry are stocked at the Review and Herald Publishing Association and may be ordered directly. Other materials are also available. Write for a complete price list.



Packet on the Church in Politics

Similar to the packet on the Pope's visit to America, this packet includes:

- 13 single-spaced typewritten pages drawn from various sources on the church in politics and related items, and the complete text of the sermon "The Future," which discusses God's scenario of coming events and the prophetic significance of the evangelical Right's current involvement in politics.
- 34 slides covering the church's involvement in

politics, the Begin-Sadat peace efforts, and the rise of militant Islam.

Complete packet, \$7.95 (No. 56443-5); slides only, \$7.00 (No. 56444-3); printed material only, \$1.00 (No. 56445-0). Note: the packet on the Pope's visit is still available at the identical prices: slides and printed matter, \$7.95 (No. 56439-3), slides only, \$7.00 (No. 56440-1), printed matter only, \$1.00 (No. 56441-9).



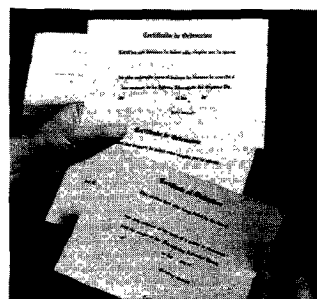
Reprint of "Seven Reasons for Studying the Book of Revelation"

This article by Orley Berg originally appeared in the January, 1978, MINISTRY. It is ideal for use as a handout at Revelation seminars, or evangelistic meetings to help create an interest in further study of this important book. \$1.00 each (No. 56340-3).



Rolodex Files

- Rolodex V546 File, 500-card capacity with 25-division alphabet guides, \$30 (#56423-9).
- Rolodex V1046 File, 1,000-card capacity with 40-division alphabet guides, \$41 (#56424-5).
- National multiring binder with 10 divider cards, \$10.95 (#56420-3).
- Set of 10 divider cards for binder above, \$22 (#56428-6).
- Triplex-punched prospect cards for Rolodex file and binder, \$5 per hundred (#56430-2).
- Single-punched prospect cards for Rolodex file and binder, \$4 per hundred (#56432-8).
- Punched church-membership cards for Rolodex file and binder, \$4 per hundred (#56434-4).
- Unprinted white punched cards for Rolodex file and binder, \$2.50 per hundred (#56436-9).



Ordination Certificates for Elders and Deacons

Attractively designed and available in either English or Spanish. \$1.00 each. Elders: (English—No. 56501-0; Spanish—No. 56505-1). Deacons: (English—No. 56502-8; Spanish—No. 56506-9). \$8.50 per hundred.



Ten Commandment Chart

This is a large chart (58" x 42") of the Ten Commandments as changed by the Roman Catholic Church, along with a few pertinent statements. Excellent for display in public evangelistic meetings. A limited number are available at \$1.00 each (No. 56394-0).



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SHOP TALK

E. G. White and literary sources

Ron Graybill, of the E. G. White Estate, discusses Ellen White's use of literary sources in the January, 1981, release of the ASPIRE Tape of the Month Club. The two C-90 cassettes include a Sabbath sermon delivered at the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist church and two evening presentations. With the news coverage this issue has received recently you need to be informed. Send your order for the January, 1981, ASPIRE tape, together with \$5.00, to: ASPIRE, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

Fellowship meals

Many churches attempting a fellowship lunch each week for their visitors have found that it can become a chore unless some arrangement is made to screen out those who are not actually visitors. Two churches in the Southeastern California Conference have put into practice ideas that are alleviating this problem. The San Bernardino 16th Street church, pastored by Hermon Vanderberg, has a weekly meal for visitors only. A specific church member plans and prepares the menu each week as part of her evangelistic outreach. The hosting committee has the meal all prepared and serves it on plates that have dividers. In this way an attractive, balanced meal can be placed in front of all guests. Place settings are already on the table, and a deacon is posted at the door to welcome visitors and to screen out regular members who might feel it is a good place to get a free lunch on Sabbath.

The Paradise Valley church, under the direction of John Thurber, has a

similar program. This church has developed a little printed ticket embedded in plastic. These are handed to guests as they sign the register. The greeter personally invites them to attend the guest luncheon following the church service. Special mention is made of this at the announcement period. Anyone who has missed getting a meal ticket is invited to secure one at the guest register.

After church, these tickets are handed to a deacon who is stationed at the door to receive them. This obviously identifies the guests and relieves the burden of preparing for members who might otherwise stay for a free meal. Of course, the church occasionally needs a general fellowship. So, on specific occasions a regular, full-church luncheon is served.

Pitcairn film

New copies of the quite famous film *Miracle on Pitcairn* have not been available for some time. However, a new master copy is now being prepared by the Australasian Division for reproduction purposes. This 16-mm, color film runs 28 minutes and was produced by Eric Were, who is well known for his excellent photography and film presentations. The price is Australian \$196. Orders should be sent to Communication Department Director, 148 Fox Valley Road, Wahroonga, N.S.W. 2076, Australia.

Minister's reading program

Last year we began a five-year reading program designed to emphasize the Word of God and the Spirit of Prophecy writings. The entire Bible ought to be read annually by every minister, perhaps in a different version each year. (Those

who read *The New International Version* last year might want to choose the *New American Standard Bible* or *The New English Bible* this year.)

To accommodate individual interests, the reading list includes two electives to be chosen from specific areas. Here is a chance for you to read that book you've seen advertised.

Here is the reading list for 1981—it's not too late to begin. Don't let another year go by without putting yourself on a regular reading program.

1981 Reading Program

The Bible
Prophets and Kings
Testimonies for the Church, volume 2
Testimonies to Ministers
1 book on church growth
1 book on Old Testament studies

Cassette catalog

Studio 91, a division of WAUS-FM, Andrews University, has recently released an extensive catalog of prerecorded cassette tapes covering such areas as theology, healthy family life, education, and storytelling. Studio 91 records sermons, lectures, workshops, and seminars given at Andrews University, and this wealth of information is available to pastors and laymen.

Whether you want to keep abreast of current theological issues, do in-depth study on a particular topic, improve your pastoral skills, add to your church library, or provide resources to a study group within your church, Studio 91 has tapes that will be of assistance. In addition, they offer special discounts on blank cassettes and will serve as a duplication service for your own sermons, worships, or

evangelistic series.

For your copy of the new catalog, send \$1.00 to: Catalog, Studio 91, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104.

Health tools

Because most people are more concerned about their bodies than their souls, Seventh-day Adventists have long considered health to be an entering wedge to spiritual concerns. The Health and Temperance Department of the General Conference has developed numerous materials with special significance for evangelistic use. There are pamphlets and tracts, kits, manuals, booklets, programs, periodicals, and many other items of interest to pastors. For a complete descriptive list with prices, write: Health and Temperance Department, General Conference of SDA, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

Adhesive notes

Post-It Note Pads, a new product from the 3M Company, are adhesive notes that fasten securely to paper and most other surfaces, yet remove easily without damage. A strip of special adhesive across the back is the secret. Press the note on, and it sticks tightly; to remove, simply peel it off. These notes can be used as brief reminders at your desk or on the dashboard of your automobile. As markers in a book, they can highlight items on a page or can be used to indicate important sections of a letter. The notes come in a variety of sizes and prices. The most economical are the 1½-by-2-inch pads and the 1-by-700-inch roll. Once you try them, you'll find a multitude of uses.—Jerry R. Coyle, Downers Grove, Illinois.

RECOMMENDED READING

A THEOLOGY AND ETHICS OF SEX

Sakae Kubo, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D.C., 1980, 129 pages, \$4.50.

Christianity has reacted to the topic of sex in a wide variety of ways. Some Christians have rejected sex as inherently sinful, to be avoided at all costs. Many have viewed it warily, as something to tolerate in an imperfect world, to be kept within careful and rigidly narrow limits. Others have seen it as a wonderful gift from God.

How should the Christian relate to sex? Does Scripture take a theological position toward it? What forms of sex are proper for the Christian? What about the ethical issues raised by such practices as abortion, premarital sex, homosexuality, artificial insemination, cloning, and genetic engineering?

Noted Seventh-day Adventist theologian Sakae Kubo, president of Newbold College in England, examines both the scriptural concept of human sexuality and the ethical issues involved in the many sexual questions facing us today. Dr. Kubo is the author of such books as *God Meets Man*, *Calculated Goodness*, and *Once Saved, Always Saved*.

Orval Driskell

INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

James F. White, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee 37202, 1980, 288 pages, \$7.95, paperback.

The scope of the history and practice of Christian worship is so broad that the novice is easily discouraged. James F. White, professor of Christian worship at Perkins School of Theology in

Dallas, has been studying and writing about worship for the past twenty years. In this book readers receive the benefits of those years, without the effort involved.

White begins with a definition of worship in both a theological and applied sense and then proceeds to untangle the sometimes-confusing strands of worship tradition, setting in context the various traditions as they exist today. He suggests in the first chapter that the degree of diversity that occurs in worship traditions over time and cultural spreads is not so surprising as the degree of constancy that exists.

The balance of the book takes up the theme of a persistent dominance in the basic structure of worship, which the author sees as a "focus on time, liturgy of the hours, initiations, eucharist, and the various rites of passage" (p. 30). An excellent bibliography, divided into sections to correspond with the chapter divisions, provides direction to one wishing to go beyond the introductory nature of the book.

Gary B. Patterson

TRAINING YOUR CHILDREN TO HANDLE MONEY

Malcolm MacGregor, Bethany Fellowship, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1980, 139 pages, \$3.95.

Parents have been commanded in the Bible to "train up a child in the way he should go," and one essential part of training during this prime time is in the area of money management.

MacGregor talks about allowances, offerings, part-time jobs, stealing, and borrowing, and offers a whole list of possible jobs available to different age levels.

This book complements the "Spirit of Pioneers" emphasis and the new Family Financial Seminars from the Ministerial and Stewardship Association of the church. MacGregor has a background in business and finances and is a believer in spiritual growth through stewardship.

MacGregor earlier wrote a best seller, *Your Money Matters* (\$3.95, 1977), a *Financial Planning Seminar Workbook* (\$5.95), and has produced a series of eight cassette tapes to teach these ideals (\$29.95), also available from Bethany Fellowship.

Jerry Lastine

POSITIVE PREACHING AND THE MODERN MIND

P. T. Forsyth, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1980, 374 pages, \$6.95.

These Yale lectures were first published in 1911, yet their theme is timeless. To the author, the cross of Jesus Christ is always central, the Word of God his constant guide as sparked by the Holy Spirit. His book will be a challenge to every truly converted gospel minister.

Forsyth's trenchant handling of the themes of the cross and one's need of the platform of the Scriptures is illustrated in two short, crisp statements in the chapter "The Preacher and His Charter." Speaking of Paul, Forsyth observes: "He fastened on the cross, if I might venture so to say, and pressed the whole divine life out of it for our healing." And again, "Our aim must be an ever fresh immersion in the Bible."

The reader will quickly discover that this is a book written by a preacher for preachers! The serious reader will joyfully embrace this thought: Biblical

preaching preaches the gospel and uses the Bible; it does not preach the Bible and use the gospel.

His chapter "The Authority of the Preacher" is most refreshing. The author boldly holds that some preachers "spoil their work by an incessant strain after novelty, and a morbid dread of the commonplace." Nor does this book side with the layman who wants constantly "shorter sermons." Indeed, he will find no comfort at all.

Forsyth establishes the preacher's right to preach, not by the ordination of his church, but on other grounds: "He has his commission from God, from the church only his permission. . . . And all the church has to do is to discover if he has the commission, by the wisest, and even severest, tests."

Dick Rentfro

MINISTRY

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