

Ministry

A Magazine for Clergy/April 1982

One thousand days of reaping



SPECIAL EVANGELISM ISSUE

Our first business

Nothing the church does has much real value unless it contributes to confronting men and women with the claims of Christ upon their souls. It is time for the church to give unquestioned priority to evangelism.

Dear Fellow Worker:

The editors of MINISTRY have dedicated this special issue to the challenge of world evangelism and the One Thousand Days of Reaping. Its pages are filled with inspiration, and it is my prayer that during this special thousand days, beginning September 18, 1982, and ending with the quinquennium when our world session convenes in New Orleans, we will share in the greatest victories of the cross that the church has yet seen!

By the time this message reaches you, all of the world divisions will have established their own objectives and laid their plans for this special period of soul winning. There is something unifying in adopting a common goal, and then through the power of the Holy Spirit reaching this prayer objective. A million souls for Christ! What will it mean to us and God that because we acted, many of this number will stand on the sea of glass who would not otherwise have been there? And yet, even a million, impressive as that number seems, is relatively small when we think of the many millions who need to be reached. Today's world of 4.5 billion souls, a population that is increasing by 141 per minute, will have increased by 203,040,000 during the thousand days. We must ask, How will these 203 million be reached, in addition to the present population? As we contemplate these things, we are grateful that the work is God's, and that He and He alone will "finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness" (Rom. 9:28).

This very situation also makes us recognize the inadequacy of numerical goals. Numbers do stimulate us and give us a working target, but is reaching a numerical goal really the purpose of this church's evangelistic outreach? Of course not; not even a million souls! It is to see God's work finished in a blaze of glory and ultimately to be a part of "a great multitude, which no man could number" (Rev. 7:9). The secret of success is summed up in a phrase found in the Thousand Days of Reaping document: "Placing unquestioned priority on evangelism in all forms and at all levels."

What does it mean to give "unquestioned priority" to evangelism? In the complex emergencies that today's world forces upon us, should evangelism take



precedence over matters of church governance when it comes to our time, attention, and dollars? We are often guilty of caring for the urgent, but we fail to give emphasis to the important! The winning of souls in these last days is a challenge that has both qualities. It is the *most important* function of the church, and the *most urgent*! While we must give effective leadership in administering the affairs of God's church, yet we must confess that every administrator in God's church is under sacred mandate also to be an evangelistic leader. There are to be no nonevangelistic leaders in God's church; any such are misplaced persons! Administrators therefore must find a way to provide governance while at the same time giving undebatable priority to the church's evangelistic thrust. If the church is weak and given to lesser goals, it is probably because leadership has permitted an emphasis that gives priority to business and organizational matters, rather than to spiritual revival and the reaping of earth's final harvest. Jesus said, of the irresponsibility of Jewish leaders in His time, "These ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone" (Matt. 23:23). Christ's appeal for soul winning is supported by Ellen White: "We need now to esteem souls above money. If you know of a higher work in this world than the work of soul saving, a work which will bring better results for the investment of means, will

you not tell us of it, that we may measure its value?"—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 57.

A companion statement clearly estimates the value of a soul: "The soul is of infinite value. Its worth can be estimated only by the price paid to ransom it. Calvary! Calvary! Calvary! will explain the true value of the soul."—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 188.

The decisions of the church's highest councils, its tithe dollars, its finest talent, its best leaders, must all be focused upon the church's *first business*. Nothing the church does has much real value in this world unless it contributes to confronting men and women with the claims of Christ upon their souls. Even preaching—that great and compelling part of gospel ministry—has but one objective. As my dear friend R. A. Anderson so forcefully points out: "To preach the gospel of Jesus Christ is the highest privilege and the most alluring adventure ever committed to man, and yet the ultimate purpose of all gospel preaching is evangelism."—*The Shepherd-Evangelist*, p. 14.

And so, fellow evangelist, pastor, administrator, the challenge is for us to put first things first! The challenge is to do whatever we need to do in our individual programs in order to give evangelism first place. Perhaps this will require much faith and even torturous struggle in some cases. Let us emancipate ourselves, even if it means entrusting to God and others some of those things that formerly consumed so much of our time and effort! And let us go forth with sanctified resolve to give priority to the work of soul winning. As God's ministers "at all levels" respond and do this, God's church will prosper, His unimpeachable purpose for us will be fulfilled, we will experience revival, God's work will be finished, and we will know, as we have never known before, the fullness of His blessing!

Sincerely your brother,

Neal C. Wilson
President, General Conference of
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A Magazine for Clergy/April 1982/Volume 55/Number 4



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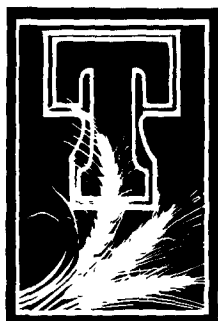
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The church must give unprecedented priority to evangelism for the same reason living persons must give priority to breathing! Without breath we cannot live; without evangelism the church cannot live!

W. B. Quigley

A prior claim



The church of Jesus Christ is not an end in itself. It does not exist to grow rich or popular or to function only for its members. It does not even exist to preserve its own existence, but contrarywise, to give itself away in tireless

sacrifice that others may live. Its essence is the epitome of selflessness, and when the world sees the church's purpose otherwise, great harm is done to the cause of Christ. The church is Christ's presence in ministry to the world. Christians are His hands in service, His feet in mission, and His voice in mercy to the world's people. What Jesus said of His own life is applicable also to the church: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24).

The leadership of God's church has acknowledged in the Thousand Days of Reaping document that at this hour of the world's night, we as a people must place "unquestioned priority on evangelism." While the church has made great decisions on past occasions regarding the need for revival and an increased tempo of redemptive outreach, it is exciting that concerned leaders have once again, in the 1981 Annual Council document, returned the focus of the church toward a renewed

priority for evangelism!

There are four very special reasons why the church must give unprecedented priority to evangelism at this time.

1. The church must give evangelism unquestioned priority because it has no other purpose for existence. Ellen White has written that the church "was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9), and that the work of the minister is "in Christ's stead . . . to beseech men and women to be reconciled to God" (*Gospel Workers*, p. 13). God gives to the church, both its ministry and members, a work that is inspiring and serious. Second Corinthians 5:17-21 contains the elements of this essential work in capsule form.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (verse 17). The miracle of new birth is the basic gift the church offers to the world! Life! Not ordinary life as we humans know it, but deep life, spiritual life, with its roots in God. Eternal life is the product we offer to the world! This is the most valuable thing imaginable, and the church is custodian to it! The world needs this more than it needs its next meal. It is for us to know its power, and to sense how fitting an offering it is that we extend to the world!

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (verse 19). If we seek a definition of evangelism, here it is: "God in Christ, reconciling the world"! The reconciling process of God, borne by the miracle of the Spirit, is evangelism! And the church, in offering the greatest thing in the world, is automatically doing evangelism.

"And [God] hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (verse 19). Won-

der of wonders! God has given us a ministry to perform on His behalf—the marvelous service of letting others know of this miraculous life! And the truth that emerges in this passage is that this divine entrustment is not just to clergy! It is to Christians! Evangelism is God's partnership gift to the rank and file of God's house!

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ" (verse 20). As though a progressive excitement finally explodes, we see here an investiture of authority in the Christian tantamount to ambassadorship! Is there a minister who hasn't felt this authority? Is there an enlightened Christian who hasn't? Even though we are but God's "water carriers," there is a portfolio of authority for the soul winner that excels any investiture by earth's greatest government or mightiest monarch. No wonder the magnate of earthly wealth, the worldly powerful, and the successful often stop to rediscover their own spiritual roots when a serious man of God addresses them with gospel authority! Perhaps Jesus intended this when He said: "And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:19).

Notice how the throb of this authority can be felt in the great episodes of evangelistic encounter to be found in the New Testament—Christ and Nicodemus (John 3); the woman at Jacob's well (chapter 4); the Pentecostal showers of blessing (Acts 1, 2); Philip and the Ethiopian treasurer (chapter 8); Saul's Damascus road conversion (chapter 9); Peter and Cornelius (chapter 10); and Paul and the jailor at Philippi (chapter 16). All reconciliation of the sinful heart is administered, not by human hands, but by God's Spirit. Elder H. M. S. Richards once declared, "No person can come to Christ unless and until God calls him." While the authority is given to man, it is governed by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit directs all Christian witness. Therefore we must not lay our own evangelistic plans! As we cannot program the new birth, so we cannot program evangelism. How can we tell when a certain locality is ready for an invasion of the Holy Spirit to the degree required for conversions and new-birth experiences? Actually, we cannot, except as we seek such wisdom in prayer and that gift is given to us. In no earthly enterprise is the Holy Spirit's direction more needed than in our attempts to do evangelism.

"For he [God] hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us . . . that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). This is gospel heartland! The only successful basis for evangelism is the preaching and teaching of the sacrificial atonement and Lordship of Jesus Christ in the setting of present truth! Reconciliation of the sinful life with Christ must be made on the basis that is acceptable to God. Therefore evangelism must deal with the

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issue! The sin issue is dealt with in the arena of God's appointed sacrifice for sin—"the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). Salvation occurs in the life as Christ is beheld, accepted, and surrendered to. When Christ is found, and life finds its anchor in the hope of eternal life, evangelism then surrounds that experience with the doctrines of the Bible and the church—concepts of truth that allow the "newborn babe" to grow in grace. And so a spiritual superstructure is erected upon that foundation, which no man can lay "than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11).

The church, then, must give unprecedented priority to evangelism for the same reason living persons must give priority to breathing! Without breath we cannot live; without evangelism the church cannot live! The degree to which a Christian's life, a minister's ministry, a church's program, or a conference's leadership philosophy becomes confused regarding the importance of evangelism is the degree to which it may waffle about in merely good activity, and in the light of redemption's plan be wholly lukewarm! Could this be Laodiceanism?

2. The church must give unquestioned priority to evangelism in order to be Christlike. A Christian cannot be a Christian without being Christlike, and to be Christlike means to be highly motivated personally to touch another life with redemption's miracle. Christ's most obvious trait was His love of souls: "Jesus . . . was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd" (Mark 6:34).

That Christian who comes and goes, navigating within the life of the church but never feeling the irresistible unction to "go tell," will eventually be obliged to come to grips with this basic paradox. If revival ever rekindles his soul with the Spirit's presence and power, his redemptive outreach will be the first area of his character and personality to demonstrate it. True Christians simply cannot be nonredemptive!

3. The church must give unquestioned priority to its reconciling ministry because it is the secret of its well-being and prosperity. Evangelism doesn't cost; it pays. Even in financial terms this is true. In general, the church's inflow of money comes from the results of evangelism. Successful evangelism provides ample money as one of the fruits of faithfulness.

Some have made the mistake of viewing the church as the parent of evangelism, calling evangelism a function of the church. This is a fatal deception. If this is true, the church could manipulate evangelism without hurt to itself. Biblically, the earthly component of redemption's plan is evangelism, not church. A bank may act as trustee to the fortune of an estate, but is never its owner, nor creator.

The church is trustee to evangelism, but evangelism existed before there was a church. It has demonstrated its ability to live without the church; but the church cannot live without evangelism. Kill the church, and evangelism will live still. Kill evangelism, and the church will die!

Evangelism is of prior claim over every other issue in the church. Historically, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has so majored in its mission that the theological hairsplitting of the religious world around it has never affected its unity. It was always too busy, too preoccupied with its mission, to waste time on controversial theories of little value. The church has always been crisis-oriented. True Christians consider themselves in the no man's land of a great warfare—a great emergency. The church must therefore let its priorities and work be decided not by whether an obscure word in a particular text has this or that meaning, but by the fact that lives are being lost in the despair of this world's night of sin. Christians who have felt the cruciality of life-changing power cannot be attracted by abstract theological suppositions regarding things God has not chosen to reveal clearly, once and for all. Though we "see through a glass, darkly," the Christian practices patience through his daily exercise of faith. The prior claim of evangelism is seen when a prostitute, a drug addict, a youth considering suicide, or a self-satisfied, respectable sinner is grasped by redemptive force and transformed into a worshipping, faith-filled saint!

4. We must give priority to evangelism because the Holy Spirit is sent to energize the church in one special thing—the reaching of lost people. The Spirit was given at Pentecost for evangelistic reasons, and it is greatly doubtful that the church will ever again be given the fullness and power of the Spirit unless it is for her central work of evangelism. When the church fully gives priority to evangelism, we will have placed ourselves in the only position in which we will be eligible to reach out and claim the promise of a second Pentecost. Is not this experience past due?

I will never forget the time I checked into a motel in suburban Washington, D.C., and went over to a nearby shopping center to get something I needed. As I stepped out of my car, a youthful Buddhist confronted me. In a polite manner he said, "Sir, may I invite you to attend a meeting

this evening on the subject of Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism?" As he talked, he handed me several pieces of literature, telling of the miracles of Buddhism and the many who had found a new life through this philosophy.

As a good Christian, I began to witness, in turn, to him. I knew enough about some of his beliefs to compare them with the "truth" and witness of my Saviour. Before long I was surrounded by eleven of these young people, all students at the University of Maryland. Almost as though the first young man had given up on me, I was soon confronted with an especially zealous youth, obviously the leader. He came up close, looked deep into my eyes, and spoke in great earnestness, "Sir, I want to tell you what happened to me! I was a hopeless drug addict. I was very sick because of this addiction, and I slept eighteen hours a day. The remaining six hours were filled with stealing in order to support my habit. I was ready for suicide and planning the event, when these friends from Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism found me. They taught me the chant, they gave me hope, and soon I was free, and living a new life." His gestures and eyes told of victory, and one could not help but be impressed.

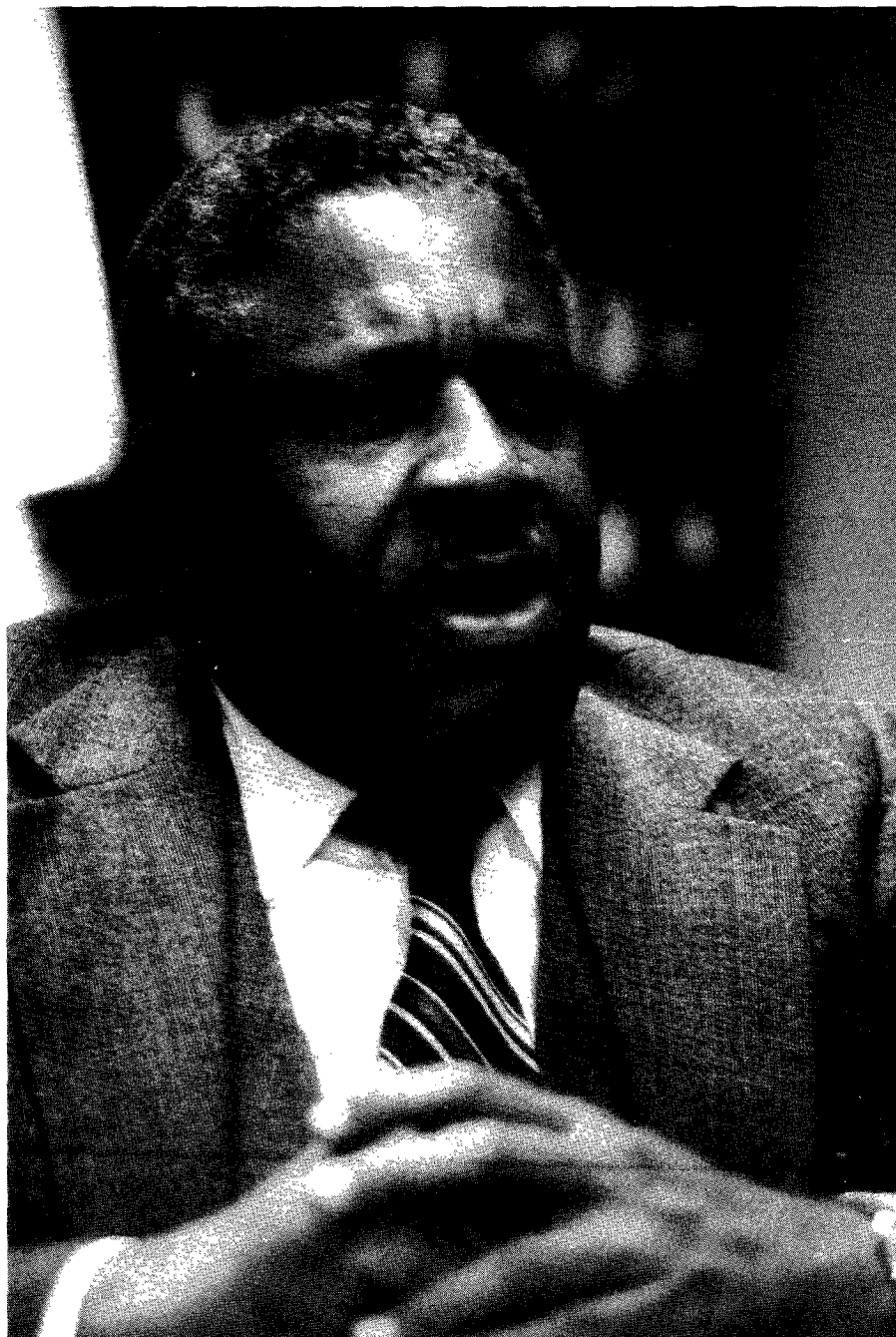
The meeting soon ended. But as I drove out of the parking area, I stopped at a traffic light in the right lane of three lanes. To the far left a small car stopped also, and I recognized it as belonging to one of the youths. Between us a station wagon pulled up and also stopped. While the light was red, the Buddhist youth motioned for the station wagon driver to roll down his window, which he did. The youth handed the driver a packet of literature, the driver thanked him. Just then the light turned green, and all three cars pulled out, probably never to meet again. But I drove on with wonderment! These young people had told me that in the suburban crescent around Washington that night, thirty meetings would be held in apartments and homes. From a dozen to fifty people would come to each meeting and sit on the floor to listen to the lecture and discuss these religious themes. I thought to myself: In the Washington area we have about eleven thousand Adventists. Are any of us doing this kind of evangelistic work? Why not?

A verse of Scripture pressed itself upon my mind. "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Luke 16:8).

The miracle of new birth is the basic gift the church offers to the world! Life! Not life as we humans know it, but deep life, spiritual life, with its roots in God. Eternal life is the product we offer to the world!

Will public evangelism work in the North American Division? We got a resounding Yes from C.E. Bradford in a recent interview. Methods must be adapted, but evangelism is alive and well in the NAD.

Bradford on evangelism



Q. *Elder Bradford, tell us how the Adventist message came to you and your family. Are you a product of evangelism, at least indirectly? I suppose all of us, in one sense, are products of evangelism.*

A. That's right. My mother's parents became Seventh-day Adventists as the result of Edson White's work on the *Morning Star* riverboat in the 1890s, in Mississippi. My father's father became a Seventh-day Adventist through reading *The Great Controversy*. He was a lay preacher in the Presbyterian Church, in Kansas City, Kansas, and he accepted the message way back in those early days. It's because of his efforts that we have several Adventist churches today; he became a worker in the Adventist Church after he was grown. He sold his business and set out to preach and was ordained.

Q. *You are the leader for North America. What are your ideals for evangelism in that division, and what is your appraisal of what is happening evangelistically in North America?*

A. I would say that there is a reawakened interest in evangelism in North America that will soon, I believe, manifest itself in a resurgence of evangelistic activity. The Andrews University Church Growth Study, which was commissioned by the Faith Action Advance Committee of the North American Division, indicates clearly that our churches, our lay people, and our pastors believe in evangelism. Of course, there is no dichotomy between inreach and outreach, between nurture and soul winning. They both must go together. So I think there are signs that evangelism is bursting forth with new vigor and activity all over North America.

Q. *You wouldn't agree, then, with those who say that evangelism is especially difficult*

to do in North America, or that Inter-America or South America can have evangelistic success but it is a different story in North America?

A. No, I don't agree with that. We must adapt our methods and our approaches to meet each situation, but I don't agree with the defeatist attitude—the line some people parrot—that we can't do evangelism here. I just don't believe that.

Q. You mentioned that you hope for a resurgence of evangelism and that both inreach and outreach are necessary parts of it. Would you outline the dimensions of that resurgence as you hope to see it?

A. Well, looking at the statistics, we can see a pattern of increase in soul winning, as someone pointed out the other day in two of our committees, the Faith Action Advance Committee, and the General Conference Thousand Days of Reaping Committee. In 1978 there were approximately 30,000 baptisms in North America. In 1979 there were 33,000; in 1980 there were almost 37,000. If that pattern were followed, we would have almost 40,000 in 1981. Unfortunately, we're not quite keeping that up.

There is, however, an encouraging word in various parts of the country, that larger crowds of non-Adventist people are attending meetings. There is a receptivity on the part of the public in recent times. People are interested in prophecy, current events, and health. So we've got avenues to people. And those who are skillful enough to know how to use these avenues to advantage are having success.

Q. You have just finished a series of meetings of your own, in which you participated with your son-in-law in Baltimore. Based on this recent experience, could you list any trends that we could and should capitalize on?

A. The wave of the future is the involvement of the total church in the evangelistic experience. And I wouldn't enter into any kind of public evangelism without the assurance that the churches were involved—first of all, the pastors and church officers. The way to go now is to get the people involved, because still the best interests we get are those generated by church members. In the New Testament sense, the church members are the ministers anyway. I was on the plane coming back from California some time ago, and a lady sat behind me whose husband is pastor of a large church somewhere nearby here in Maryland. She said to me, "Shepherds don't reproduce sheep; sheep produce

sheep!" And I thought of that. So our approach should be to get the people involved. Do anything to excite the people, to motivate them. And, of course, the church must have an ongoing program.

Now another thing, some of my evangelistic friends have told me that there is not the high threshold of prejudice against the Seventh-day Adventist Church that there once was. Our meetings in Baltimore were held in a church fully identified as a Seventh-day Adventist church. And people came—some of whom hadn't ever been inside a Seventh-day Adventist church. In fact, one man told me he hadn't been to church in almost sixty years! He was a man of 70 years of age, but he said he just didn't believe what he had heard was taught in the churches. He listened on the radio, but he didn't believe that, either. So he just stayed home and read his Bible. But just casually seeing our advertisement in his mailbox, he decided to come, and he and his wife were baptized! So there are people out on the street who can be reached with some kind of appeal and who will come to public meetings these days. But it's going to have to be, and it must be, a cooperative effort, a total involvement, of ministers, church officers, and members. It's always going to go flat otherwise.

Q. As vice-president of the General Conference for North America, you don't have much extra time on your hands, I'm sure! Many of us who aren't in pastoral ministry excuse ourselves from evangelism by pleading



a lack of time. Even some pastors don't feel they have time to prepare for a series of public meetings, and rely instead on professional evangelists. How do you work a series of meetings such as you have just held into your schedule?

A. I'm like John Wesley, who said he never threw away a sermon in his life. I have the very first one I ever preached. I don't preach it anymore, but I have it! I've always kept all of my evangelistic sermons. I've tried to keep them up to date, of course. I've had several short campaigns since being here at the General Conference, so my sermons are fairly current, and I don't have to take a lot of time in sermon preparation. That's one advantage I have. Also, we are close by Baltimore. It takes us only an hour to drive there.

Q. Were you involved in visitation, as well as preaching?

A. Oh, yes. I wouldn't say I was involved in extensive visitation, but I did some. My wife and I always try to visit some. We're still going to be visiting people over there. I found great joy in working with these humble people. South Baltimore is not the most affluent section of the city. And yet they gave good offerings—\$60 or \$70 some nights from these poor people. It was a great honor and a privilege for me to go into their homes.

A woman who is the assistant minister in a Baptist church read about keeping the Sabbath. I went into her home and prayed with her and her family. She isn't baptized yet, but she's going to be. And she's going to bring twelve or fifteen people with her from that little church. And there was another man—the one who told me he hadn't been to church for sixty years. I went around to visit his wife, and she accepted everything at home in the bed, sick. She came to only three meetings. When I went to visit her, she said, "I cleaned that old hog out of the refrigerator," and she laughed! And her husband said, "How do you pay the tithe? Before you pay your bills or after?"

I said, "Now you know you'd pay the Lord first." And he answered, "I thought that." You know, nobody in this building can pay me that way! Elder Wilson can't

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pay me that way!

I had another advantage. It's my son-in-law's church, and he has kept me acquainted with what he's doing. They have been involved in The Real Truth Bible Course, a very brief, simple, mimeographed course. So they had quite a number of people studying, and still do. We really wanted to follow that up.

Also, we got a lady from Birmingham, Alabama, Mrs. Mildred Johnson, who had worked with me in Memphis, Tennessee, in Mission '72. She is a crackerjack of a Bible instructor. I am a firm believer in women Bible instructors. They can get close to people; they can give the mother's touch, and appeal in ways that men never can. In a month, this lady prepared twenty-eight people from her list for baptism. She didn't have a long list, but she worked it thoroughly, and had tremendous results.

I'm sold on women Bible instructors. I think we ought to multiply them. I am going to suggest to our North American FAA Committee—which is the Thousand Days Committee for North America—that, based on what the fields return to us, we set a target for lay Bible instructors, trained for reaping campaigns during the Thousand Days.

Now I realize that Thousand Days, FAA, or whatever it is, must be more than drumbeating. We can't send people out like they sent children out in the crusades, unequipped, unprepared, without strategies, without proper leadership and guidance. We've got to prepare our people, because there's a real war out there, and many of us are not ready for it. The first thing the church must do is undergird its members, and prepare its personnel, and give them the weapons that we have. Thank God, we have mighty weapons! We must develop the strategies, the tactics, the plans, and then each of us along the line must execute them.

We have to face the fact that people cannot be public relationed into the message. The only way you're going to get people into the message is eyeball-to-eyeball, heart-to-heart, one-to-one confrontation. "Evangelism is not spraying the world with words," as Leighton Ford once said. I think we ought to attempt to communicate realities to pastors and their people. Otherwise, we're not going to be credible. They have a tendency, you know, to look upon us here in the General Conference as drumbeaters, as armchair generals who say "You go, while we encourage you!" We've got to communicate to this division that we understand where it's at, that we know what's happening in the local church.

The local church is the most visible manifestation of the body of Christ, and it's endowed with power. It is here that the saints are outfitted and equipped for service. It has power already. We can't create it here at the General Conference.

It's the Holy Ghost that pours out His gifts. What we are trying to do is release the dynamics that are already there, to bring the gifts to flower, to give the Holy Spirit an atmosphere and climate in which He can operate and become the Chief Administrator of the church. We want to provide tools to challenge people and hold before them all of these great objectives and targets that we own together. Then we want to encourage them and give them a little example leadership. And the Holy Spirit and the people will show us. They will.

But we've got to prove to pastors that this is not another scheme, another slogan—not just another big banner and bunting that we crank out every so many years so that someone can chart it and show the peaks and the valleys, and what Earl Cleveland calls the "muscle spasms." The FAA approach is to help undergird whatever is done in the local fields. We're not telling people you've got to use the title FAA. Some people don't like it; we don't care. A rose by any name will smell as sweet. It's the principles that are important.

Q. *You've mentioned Faith Action Advance, which is the program for North America. How is Faith Action Advance going to affect evangelism for North America?*

A. Faith Action Advance is based on three basic principles. The first one is that



every responsible man is to drop responsibilities on others. This concept comes from Ellen White. The union president's first responsibility is to make his staff and his conference presidents capable, effective leaders. He drops responsibility on them. The conference president's first duty is to make his staff and his pastors capable, effective leaders. And the pastor, who is an administrator and a responsible man, is to make his church officers and department leaders and every member of his church capable, effective leaders and ministers. And, of course, central to this first great principle is holding before each part of the team their joint mission, priorities, and objectives.

The second big principle is that every unit of organization is to be of service to its target population. We are all here as service units, and we have target populations.

Then the third principle is that the local church is the basic unit of organization and the focus of all activity. Here are all the essential elements of church growth.

You know, *church growth* is the in concept now. I have sampled the church-growth literature. I've read Peter Wagner, McGavran, Schuller, and Win Arn (and James Kennedy before that). I can't say that I've thoroughly done a definitive study, but I've sampled them, and I've picked up some things. It's almost like *déjà vu* when I read these things. I say, "I've read this before!" I've come to the place where I see that every valid principle that these people enunciate is already clearly outlined in the Spirit of Prophecy. All these valid principles that they have can be reduced to two, upon which all the others hang. The first one is "small companies," and the second is "assignment." These are the essential elements of church growth. Ellen White says that she was shown by One who cannot err that small companies should be the basis of all missionary endeavor. Small companies. That's why Wesley succeeded and why Whitefield's movement fizzled out. Little Wesley reproduced himself in small groups, classes.

Ellen White also says that everyone added to the ranks by conversion is to be assigned a post of duty. One of the big things in the church-growth movement today is spiritual gifts. We read about spiritual gifts everywhere. Now, the development and use of spiritual gifts is nothing more or less than "assignment," because

We have already been assigned a task by the gifts that God has given us. We could double our successes, not only in soul winning but in retention, if we knew skillfully how to help people develop and use their spiritual gifts.

we have already been assigned a task by the gifts that God has given us through the Holy Spirit. He's made the assignment by the gifts. So to help people discover their spiritual gifts and to use them is a part of assignment. And we could double our successes, not only in soul winning but in retention, if we knew skillfully how to help people develop and use their spiritual gifts. We'd win more and hold more.

And then, of course, there are the priorities. The last part of Faith Action Advance sets the priorities as the Word, worship, fellowship, and service. You can't have a church without the Word. You can't have a church without worship, fellowship, and service. All forms of outreach and ministries. That's Faith Action Advance in a nutshell.

Q. Statistics indicating how people make decisions for Christ and the church seem to confirm that the number one avenue by which people come into the Adventist Church is from favorably knowing a successful Adventist or having a close Adventist friend. Public evangelism, for example, is way down the list—almost at the bottom—as a means of bringing people in. Would you comment on this?

A. From my own experience and observation, it is public evangelism, however, that brings it all about and ties it together. As I said before, people are not going to come into this church in large numbers without a confrontation with the Word. They may have these good, favorable impressions. They may have these Adventist friends who gave them bread over the fence, or helped them in some way, or witnessed by their life. Don't misunderstand; we ought to do these things. But I believe that these people are not going to become Seventh-day Adventists until they have been in a situation where the Word challenges them and they are confronted with it. Most people have to have this almost traumatic experience in which they are made to think about the claims of Christ as a matter of life and death. Very, very few people will just drift in.

Q. Are you saying that evangelism can take many forms, but that they all need to lead, ultimately, to a confrontation that is best done, perhaps, in public meetings?

A. In public meetings or in church on Sabbath. We really pass up great evangelistic opportunities on Sabbath. I talked yesterday on the phone with a union president who told me, "I have challenged my presidents and the pastors in this field to make a call to join the church every Sabbath." In the black community we call it "opening the doors of the church."

There are scores of people who have been attending our churches and have never been brought face to face with a decision for eternity. This is a problem with too many churches. They have become religious clubs, not really churches. But with the Word, worship, fellowship, and service, they will be churches. Every Sabbath morning ought to be an evangelistic experience.

Look at the Southern Baptists. My sister-in-law is a widow now. She has a friend, a professional friend, who asked her to go to his church, the First Baptist church of Jacksonville, Florida, and sing in the choir. It's one of these huge institutional churches with thousands of members and two or three services every Sunday. She went on Sunday and signed the guest register. Thursday, two gentlemen came to see her. They said, "Oh, Mrs. Allen, we see that you're single now. Why don't you come and join our singles club? We have something to offer you." Now if every Seventh-day Adventist church were that alert, we would see results that would be astonishing! If every church would tactfully and lovingly give people opportunities to join, we'd be amazed. We'd be amazed here in North America, because there are many people who have been coming to our churches, some of them off and on for years, and nobody's ever challenged them to join.

Q. How important do you feel it is for us here in the General Conference complex to



give some kind of personal leadership to evangelism?

A. We should be involved, no doubt about it—not in a way to preempt the ministry of the pastor, but to support him. I don't think that our efforts sallying forth from this complex ought to be in competition with what the brethren are doing out there. We shouldn't demand big budgets from them. We ought to go out as a lay person almost, and assist in whatever way we can.

Q. Would you call this example leadership?

A. I think so. I wouldn't want to go to a conference committee and demand a huge budget. I don't look on myself as a professional evangelist, but I must become involved to the extent that I will say to a pastor, I'd be glad to come and help you in any way I can.

Q. If you had a final word to say to pastors regarding the priority of evangelism—the importance of it—what would you tell them?

A. I started to say, I'd use Earl Cleveland's little saying. He says evangelism will grow hair and cure bunions. I don't know if I ought to say that. But I would say that I agree with Karl Menninger, the psychologist. When he was asked what he would do to heal America, he said, "I'd preach. I'd preach repentance and faith." He chides the preacher, "You preachers have an unparalleled opportunity. Psychiatrists with the largest clientele see only a few people every week, but you have the opportunity on a given moment—eleven o'clock at your worship hour—to speak to scores, hundreds, and some of you to thousands. That's preventive medicine. That brings healing."

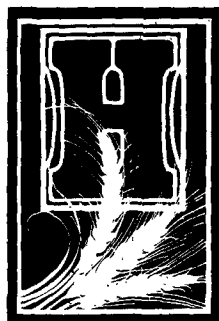
If you can show me a counseling ministry that's filled up a church, I'll go into it. I'll drop preaching and go into counseling. So I would say to pastors to preach. That's our job—to preach. Preach the Word of God. Preach it evangelistically; preach it redemptively. Preach Christ and lift Him up in such a way that sinners will be saved.

I would say to pastors to preach. That's our job—to preach. Preach the Word of God. Preach it evangelistically, preach it redemptively. Preach Christ and lift Him up in such a way that sinners will be saved.

From a small group of disappointed Millerites, we have grown to a worldwide church numbered in the millions. Yet our evangelistic purpose is the same as that of the pioneers—heralding the soon return of Jesus.

George W. Reid

From despair to destiny



How did the early Adventists view the commission to preach the Christian gospel to all the world? The answer depends upon the particular time period, but the historical prologue to Adventism almost guaranteed that it would become an active recruiter for the kingdom of God. From what kind of background did the Adventist Movement arise to provide its later enthusiasm for soul winning?

Adventism is evangelistically indebted to the heritage of the Wesleyan revival, which swept England and her colonies in the mid-eighteenth century. The Reformation in England under King Henry VIII was as much a political revolt as a religious reform, and the same was true when later Puritanism eventually precipitated a civil war and for a time even banished the monarchy. With its restoration, however, the Church of England leaned firmly toward an altar-centered, formal service, tied to a modified Calvinist creed. By the early 1700s it had largely ceased to speak to the growing masses of poor clustered about the mills of the Industrial Revolution.

Into this scene came the Wesleys and George Whitefield, whose work led to a revival of magnificent proportions; it was a concerted effort to reach the widespread public with the power of the gospel. Religion, for Wesley, was not a matter merely to be defined by intellect and liturgy; it was also—even especially—a matter of experience. Ronald Knox's analysis of the Wesleyan phenomenon, *Enthusiasm* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), although critical of it, demonstrates its influence and that of its continental counterpart, Pietism.

But during much of the later eighteenth century the fires of enthusiastic religion burned low. Wars swept both Europe and the American colonies, and the radical skepticism of Enlightenment philosophers led to the absentee God of the deists. About 1800, however, there came another revival wave that church historians have labeled the Second Awakening. From this grew the Millerite movement, whose members were forerunners of modern Seventh-day Adventists.

The Second Awakening was much more concerned with action than with reflection. Theologically it laid aside the old Calvinist-Puritan emphasis upon divine election and total human depravity. Man now was seen as endowed with the ability to make truly significant choices between good and evil; indeed, he was obligated to exercise this ability to the advancement both of himself and of those around him.

In America this spirit, combined with personal opportunity, a laissez faire social system, and the semipolitical philosophy of a divinely sponsored manifest destiny, led at times to religious extremes. But there emerged also a mainstream of more sober qualities. Charles G. Finney, an attorney and the outstanding evangelist of his day, packed crowds into the largest auditoriums of the Eastern cities, calling for repentance and developing the altar call as a method of indicating decisions. Untidy as all this appeared to the staid, traditional clerics around him, it set a pattern still widely used in evangelistic crusades. The popularity of the public evangelistic series paved the way for Finney's contemporary, William Miller, to attract great crowds to his prophetic lecture series during the eleven years from 1833 to 1844.

On the frontier, away from the cities, however, it was the spontaneous, often rowdy, camp meeting that caught fire. Whatever may have been its faults, it was widely adopted by Methodists, Baptists, and others, including the Millerite Adventists. It was at such a camp meeting that Ellen Harmon was exposed to the message of William Miller. In fact, publications and tent meetings were virtually

the only methods used by the early proponents of Christ's return "about the year 1843," as Miller first put it. But their impact was impressive. We should not forget, however, that Miller's work represented only the American phase of a worldwide revival based on the hope of Christ's soon return—a revival that reached much of the civilized world.

It was never William Miller's purpose to found a new denomination. On the contrary, he hoped his emphasis on the prophecies would be accepted as glorious good news throughout all Christendom, and he was deeply hurt when, instead, he became the butt of scorn, ridicule, and caricature. Up to the very time of the great Disappointment itself his idea was of an ecumenical, rational study of the prophecies and history, not a new and separate church. Not even his most bitter enemies accused Miller of raw emotionalism. Instead, his meetings were marked by an almost solemn decorum as large crowds were held spellbound while he proceeded throughout extensive prophetic diagrams and charts. Contemporaries reported that many of his audiences were composed mostly of men between the ages of 20 and 50 years. Clearly, Miller's intent was to bring additional light that would prepare as many as possible for the approaching return of Jesus.

But 1843 came and went, as did 1844. Miller had based his labors on the calculation that Jesus would return no later than the spring of 1844. When this failed to occur he gave qualified endorsement to a revived hope based on October 22, 1844, the Hebrew Day of Atonement. When the day passed and the hopes of Adventists were dashed in bitter disappointment, evangelism ceased.

So complete was the collapse of Adventism that as a people it virtually disappeared. In Boston, which had been a center of Adventist work, an early letter to the *Review and Herald* reported that only a sprinkling of believers remained. Cincinnati, once the site of the largest Adventist concentration west of the Appalachians,

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saw their great house of worship, the tabernacle, converted to a cider warehouse. Among the few who yet clung to the hope of the Saviour's return, scarcely any two agreed. At this very low point the first Sabbathkeeping Adventists appeared, but soul winning was scarcely their concern. How could there be concern for the lost under such circumstances? The long, agonizing prayer services—and there were many of them—were spent in pleading for light, for understanding. Why had their abounding expectations been rebuffed, and what would the future bring?

During those first few years that scattered little flock, seed for the coming Seventh-day Adventist Movement, was searching for insight and a sense of destiny. Both emerged slowly, taking shape with the Sabbath conferences of 1848. Here the foundation truths from Scripture were examined, tested, re-examined, and finally adopted—doctrines such as the sanctuary truth, which explained the cataclysm of 1844, the Sabbath, life only in Christ, and the major lines of the great Bible prophecies. Not until there was a clear message could anyone be prepared for widespread evangelism. In this process, though, a few leaders of the little flock traveled extensively, holding what today would be called cottage meetings, primarily in an effort to find harmony in diversity.

The principal body of survivors of the 1844 disappointment, including Miller himself, tried to explain the entire affair by denying that the 2300 years expired in 1844. This left the way open for a series of new date-settings. Holding this view, it was natural that they would regard human probation as still open.

The Sabbathkeeping branch, much fewer in numbers, accepting the 1844 termination date, and taking their cue from the parable of Matthew 25, which speaks of the door of admission being shut upon arrival of the bridegroom, believed temporarily that the door of mercy was now shut, that all God's true followers had already reached a proper relationship with Him. To hold otherwise seemed to them to undercut the validity of the 1844 termination date for the prophetic time period. The very earliest Sabbatarian Adventist periodicals, *The Present Truth* (1849-1850) and *The Advent Review* (five issues in 1850 only), carried extensive discussions of the shut-door teaching.

Gradually it dawned on them that the shut-door position was untenable. Already in December, 1849, David Arnold's lengthy defense of the shut-door thesis recognized that if God is to be just, mercy must yet be open to developing youths and others "in innocency." With increasing insight into the implications of Christ's ministry in the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary in heaven, it became clearer that opportunity was still open for all who believed. In addition, new truths such as

the Sabbath message had emerged since 1844. Surely God would have the world hear these truths, too. So, from a ministry limited (by the shut-door idea) to only those who had been participants in the pre-1844 movement, light began to dawn that a message was yet to be proclaimed to all the world, a message summed up in the proclamation of the three angels of Revelation 14. But still the vision was not global.

By 1855 Seventh-day Adventists had outgrown the restrictive shut door. Now periodicals were coming from the press on a regular basis and being sent to the general public, including those who had had no prior connection with Millerism. In her message "To the 'Little Flock,'" Ellen White, as early as April, 1850, appealed to believers to give money "to save perishing souls, by sending them the truth." One by one, the few ministers of the movement began to hold meetings designed for this wider public, and were elated with the response. Just as in Acts, where the apostle Peter defended his work for non-Jews on the grounds that the Holy Spirit was given to them, so the Adventist preachers of the late 1850s became more and more excited about conversions from such efforts. Soon direct soul winning was turned toward the general public, with tent meetings or preaching missions being held in town after town and virtually all the twenty or so active ministers becoming involved. Among these, none was more indefatigable than the patriarch of the group, Joseph Bates, who lived an almost gypsy existence of long itineraries filled with numerous series of meetings. As a result of such widened evangelistic activity, the membership of the fledgling new movement grew rapidly, increasing from a few hundred in 1850 to 3,500 by 1863, when the General Conference was organized, a dramatic growth percentage by anyone's standards.

Just as the Seventh-day Adventist Church was beginning a serious effort to reach the nation, expanding its labors from New England to the West (at that time Michigan and Iowa), the nation was divided by a massive civil war, which left more than 600,000 casualties and distracted the citizenry from all other enterprises, religious ones included. Not until the war's conclusion in 1865 could evangelistic labors be revitalized and resume

their work.

But during the doldrums of the Civil War, God was not at rest. Both Adventist leaders and members were catching a vision of a grander work. Eyes were turning to the Pacific Coast and the South, where no work as yet existed. These too must hear the message. By 1870 opportunity was opening for a foothold in Europe, a call soon met by dispatching John N. Andrews to Switzerland for pioneer work. A global vision was dawning, and a passion for souls was building.

The next two decades marked a great period for public evangelism and personal work by Seventh-day Adventists. Tents were purchased, and wagons groaning with equipment and other necessary goods rolled in many directions. Literally dozens of new churches were founded every year, and membership grew rapidly. Powerful exponents of the Adventist faith, although sometimes pugilistic in temperament, took on all comers in debates over the central pillars of the message. Substantial numbers responded to urgent appeals, and the church marched forward. A careful study of Adventist membership figures shows these two decades to be a period of truly great growth. From 1870 to 1890 a base was built that was capable of founding and making a success of both medical and educational institutions, as well as thrusting forward a missionary penetration into vast new regions of the world under the marked blessing of God. The thrill of reaching new souls had penetrated Adventists everywhere, and a mighty movement was now firmly on the way.

How far the movement had gone in only forty years! From a few dozen self-conscious believers searching for meaning in the aftermath of the great disappointment of 1844, the Seventh-day Adventist Church had grown by 1884 to be an inspired, aggressive people of expanding vision and thousands of new believers. The work of reaching the world, even if yet dimly understood in all its complexity, was well begun. But still, few could conceive of a future when the church would number its followers by the millions and include every continent. Fewer still had the vision to think in terms of one thousand souls a day being won for Christ and His church.

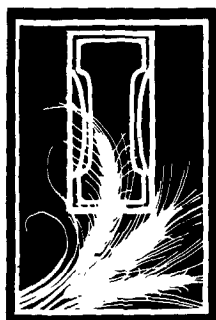
Yet our evangelistic purpose today is the same as that of the nineteenth century—a completed task of heralding the triumphant return of Jesus!

In 1884 few could conceive of a future when the church would number its followers by the millions. Fewer still had the vision to think in terms of one thousand souls a day being won for Christ and His church.

Inter-America has accepted the One Thousand Days of Reaping challenge and by God's grace plans to baptize 200 persons per day for a total of 200,000, or 20 percent of the world goal.

Carlos Aeschlimann

Inter-America in action



In 1981 the Inter-American Division baptized more than 60,000 persons! Membership is nearing the 700,000 mark, with more than 800,000 Sabbath school members. These figures are even more

astounding in view of the serious political and social problems that exist in many parts of the division. However, it seems that nothing can restrain the enthusiasm of workers and lay members in Inter-America for soul winning:

- By late 1981 the Mexican Union had more than 15,000 baptisms.

- For the past seven years the South Mexican Conference has been the local field with the most baptisms in the world church.

- Through the efforts of a young worker, Robinson Mendez, and his laymen, almost 500 have been baptized this past year in Oaxaca, Mexico, a predominantly Catholic town.

- In the midst of a civil war the El Salvador Mission reached its baptismal goal for 1981 in the month of March! The twelve ministers and hundreds of lay members there, who work in the very face of death and destruction, went on to baptize approximately 3,500 by the end of the year.

- Almost 2,000 were attending Union Evangelist Francisco Ottati's meetings in Managua, Nicaragua, until authorities suspended the crusade. But workers and lay members continued preaching in area churches until 280 were baptized. By late 1981 the Nicaragua Mission had baptized more than 1,500.

Many wonder how the Inter-American Division can continue to attract and win so

many. Some may even feel that evangelism is particularly easy in that field or that converts are not well grounded. Actually, there are areas in Inter-America that are very difficult to work evangelistically, just as there are in every other world division. And all baptismal candidates in Inter-America must be approved for baptism by the local church board, which in most cases is very conservative. What, then, are the reasons for evangelistic success in Inter-America?

1. From the division to the local church member, there is a sense of mission and urgency that gives evangelism top priority. Inter-America's main objective is to finish the work.

2. Every department of the church lays bold, well-defined plans, conducive to evangelism. These departments work closely together with the common goal of evangelization.

3. All the pastors carry out an active evangelistic program in their districts.

4. Thousands of laymen, working with their pastors, give Bible studies and prepare candidates for baptism. The motto for the division is "Workers and Laity in Action."

5. All of the unions, as well as the local fields, districts, and pastors, accept soul-winning goals that help them to have a well-defined objective toward which to work.

Bold plans

The unions in Inter-America are laying great and bold plans for 1982. They no longer want to think small, but to plan and attempt something big with the help of the Lord.

In the Central American Union laymen began in 1981 working with 130,000 Bible courses to prepare for a harvest at the beginning of 1982. All the workers and hundreds of laymen have been leading out in meetings in the churches, rented halls, and even in homes. Their goal? A large union-wide baptism on Sabbath, February 27, designed to garner 12,000 souls for God's kingdom! This is more than the

union goal for all of 1982! (This large baptism will be history by the time you receive this issue of MINISTRY.)

A bold experiment will be tried in Colombia, as well, during this year. A national evangelistic campaign will be held simultaneously in every church and in dozens of new places all over the country. The sermons and the publicity will be coordinated all across Colombia. Plans are to preach in more than 600 places at the same time.

Mexico City, with 15 million inhabitants, has 56 Seventh-day Adventist churches and congregations. The leaders of the Central Mexican Conference have declared that 1982 will be a year of continuous evangelism for Mexico City. This means that during the entire year meetings will be held in the 56 churches, and pastors and laymen will be preaching and winning souls in order to organize at least 18 new churches.

In Jamaica, which has a ratio of one Adventist for every 25 inhabitants, 7,000 souls were won in 1981, and great plans are being laid for this year in order to take the message to every corner of the island. The same thing is occurring in Haiti and the other islands of the Caribbean.

Successful soul-winning methods

A recent survey shows that the following methods win the most souls in Inter-America:

1. *Evangelistic campaigns held by the pastors.* In Inter-America about 96 percent of the pastors conduct at least one evangelistic campaign per year.

2. *Laymen winning souls.* Thousands of laymen preach, give Bible studies, and prepare baptismal candidates. The ministers spend much of their time training the laymen.

3. *Bible studies.* Ministers, as well as laymen, extensively use the method of giving Bible studies in the homes.

4. *Baptismal classes.* All of our churches and congregations have at least one baptismal class. The larger churches have three different classes—one for

Carlos E. Aeschlimann is Ministerial secretary of the Inter-American Division.

adults, one for youth, and one for the juniors. The baptismal class instructors are mostly laymen.

5. *Large evangelistic campaigns.* Each local field tries to hold at least one large evangelistic crusade each year.

6. *Evangelistic units.* These are the Sabbath school classes that work as evangelistic groups.

7. *Missionary mailmen.* The laymen give Bible studies using the Voice of Prophecy correspondence school lessons.

8. *Cottage meetings.* Hundreds of laymen lead out in meetings where the Bible is studied in the homes of interested persons or members.

9. *Voice of Youth.* Our youth are very active in preaching and soul winning.

10. *Branch Sabbath schools.*

The division has also voted that beginning in 1983 a plan called Evangelism Conquest will be put into action. This plan has three dimensions. The first is *entering*. New areas where there are no Adventists will be entered with the message. The second is *multiplication*. During the next three years the goal is for every church member to win at least one soul for Christ. And the third is *division*. The churches will be encouraged to divide and form new churches or groups.

One Thousand Days of Reaping

The division has accepted the challenge of the One Thousand Days of Reaping plan and has decided that by God's grace during this time it will baptize 200 persons per day for a total of 200,000 souls, or 20 percent of the world goal. Every union is studying how best to participate and is planning the number of souls they want to baptize per day. The local fields and districts will also do the same.

In order to implement the One Thousand Days of Reaping plan a large evangelistic campaign is being organized for 1984. This campaign will cover the entire division territory simultaneously and will count on the participation of workers and laymen, who will preach in more than 10,000 places. An enormous evangelistic explosion is being planned for 1985, which will challenge every church to launch an unprecedented campaign to reach every area of the Inter-American Division with the gospel message.

Inter-America is on fire with the fervor of evangelism. The administrators, departmental directors, pastors, teachers, colporteurs, and laymen all feel that their principal mission is to preach, win souls, and finish the work. There is a movement afoot to transform the 16,000 church elders in the division into evangelistic leaders by getting every one involved in an evangelistic, soul-winning project. Another plan is to recruit thousands of laymen who are willing to dedicate Sabbath afternoons to witnessing, giving Bible studies, and visiting their neighbors and friends to give them the gospel message.

All of the union and local field administrators set the example. The departmental directors hold meetings and plan the activities of their departments around evangelism. The most successful ministers are those who are able to train and motivate the greatest number of laymen to do soul winning. Teachers and professors try to win souls for Christ among their students and their families. Colporteurs are not only salesmen but soul winners. But the most important source of power and energy is the laymen who with courage and enthusiasm preach and win souls alongside the ministers.

We want to finish the work in Inter-America. That is why our emphasis here is on *everyone's doing evangelism*.

Top: Following a crusade by Union Evangelist Francisco Ottati, 241 were baptized in Managua, Nicaragua. Center: C. A. Holness and Keith Harding conducted a Better Living Seminar in Jamaica that resulted in 105 additions to the church. Bottom: In Orange Walk, Belize, 24 persons were baptized recently.



If you are the pastor of a church of less than one hundred members and have concluded that your church is doomed to stay small, read this article. It will convince you that . . .

Small churches can grow



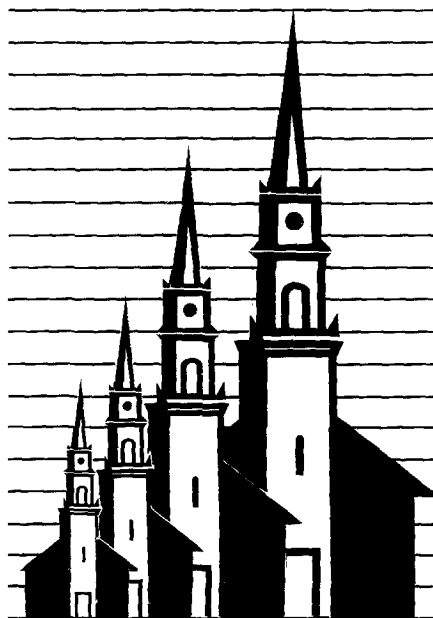
Most Seventh-day Adventist churches in the United States today number less than one hundred members.

Thus many small church pastors face the dilemma of trying to build up their church without the

resources and personnel that are available in a large-church situation. No wonder this leads to frustration and even to thoughts that small churches can't grow. Significant growth can occur on a continuing basis in small churches, but only if three factors are present: a dynamic and enthusiastic pastor; a systematic plan for accomplishing the mission of the church through measurable goals and objectives; and a trained, organized, and working laity.

The first ingredient for achieving growth in a small-church setting is a dynamic and enthusiastic pastor. He is the one who sets the climate for growth in his district.

In the small church most of the members have never seen significant growth. One church I pastored had not had a single baptism in four years! They did not even have their own church building, although Adventists had been in the community since about 1900. Naturally, the people really did not believe anything could happen, because it never had. But growth can take place even in such situations. Under the blessings of God church membership doubled in twenty-two months from 30 to 62 members. Giving more than doubled, and a brand-new building was built. In the small-church setting—even more than in a larger church—there must be a positive climate if the church is to grow. The members of the church need to gain confidence that through the power of the Holy Spirit you can lead them in the way that God wants the church to go. This requires a dynamic and enthusiastic pastor.



One of the first things a pastor needs to know as he begins to work evangelistically in a small-church district is what has happened in that particular church in the past. There are two ways to find out: ask the members, and then do a statistical study. Both are important, but the latter is more objective and accurate. By studying the church's history for the past five years, the trends and growth in many areas become apparent. Here are some suggestions: Determine the number of public evangelistic meetings and their approximate cost and net result. Determine the pattern of church growth over the past five years—the number of baptisms, deaths, apostasies, and transfers in and out. Get the tithe and mission giving for that same period of time. Do a demographic study of the local area; this will provide valuable information in working with the community. Put all this material on a graph and present it to the congregation when you meet for your first planning session.

A good statistical analysis of the community and church will sometimes give you more information and knowledge than can people who have lived there for many years. When I was an evangelist people at one church told me that virtually no one

was left as church members in good standing from the last two crusades held there. This was hard to believe, so I asked the clerk for a list of those who had been baptized in those meetings and checked their current status with the pastor. About two thirds of the seventy people baptized in the two meetings were still active members. Statistics are often more accurate than opinions.

In building up a small church you must be prepared to provide a great deal of the initial thrust yourself. First, you must have a general plan of attack as you go to work to build up the church. God has called you to do a special work in the area where you are working, and if He has called you, then enter into that work with all the energy and zeal you can muster. If you have no direction or mission, then how can you possibly lead out in the work of saving souls for God's kingdom? If you do not know how to win souls or how to train others to win souls, then learn. Go to someone who does know and get both the textbook and on-the-job experience. This is a must. Soul winning cannot be learned by merely reading a book; it must also come through experience.

Set the example. The first time I preached in one church of thirty members, I brought some Voice of Prophecy and Faith for Today interest leads. After church I took a layman with me to see how to enroll people in Bible studies. He had never actually seen this done before. We enrolled a woman, and about ten weeks later she was baptized. She had had no previous contact with the Seventh-day Adventist Church besides working through a Bible study from Faith for Today. I had the layman tell publicly what happened. This did a great deal to motivate other laymen to give Bible studies and to get involved in winning souls.

One reason a small church tends to remain small is that it usually focuses on the negative. An aggressive pastor must always focus on the positive. There are always plenty of negative things to talk about, but you must focus on the positive. A pastor must create revival and enthusiasm in the church. Not all churches have a true spirit of revival, but most want this. It

takes consecrated leadership for this to occur. The leader himself must be so burning with the fire of the Holy Spirit that others catch fire from just being around him. A workman on a new church we were building handed me the cord to his saw, asking me to plug it in. "Actually," he grinned, "your church members tell me you're so charged up that you could just grab the end of this cord and I could probably cut right through this two-by-ten." We need zeal and enthusiasm in our work.

Here are some things that have worked for me in creating a spirit of revival and enthusiasm in small churches:

1. *Preaching.* Preach soul-stirring, revival sermons every week. Feed the church spiritually.

2. *Find work for everyone possible in the church.* This gets their minds off themselves and the internal problems of the church, and onto the souls perishing for the light of the truth.

3. *Write positive newsletters on a monthly basis.* This will do a great deal to set the climate for small-church evangelism.

4. *Have your laymen share their experiences each week.* Those actively witnessing can do much to encourage and strengthen others in the church to do the same. Ellen White has said that if we will set the people to work and let them tell on Sabbath what they have done, then we won't need a sermon every week. I have practiced this in my churches on occasion, and the testimony service has been a soul-stirring, spiritual feast for the people.

One of the best ways to build up a small church is through personal evangelism. Therefore one of the primary objectives of any pastor should be to give Bible studies. You can't get Bible studies started? One of the best ways to do this is to visit every one of your members. Find out whether they have any friends or relatives who are not Seventh-day Adventists. These are the best people to work with in giving Bible studies and the best prospects for baptism. Many Seventh-day Adventists have spouses, relatives, and children who should be enrolled in Bible studies. Make this a priority. You will be able to find out about backsliders who are also good interests.

If a small-church pastor is going to see his church grow he must visit—especially members and Bible-study interests. Invite a local elder to spend the entire day visiting with you. Some have taken time off from their jobs to go with me and see exactly what a pastor does! They enjoy it tremendously, and it shows them that a pastor does more than just sit at a desk all day. Visiting is the key to every aspect of the church. Visit! Visit! Visit! As you visit church members you can learn their goals and objectives for their church. This will give you ideas for the church planning session.

As soon as you get someone ready for

baptism have a baptism. Announce it in advance. Make it an important event. Have the friends and relatives tell how they have had a part in his or her conversion. Always point to the church members as the key figures in bringing this person into the church—never to the evangelist or yourself. Point out how God is using the laymen of the church, and give Him the glory. Talk only of success. Success breeds more success.

Finally, Ingathering should be made short and soul-winning, instead of the hassle it is in many churches. Here's how. First, start Ingathering early. Begin business Ingathering in September, before the United Way drive begins. You will find this the best time for businessmen to give. Do house-to-house Ingathering in late September and October. Ingathering will be over by November 1. Set both a financial goal and a literature-distribution goal during Ingathering. And enclose in each Ingathering paper a free Bible-study-enrollment card that comes back to your local church office. You'll have baptisms resulting directly from these requests.

When you reach your financial and literature goal, celebrate! Plan a large victory banquet. This is a good time to set objectives and make plans for the next year. During the Ingathering campaign make charts to keep people informed of the progress both in funds and in Bible-study-card distributions. This is a motivational factor. Ingathering can be positive and enthusiastic if it is organized properly.

I believe that before a small church can grow it must see revival and enthusiasm. This will come only if the pastor and the church leadership create the atmosphere for it to happen. We must teach our people to expect great things. Ellen White wrote something very similar in *Christ's Object Lessons*: "You need not go to the ends of the earth for wisdom, for God is near. It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you. We need to have far less confidence in what man can do and far more confidence in what God can do for every believing soul. He longs for you to reach after Him by faith. He longs to have you expect great things from Him. He longs to give you understanding in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. He can sharpen the

intellect. He can give tact and skill. Put your talents into the work, ask God for wisdom, and it will be given you."—Page 146.

Besides an enthusiastic pastor, the second factor that stimulates small-church growth is a systematic plan for growth through measurable goals and objectives for the coming year. It is of utmost importance that the majority of the church members be behind the program of the church, and the only way to assure this is to let them set the program! Many churches and pastors have never seriously sat down and thought about the mission of their own local church or considered its goals and objectives. In the small church it is imperative to have this kind of planning session to decide what is realistic and what you really want to do in the community. It is imperative that the leadership (the pastor and elders) arrange a forum for verbalizing the dreams of the members. Then translate these dreams into mission, goals, and objectives.

Have a goal-setting meeting before the beginning of each year. Publicize it well in advance and have it at a time when as many people as possible can be there to express their ideas and opinions. Formulate a mission statement that will define what your church is actually trying to do in the local community.

Set specific goals for the church. Make these simple, measurable, and attainable. For example, "To win more souls this year" is not a measurable goal. A better statement would be, "To increase our membership by 25 members." Print these goals and objectives in a monthly newsletter. A newsletter is a must for the growing church. Especially is it necessary in a small-church district. In the newsletter list the goals and objectives and then keep the membership informed of how things are progressing. As a pastor, you must have a plan. You must enter your church with zeal and enthusiasm and expect great things. God has promised it, and He can and will deliver.

In the small church a third key factor, once you have created a spirit of enthusiasm and have set goals and objectives for the coming year, is to organize, train, and set the laity to work. Only by training the laity and equipping them to do personal evangelism on a one-to-one basis can you see significant results in a small church. Remember, it takes all the departments of

Before a small church can grow, it must see revival and enthusiasm. This will come only if the pastor and the church leadership create the atmosphere for it to happen. We must teach our people to expect great things.

the church cooperating for the church to be victorious. Soul winning must permeate every aspect of the program. When it does, no one can stop the advancement of the gospel.

In the small church the pastor must organize the church so that when a nonmember visits, he will get the feeling that this church is vibrant and alive. This may even involve something as simple as how the offering is collected. A haphazard, unorganized service says something about your church. From the time a person walks into a church until he leaves he is observing how you conduct the service. The church service must appear smooth so that nonmembers will be properly and favorably impressed. Also the church building should be well maintained. What a person sees and hears as he enters the church on Sabbath morning is very important in small-church evangelism.

Now let's look at some specific things that you can do to interest people and bring them into a small Seventh-day Adventist church. First, form a list of people who are interested in the Adventist message. A successful salesman works hard to get a good list of prospective customers, those most likely to be interested in the product he has to sell. Seventh-day Adventists must find and study with the people who are most interested in our message if we are to achieve results. Here is where many pastors fail and why many small churches do not grow. They spend their time, which is limited, on those who are least likely to make a decision for Christ. So locate every potential interest in your area. Make an announcement in church that you want to know of everyone in town who might be interested in our message. Have the members write down names, then take these names and have someone put them on the Rolodex interest-file forms that are available through your conference Ministerial Association.

Send for all the names you can secure from the Adventist media programs and other sources. This is a must. Send all the zip codes in your district to *It Is Written*, *Voice of Prophecy*, and *Faith for Today*, and ask for computer listings of names in your area. These can be transferred immediately to your interest file. The Home Health Education Service in your conference will send you the names of all paid-out customers in your area if you ask. Review and Herald and Pacific Press will send you the names of the persons who are receiving *Signs*, *These Times*, and *Message*. Gather all the interests from former evangelistic meetings and get the names of non-Adventist visitors who have registered in the guest book in your church on Sabbath morning. Secure all the names that have been helped by your local Community Services center, cooking classes, Five-Day Plans, et cetera. Don't forget *The Quiet Hour*, *Amazing Facts*, and *Hour of Prophecy*. Gather every single

name that you can get for your interest file.

Next, organize and cultivate the interest file. You should have so many interests that you will have to organize the file to concentrate on the best ones. I have found a good way to cultivate interests is to mail letters identifying myself as a Bible-school director and including a post card that allows the recipient to request Bible studies. I do not offer a free Bible, because too many people will be interested only in the Bible. I offer them only the opportunity to get a free set of Bible-study guides. Get a bulk-mailing permit so you can make these mailings at the least expense. Each time put an address-correction request on the envelopes, and it will update your mailing list. Once a person has requested Bible studies, simply go to the home, enroll him in the course, and visit each week to review the studies calling for decisions with each lesson.

Having an interest file alone will not add a bit of success to your soul winning. It will not produce decisions for Christ. The names on the cards are potential Adventists, but they need to be visited if they are to become a part of the church. In order to follow up all the names, you will need the help of your laymen. Ask your members publicly and privately to help in this task. Offer to train them. Take your laymen along with you and let them observe as you give Bible studies. Many will find it is easy for them, and they will soon begin to give studies. It is often profitable to use a witnessing class to train members in some means of leading souls to accept Jesus. There are many manuals and training classes that can be used. The *Lay Bible Instructor's Manual* by Don Gray is ideal, as is the *Witnessing Manual* produced by the General Conference.

One of the greatest reasons small churches don't grow is that the members get discouraged when they try to give Bible studies and nothing happens. The reason nothing happens is that they do not know how to give Bible studies and get decisions. Ellen White says, "Many would be willing to work if they were taught how to begin. They need to be instructed and encouraged. Every church should be a training school for Christian workers. Its members should be taught how to give Bible readings, how to conduct and teach Sabbath school classes, how best to help the poor and to care for the sick, how to work for the unconverted. . . . There

should not only be teaching, but actual work under experienced instructors. Let the teachers lead the way in working among the people, and others, uniting with them, will learn from their example. One example is worth more than many precepts."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 149.

Begin with a short class on a weekly basis for those who wish to learn how to give Bible studies; then take them out and show them how to lead a person to accept Jesus Christ and how to present the doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Another important factor in winning souls in a small church is a strong pastor's Bible class. Many pastors fail to achieve results because they try to preach in every church every week without doing anything in the Sabbath school program. A pastor's Bible class is an effective tool that can win souls, and it is one of the most successful ways of establishing a regular church and Sabbath school attendance pattern for baptismal interests. As you visit with people to whom you are giving Bible studies, invite them to this special class. You will find this a good way to get people to church. If you are in a multichurch district train an enthusiastic, vibrant layman to teach the pastor's class in churches where you cannot do so.

Last, a small-church pastor must remember that occasionally he needs a public evangelist to help him bind off the interest he has created and to help him develop more interest. In a small-church setting, the conference evangelist will probably not experience as many baptisms as he will if he holds a meeting in a church of 700 members, but most evangelists are willing to hold a series of meetings in a small church if they know the pastor is working hard and giving everything he has to building up that church. The public evangelist can also help the small-church pastor learn how to gain decisions.

Small churches can grow. They can achieve significant baptismal results. But they will grow only if the pastor exhibits enthusiasm and zeal for bringing souls into the church; only if the church sees its mission and sets goals and objectives to reach it; and only if the laity are trained and organized to do personal and public evangelism. Small churches *can* grow. In fact, if these ingredients are present, then your small church may well grow to be a large church!

Having an interest file alone will not add a bit of success to your soul winning. The names on the cards are potential Adventists, but they need to be visited if they are to become a part of the church.

In man's eyes, a human soul is sometimes worth very little. What is a soul worth in the eyes of God? Do we appreciate and understand the price that Heaven paid?

J. N. Hunt

How much is it worth?



A missionary once told me of watching a little orphan girl in Angola being auctioned off as a slave. Tribal law required surviving children to be sold as slaves when both parents died. What a pathetic sight! The little girl with downcast eyes fearfully waiting while the village headman called for bids. A villager offered a few escudos; others bid various articles. Finally, one man offered a pig. This was the highest bid. A human being was exchanged for a pig! Could the cost of a soul be reduced to less? The thought is hideous, repulsive. But do we, even as Seventh-day Adventist Christians and ministers, really comprehend the value of a soul? Says Ellen White, "I saw that God's people are on the enchanted ground, and that some have lost nearly all sense of the shortness of time and the worth of the soul."—*Early Writings*, p. 120.

What is a soul really worth in the eyes of God? Do we appreciate and understand the price that Heaven paid? "Well you know that it was no perishable stuff, like gold or silver, that bought your freedom. . . . The price was paid in precious blood, as it were of a lamb without mark or blemish—the blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18, 19, N.E.B.).*

Can we compare the worth of a soul to that which human beings consider most valuable? Can we find enough diamonds or gold or currency of the nations to buy a single soul?

If we collected all the gold and diamonds ever mined and all the crowns of all the ruling monarchs that ever reigned on earth, and added all the currencies of the nations of earth, and stacked all of it up in one huge heap, and placed on the other side the little orphan girl from Angola, which would be of greatest value in the

eyes of God? There is no question. The wealth of the world dwindles into insignificance when compared with the worth of a single soul for whom our Lord died.

Why is it, then, that we spend so much of our time on "perishable stuff" and so little working to save souls for eternity? Should there not be—for most of us—some drastic changes in our priorities?

Obviously, human life is more valuable than material things; even non-Christians recognize this. The wealthiest person on earth will gladly exchange all his riches for life. It is said that Queen Elizabeth I cried out on her deathbed, "All my possessions for a moment of time!" A physician or a mother will stay by the sickbed of a child day and night to preserve its life. Rescue teams will perform heroic deeds to save human life from disaster. Seventh-day Adventists abstain from everything that shortens life and will eat almost anything they think will lengthen life! Nothing is too costly, no regimen too rigorous, to preserve life for a few more years in this sinful world.

But the value of the soul far transcends this. We will go to almost any length to save someone from death, but how much more is it worth to save a life that will measure with the life of God? Why is it that we do so much for this little, insignificant span of life, this mortal body, and so very little to save souls for eternity?

Certain men and women, who have stood close to God, have seen more clearly than most of us the value He places on the eternal salvation of one human being. After Israel's great sin at Sinai, Moses ascended the mountain again to plead for the people's lives. "And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written" (Ex. 32:31, 32). With the exception of Christ in Gethsemane, and on Calvary, no other on earth has ever dared put his own eternal life on the line that human souls might be saved. Moses, I believe, understood heaven's evaluation of a soul. His heart beat in unison with the heart of his Saviour for sinful mankind.

Even if it meant eternal separation from the Father, both were willing to pay the price. No wonder it is said of Moses, "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (chap. 33:11). This common love for the lost becomes the closest bond between Christ and His workers on earth. "The more closely we resemble our Saviour in character, the greater will be our love toward those for whom He died."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 167.

Finally, if we are to understand the true value of a single soul, we must look to Jesus on the cross. We must keep trying to plumb the depths of the waters crossed and measure the denseness of the darkness He passed through to find the sheep that was lost. "The value of a soul, who can estimate? Would you know its worth, go to Gethsemane, and there watch with Christ through those hours of anguish, when He sweat as it were great drops of blood. Look upon the Saviour uplifted on the cross. Hear the despairing cry, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'"—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 196.

What was it that wrenched from Christ's soul that anguished cry and the bloody sweat? It was His Father's wrath against sin, the withdrawal of the divine presence, the Son of God suffering the eternal separation from God for every living soul on earth. This is the price that none of the ransomed will ever know. It is true that our finite minds cannot fully estimate the worth of a soul, but if we come to the cross and try to understand what Jesus suffered, dying eternal death in our place, then we may more accurately estimate how much each soul is really worth.

As the cross of Calvary speaks this truth to our hearts, how will we respond? How much longer must the Saviour lavish on us His incalculable love before this earth and all it considers valuable fades into insignificance? How long until the winning of one more soul for heaven shall have top priority in our life?

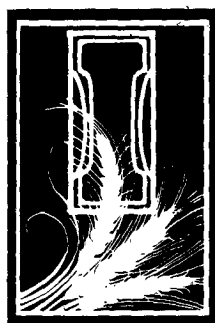
J. N. Hunt is an associate director of the General Conference Publishing Department.

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Many seemingly plausible excuses are given for avoiding public evangelism. But after getting through all the rationalizations, the true reason surfaces—an inherent fear of attempting the unknown and the anxiety of not doing well. The author believes that every pastor can become an effective public evangelist if given the opportunity to conquer his fears. And here's a way!

George Digel

You can do public evangelism!



I have never met an Adventist pastor who did not have an intense interest in winning souls. But I have met many who were reluctant or unwilling to hold public evangelistic meetings.

In fact, I was one who avoided personal involvement in public evangelism for many years. I have been in the pastoral ministry for twenty-two years, but only in the last eight has public evangelism captured my imagination. What was happening during the first fourteen years of my ministry?

As a young pastor I quickly learned to circumvent any possibility of having to personally conduct public evangelistic meetings. I could always have a Voice of Youth crusade and let the youth of the church do the speaking. Or I could call upon the conference evangelist. Even a neighboring pastor could sometimes be enticed to come over to my district to hold meetings. Of course, there were always the professional evangelists from the Voice of Prophecy, Faith for Today, The Quiet Hour, or Amazing Facts, et cetera. And if none of the above were available, then, as an astute pastor, I could salve my con-



J. BYRON LOGAN

science by suggesting to the conference president that I was a personal worker and that those baptisms resulting from Bible studies were the ones that really remained faithful anyway!

This desire to avoid public evangelism describes fairly accurately the attitude of far too many Seventh-day Adventist pas-

tors. "Public evangelism doesn't work anymore," some maintain, in order to justify their lack of personal involvement. Others argue, "I just don't have time to plan and prepare for a public crusade." But after getting through all the rationalizations, the true feelings surface. The real problem is usually an inherent fear to attempt the unknown and the anxiety of not doing well. Such fear is understandable in the inexperienced young pastor. However, this same fear seems to plague the older and more "experienced" men as well.

In many conferences very few pastors (and even fewer ordained men in nonpastoral roles) conduct their own public evangelistic meetings. In a conference very near to my own heart forty-six pastors or other ordained ministers are employed. Of these, only six (or about 13 percent) were involved as the speaker in a public crusade during 1981. Those six included the conference president, the conference evangelist, and the Ministerial director, leaving only three field pastors (or less than 1 percent) who conducted their own crusade, doing their own preaching. There were, however, in this same conference, twenty-three public crusades conducted during 1981, most of which were held by the professional evangelist. Can these statistics be turned around and more pastors be motivated to conduct their own evangelistic crusades? I sincerely believe this is possible. Considering the average pastor's lack of time and his fear of evangelism based on inexperience, what

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are the answers? Is there a way to approach public soul winning and at the same time conserve time in planning? Is there a way to conduct public meetings and generate a minimum of anxiety? I believe there is.

Don Gray, Ministerial director of the Idaho Conference, has produced a taped evangelistic program that can be a real help to pastors. It saves time in planning sermons. It also provides messages so clear and concise that with a minimum of study preparation, the average evangelistically inexperienced pastor could feel very comfortable conducting his own evangelistic crusade. The approach is a multimedia one using three projectors. Being impressed with the program, I purchased the entire twenty-sermon series. Of course, I also had to purchase three projectors, a stereo tape deck, a Clear Light Multi-image Control System, and a large portable fold-up screen.

Now I was in business. On the surface, the program appeared fantastic, and I felt that it might just answer a real need for the pastors in our conference. But would it work? Would pastors be interested in using the taped material? Would it just sit in my office waiting to be used? One way to find out was to use the material myself in a pilot program.

So August 29, 1981, found me prepared for the opening meeting of a test series in Norrisville, Maryland. All was in readiness in that little congregation of just forty-two members. The handbills were mailed. Much praying had been done. The equipment was in position. By 7:15 P.M. more than one hundred people were present, forty-six of whom were visitors! How would these people respond to a preaching series that was on tape for the most part? Would taped sermons, illustrated with slides, work? Would souls make decisions? Could God use this approach? Was it imperative to have a "live" sermon? We hoped this pilot evangelistic crusade would provide criteria by which Don Gray's multimedia materials could be evaluated.

The evening's program up to the sermon was rather typical. The local pastor's musical talents provided preliminary music. Of course, an offering was taken. Special music followed. Then I introduced the first message, "On the Edge of Tomorrow," for about four minutes. The elder of the church pushed the button to begin the multimedia presentation. For the next thirty minutes those present heard and saw a message on the end of time presented so vividly and forcefully that when I made a live appeal at the close, every person in the church indicated that he wanted to be ready to meet Jesus when He comes.

When the message of the Sabbath was presented via the taped multimedia program, I made a live appeal at the conclusion, and the response resulted in twelve decisions. Seven of these have resulted in baptism. The entire series unfolded in a similar way. At least twenty-five devel-

oped an interest in the unique messages they heard and are being followed up by the pastor with Bible studies.

There was no evidence during the meetings that the taped messages were less than adequate. The Don Gray multimedia series is not a panacea, of course. I am not suggesting that live evangelistic preaching is no longer necessary or that pastors should not attempt it. However, if proper planning, advertising, and visitation are conducted in the context of much prayer, this program will produce souls for the kingdom.

A recent conference workers' meeting was the perfect opportunity to introduce all the pastors to the merits of this multimedia series. After the message on the Sabbath was shown, the response was overwhelming. Both experienced and inexperienced pastors were clamoring to reserve the program for a series in their district. Somehow they saw in this taped program an opportunity to personally conduct an evangelistic crusade without the usual anxiety. Nor would an inordinate amount of time be a factor in deciding to become personally involved in this soul-winning venture. It was a new day! Pastors were actually excited about the prospect of holding their own evangelistic series. So great was the demand that a schedule of dates for the program's use had to be set up. Every month during 1982 a crusade will be using this taped approach in our conference. The pastor will introduce the messages and then conclude with a personal appeal or a simple summation, depending upon what the particular message demands.

The most exciting aspect of this whole experiment is that many young pastors in our conference have reserved this taped series. They have made their plans with a minimum of anxiety and with a great deal of enthusiasm. From the initial interest, it appears that this program will be helping pastors, young and old, to feel free to conduct their own public crusades in our conference for years to come.

The evangelism plans in our small conference have increased from the twenty-three crusades held in 1981 to thirty-nine planned for 1982, an increase of 70 percent. In 1981 less than one percent of our pastors were personally directing public evangelism. More than 17

percent will be doing so in 1982. This figure would be higher except that the multimedia equipment will not be used for crusades during camp meeting or the Ingathering season.

On January 13, 1982, a special seminar was conducted to orient those planning to use the Don Gray taped series to the other components of the multimedia equipment. These pastors were given instruction in the mechanical operation of the equipment and ideas for introductions and appeals for each message. They were prepared and anxious to experience the thrill of doing their own evangelistic crusade.

As I review our conference and its public evangelism expenditures, this question arises: Is public evangelism cost effective when we continue to hire professional evangelists and yet do so little to motivate our pastors to do the work of an evangelist? One series in 1981 cost our conference more than \$23,000 and resulted in 12 persons baptized. Another crusade cost more than \$5,000 and produced four new members. Both of these were conducted by professional evangelists. I don't intend in any way to indict or disparage the work of any full-time evangelist. However, could not the pastor, using a single multimedia program, create a more balanced, cost effective evangelistic thrust? Shall we let specialization lead us into turning all public evangelism over to the full-time evangelist? Is such a course effective either financially or in terms of pastoral fulfillment? Should we not provide a milieu in which pastors can feel the thrill of winning souls through public crusades?

When a pastor reads of the success of the professional evangelist, does he become inspired? More likely, his fear of inadequacy and the pressures of time become more firmly cemented in his thinking as reasons for avoiding public evangelism.

I would make a plea to Ministerial directors to help pastors develop their own evangelistic skills. I believe they can become effective public evangelists if given the opportunity to conquer their fears. They can function effectively if they are given methods which will save preparation time. I would appeal to every pastor: Determine that by the grace of God you will claim your right and privilege as a gospel minister to be a public soul winner.

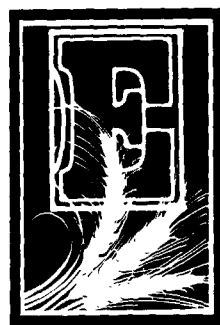
For information on how to order these multimedia materials, see page 31.

Shall we let specialization lead us into turning all public evangelism over to the full-time evangelist? Should we not provide a milieu in which pastors can feel the thrill of winning souls through public crusades?

Church members can do more than attend your evangelistic meetings and take up the offering! By their witnessing they can increase baptisms and help ensure that these new members will be around years later.

David Parks

Preparing for public meetings



Evangelists have been relying increasingly on public media advertising as they attempt to get a reasonable audience for their crusades. Television, radio, newspaper, and billboard advertising will often produce a good crowd for the

opening night, but the group tends to dwindle through succeeding nights, so that only a few are left at the close of the series.

It's true, some of those who are "pulled off the street" through advertising will show a genuine interest, continue attending, and will ultimately be baptized. But recent studies indicate that of those baptized at the close of a crusade, the ones who have had no previous contact with Seventh-day Adventists suffer a higher rate of apostasy than those who have received Bible studies or have had other contact with the church prior to the start of the crusade.

This fact does not mean that the evangelist did a poor job of presenting the message or that these new converts were not firmly grounded in the teachings of the church. Instead, it usually means that the new convert who had no previous contact with the church simply finds it difficult to become integrated into the church family; they are unacquainted with anyone in the congregation.

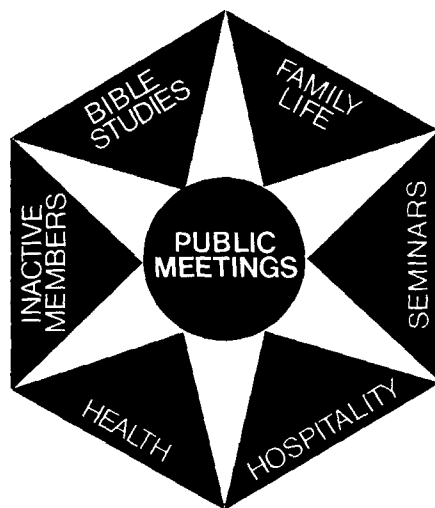
The solution to this perplexing problem is not to discontinue evangelistic advertising. Some excellent contacts are made in this way that probably would not have been made otherwise. The real answer is to increase the lay involvement in soul winning so that more baptismal candidates at the close of a crusade will have a close bond of friendship with at least a few of the members. These church members can act as a support group to provide the much-needed spiritual nurture to help new

converts become stable, growing Christians.

Counsels from the Bible and the writings of Ellen White make it abundantly clear that God's plan for the church is that every member be involved in the work of sharing the good news with the world. "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining the full measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13, N.I.V.).*

It may come as a surprise, and certainly it is a challenge, to realize that the major responsibility of gospel workers is to "prepare God's people for works of service." Yet this is essential if church members are to maintain the vitality of their own spiritual experience. The spirit of Christ is a missionary spirit. The very first impulse of the renewed heart is to bring others to the Saviour.

I have found the following steps helpful in implementing a program of preparation for public evangelism in the church:



1. In consultation with the church board and the Lay Activities Council, carefully plan the major outline of a year-long program of lay training and outreach that will culminate with a series of evangelistic meetings.

2. A special time of revival for the congregation should precede the soul-winning thrust. This may be a concentrated week of spiritual renewal, a special series of Sabbath sermons, or any other format that will enable the congregation to experience real spiritual growth and awareness.

3. Give the outreach program a high profile by presenting a Sabbath morning sermon on the theme of lay involvement and witnessing. Conclude with an outline of the plan to be followed by the church.

4. On the following Sabbath organize the lay training classes. Some churches are now using a twenty-five minute segment during Sabbath school for this purpose—fifteen minutes previously used for Sabbath school preliminaries are combined with the ten-minute lay activities period. Each church will need to determine its own best time. In many churches a class on the basic concepts and techniques of soul winning should be given initially for a few weeks. All classes should begin immediately after being organized. (These classes must become an in-service training program and not just an intellectual experience.)

5. Start "Operation Andrew" with each of these classes six months before the crusade. In this program, the individual church member covenants to pray for one to ten people of his acquaintance. He continues to cultivate their friendship, seeks to bring them to the services of the church, encourages them to commit their lives to Christ, and follows them up until they are linked with the church and become stable, growing Christians.

6. At this same time, organize the committees that will function during the crusade so they can begin their planning. These committees should include music, ushers, nursery, youth, attendance, publicity, visitation, follow-up, and finance. The chairman of each should be a member

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of the steering committee that gives overall direction to the crusade.

7. Two weeks before the crusade, lead the congregation in a service of recommitment to the Lord and to soul winning. Give special emphasis to the importance of inviting and personally bringing to the crusade the interests who have been developed through the year.

The class suggestions given below include schedules indicating the length of time before public meetings that each step

should be taken. These are suggestions only and are not exhaustive by any means. They will be most useful if they serve to generate additional ideas among your congregation of new and creative ways to make various gifts and talents of your members productive in soul winning. These ideas will capitalize on the interests and abilities of many of your members, but they can be adapted to your own congregation.

When the pastor and his church family

begin working together in this way, great things will be accomplished for God. "If Christians were to act in concert, moving forward as one, under the direction of one Power, for the accomplishment of one purpose, they would move the world."—E. G. White, *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 221.

*From *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. Copyright © 1978 by the New York International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

Bible instructors' class

- 12 months Begin Bible instructors' training class and compile a complete interest file.
- 10 months Begin visitation of interest-file names seeking Bible studies.
- 8 months Begin distribution of Bible-study offer cards in the community.
- 6 months Lay Bible instructors invite other members to go with them as they give Bible studies.
- 4 months Begin encouraging interests from the Bible studies to attend the Pastor's Bible Class, worship services, or other church functions. Continue all activities until the crusade begins.

Youth and family life class

- 12 months Begin youth and family life training class.
- 10 months Conduct Vacation Bible School or begin a children's Story Hour.
- 8 months Begin branch Sabbath school and invite the children to attend Pathfinders.
- 6 months Visit homes of all children who have been contacted and invite the parents to a family life seminar at the church (use a guest speaker or show James Dobson's *Focus on the Family* film series). Make a Bible-study offer.
- 4 months Invite children to summer camp, church camp-out, or canoe trip, et cetera. Invite parents to an effective-parenting class.
- 2 months Invite couples to Marriage Encounter or Marriage Enrichment.

Reclaiming inactive members class

- 12 months Begin the reclaiming inactive and former members training class and form a committee to assemble the names of all those in the area that belong to this category.
- 10 months Conduct research on each person on the list to gather vital data. Initial visits using Former Member Survey may begin here.
- 8 months Assign all names to visitation teams for regular visits. Begin giving invitations to special church functions such as socials, singspirations, and guest speakers.
- 6 months Work with the soul-winning hospitality class to give each family an invitation to a fellowship meal in a member's home.
- 4 months As these reclaimed members begin to attend church again, work closely with the church board to plan how to involve these people in helping with church activities.

Soul-winning hospitality class

- 12 months Begin soul-winning hospitality training class.
- 10 months Distribute 50-100 copies of *Your Adventist Neighbors* to a territory close to the church. Include a letter of invitation to Sabbath school, the worship service, and a fellowship dinner. Those who respond by attending should receive a follow-up visit and a Bible-study offer. Continue this program monthly throughout the year.
- 8 months Begin an Adventist Welcome Wagon so that all new people moving into the community receive a visit, a loaf of bread or a hot dish, helpful information, and an invitation to the church or a Bible-study offer.
- 6 months Begin visiting homes where a birth, death, marriage, or divorce has occurred. (Obtain information from local newspapers.) Take a loaf of bread, a helpful booklet with a Bible-study offer card inside, and give an invitation to attend church if appropriate.
- 4 months Begin neighborhood cooking classes, health classes, craft classes, and Bible fellowship groups in members' homes.

Health evangelism class

- 12 months Begin health evangelism training class.
- 10 months Begin health-screening programs such as blood-pressure or lung-function testing, heartbeat, computer health profile, or others.
- 8 months Hold Stop-Smoking clinic.
- 6 months Hold weight-control class.
- 4 months Hold nutrition class.
- 2 months Hold stress-management seminar.

Toward the close of each program in this series, distribute a Community Service Interest Survey to determine further needs and interests of those attending. Every person contacted should receive a Bible-study offer.

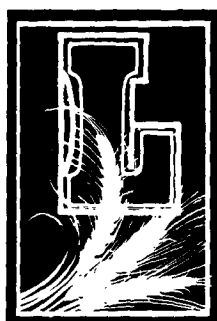
Lay preachers' and teachers' class

- 12 months Begin lay preachers' and teachers' training class.
- 11 months Begin weekly It Is Written seminar at the church or other suitable location with lay participation and involvement.
- 8 months Begin showing evangelistic Multi-Media Series I one or more nights a week.
- 4 months Begin a Daniel Seminar one night a week.
- 1 week Hold, at the church, Saturday seminar on the end of the world.

As society becomes increasingly impersonal, people seem to crave an understanding and acceptance based on close association with a few people. In the church, such groups can both nurture and evangelize.

Clarence Gruesbeck

Small-group evangelism



Listen carefully to what three formerly unchurched people have to say about the effect on their lives, through the Holy Spirit, of small Bible study groups.

"When my wife suggested that I attend her Bible study group, I was not interested. But I went because I had seen an incredible change in her. I'm glad I did, for I found something that was missing in my life. I have accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord, and am preparing for baptism."

Another says, "What appealed to me at the Bible study group was the realization that here were people who were experiencing a real relationship with Jesus Christ. God was working in their lives; that is why they accepted me when I was so unlovable."

And another, "I was impressed with the way members of the group helped one another. It was obvious that these people were filled with genuine love. You don't see much of that anymore, and I wanted that love in my life. I have discovered that it is very satisfying and rewarding."

On January 3, 1900, Ellen White wrote to a Brother and Sister Sisley: "Let small companies assemble together in the evening or early morning to study the Bible for themselves. Let them have a season of prayer that they may be strengthened and enlightened and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. . . . Let little companies meet together to study the Scriptures. You will lose nothing by this, but will gain much. Angels of God will be in your gathering, and as you feed upon the Bread of Life, you will receive spiritual sinew and muscle. You will be feeding, as it were, upon the leaves of the tree of life."—*This Day With God*, p. 11. Likewise, the activities of the



early church in the New Testament seemed to center on intimate fellowship in studying, sharing, praying, and eating together (see Acts 2:42, 46).

The Western world is experiencing a fragmented society that increasingly disproves the view that "No man is an island." Fewer single people are planning on marriage. Sociologists predict that half the children born today will live in a single-parent home at some time during their life. According to recent surveys, many parents are becoming more concerned about themselves than about their children. The emphasis in society is becoming directed more toward the individual person, whether married or unmarried. Crime, politics, labor difficulties, and economics all seem to be separating people and isolating them.

The political and sociological milieu of eighteenth-century England, which was influenced by the intellectual deists, in many ways parallels conditions in this century. In fact, churchmen and historians agree that England would likely have experienced a revolution like the one in France in 1789 except that there appeared in England two spiritual leaders who organized the working classes into small groups and gave them a vision of a better world to come. John Wesley and Charles Whitefield created thousands of "class

meetings" all over Great Britain with the purpose of bringing spiritual renewal to the static Anglican Church. The class meeting produced a spiritual awakening that cut across cultural and political barriers and developed substitute families in an otherwise atomistic society. W. H. Fitchett wrote: "In Wesley's societies . . . a new and far-stretching brotherhood came into existence. It spread like a living net over England. It linked men and women, parted from each other by the widest differences of education and social position, of wealth and poverty, into a common household. . . . The classes were a brotherhood . . . woven of spiritual ties, and so made indestructible.—*Wesley and His Century* (New York: Abingdon, 1917), p. 219.

According to Albert Wollen, every major revival has been influenced by a ready access to the Bible and the gathering of believers in small, intimate groups (*Miracles Happen in Group Bible Study*, Zondervan, p. 32).

As in England, so in our society the small group becomes a substitute family. It brings identity and intimate fellowship to the lonely. The stranger is accepted regardless of his cultural, ethical, or religious background. Regardless of his sin or his skin, he is loved, and that makes life very important!

Initiate church revival

If Wesley's class meetings affected the life of Great Britain so profoundly, what could it do for the twentieth-century church? An increasing number of pastors and church leaders are finding that small groups are one of the key elements in spiritual renewal.

It is significant that Jesus, after much prayer, formed a small group, namely, twelve disciples with whom He spent the greater part of His public ministry. As a dynamic speaker, conveying compassion for the unfortunate and exuding charisma, He could have revelled in the attention of large audiences. However, His concern was for the future of His church, and the focus of His ministry was upon the small group. He knew that when He returned to

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His Father, He should leave behind a strong, well-trained leadership. Over the months the disciples changed into dynamic leaders filled with the Holy Spirit.

Small-group dynamics bring renewal. Lawrence O. Richards, in his book *A New Face for the Church* (Zondervan), speaks of the influence of small groups on renewal in the church: "To learn to trust, and to become trustworthy—to learn to love, and to become loving—we must become deeply involved in the lives of others to whom we commit ourselves in Christ. . . . And thus a church is forced to move to a small group structure."—Pages 152, 153.

A natural for evangelism

Evangelicals in the Philippines have set an objective of planting fifty thousand new churches by the year 2000. Their research has led them to discover that most churches develop naturally from home Bible studies conducted largely by laymen. Furthermore, they have discovered that rapid growth today can be traced to active laymen who are conducting evangelistic Bible studies. (see James H. Montgomery and Donald A. McGavran, *The Discipling of a Nation*, p. 61.)

One of the fastest growing churches in the Philippines is the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the largest Protestant church on the islands. Montgomery and McGavran list several reasons for its rapid growth. They report that few denominations have been as "successful as Adventists in mobilizing and training their laity for personal work, house-to-house visitation and Bible-marking classes" (*ibid.*, p. 112).

The counsel Ellen White gave to the church in 1902 is evidently still apropos: "The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort is a plan that has been presented before me by One who cannot err. If there is a large number in the church, let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members but for unbelievers also."—*Evangelism*, p. 115. "Why do not believers feel a deeper, more earnest concern for those who are out of Christ? Why do not two or three meet together and plead with God for the salvation of some special one, and then for still another? In our churches let companies be formed for service."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 21.

Dr. Paul Yonggi Cho believes that the small group is the best method of evangelism. "Each cell group becomes a nucleus of revival in its neighborhood, because the cell group is where real life is to be found in that neighborhood."—*Successful Home Cell Groups* (Logos, 1981), pp. 58, 59. He trains his leaders to be sensitive to the needs of others so that they can minister to those needs and then invite those individuals to the cell group where they may encounter Jesus Christ. Some of his members living in apartment complexes

cannot go door to door among their neighbors, but they minister to people and their needs while riding the elevators. Thus they become friends and are soon involved in a small Bible study group.

Necessary for nurture

Montgomery and McGavran believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Philippines could grow even faster if it would continue its Bible study groups beyond the evangelistic meetings. (See *The Discipling of a Nation*, p. 113.) Not only would the group teach and train the new people to become responsible church members, but the small groups would continue to be evangelistic as the new members brought their friends and relatives to the small groups.

Sam Shoemaker, the pastor who developed small groups in his New York City church and on many college and university campuses in America, believes that a newborn child of God needs as much care as a physically newborn child. He needs warmth, food, love, and attention. He needs the association of other Christians on a regular basis so that he can talk over his problems and find support with those who will pray for him.

Russell Burrill, pastor of the Spokane Valley Seventh-day Adventist church, where accessions have been one of the highest for the Upper Columbia Conference, did thorough research to discover the spiritual health of recent converts. He was surprised to discover that not one person who had been involved in a small group had left the church.

How to begin a group

In every American church where successful small groups are functioning the key figure is the pastor. The people in the small groups are to develop their own objectives, but they must be in harmony with the objectives of the body of Christ. It is the pastor who can convey the objectives of the church and his philosophy of ministry to his leaders. Furthermore, most people need a workable model for conducting a small group.

In the selection of his leaders, the pastor will prayerfully choose people whom he knows have qualifications of leadership, spiritual maturity, and an experience with Jesus Christ. They should live their religion, and should be held in high regard by the congregation. Leaders of small groups

need to be sensitive to the needs of others and perceptive to a member's needs. They will be attentive listeners. They will be humble and teachable.

The leader is not a resource person. He is not the teacher, nor is he the authority figure in the group. He is a facilitator, on an equal basis with the other members, an enabler for dialogue among all members of the group.

The first meeting is one of the critical moments in the life of the small group. It will set the tone for the meetings that follow. In the first meeting a covenant should be developed by a consensus of the group. The covenant should contain the time and place of meeting and the attendance vows. These are important! Since a small group may be as few as four people and should not be more than fifteen, if one or two couples begin to attend less frequently, the group will begin to disintegrate. It will not remain viable with spasmodic attendance. The covenant may contain a consensus of the group on the length of the meeting, the study materials to be used, and how the group will respond to needs. (If there are non-Christians in the group one may choose to ignore a covenant).

There are two methods of Bible study especially helpful for small groups. The groups may choose to take a book of the Bible and study it verse by verse. The leader may use two basic questions: 1. What does the author say in this text? 2. What does God say to me through this text? Through these questions the group learns the truth about God and discovers their relationship to Him and to one another.

The group may choose a second method of study based on a question or problem that has been troubling a member. The group studies this problem from the viewpoint of the Bible, using any resource materials they wish during the week. When they return for the next meeting each will report what he has discovered. This discussion may lead to another question or problem for the following week.

There is an advantage in using only the Bible while the group is in session. Reading from commentaries and other resource materials can take time that should be spent in dialogue. Dialogue is the key to successful small groups. Each person must be allowed time to contribute.

In our society the small group becomes a substitute family. It brings identity and intimate fellowship to the lonely. Regardless of his sin or his skin, he is loved, and that makes life very important.

Suggested covenant for small groups

1. We will meet together at the time decided by a consensus of the group. Nothing will keep us apart at that appointed time with the exception of:
 - a. Illness
 - b. Out-of-town business
 - c. Vacations
2. We will meet for the next eight weeks and then evaluate our program to see if it is beneficial to us.
3. Our sharing time will be kept confidential and will not be discussed outside of the group unless the one who shared is present or gives his consent.
4. We will spend a period of time in:
 - a. Study
 - b. Prayer
 - c. Sharing
5. We affirm each other as children of God who need friendship and we plan to:
 - a. Be willing to listen to each other with openness and care.
 - b. Be supportive of the needs of one another.
 - c. Actively help where it is needed.
6. We will not consider this time together as social, but as an intentional spiritual growth involvement.
7. We may wish to get together periodically for wholesome social functions.
8. When anyone is absent, we covenant to check on one another, not to be judgmental or critical, but only to support and affirm.
9. Our small groups will meet as long as we can positively contribute to the unity of the body of Christ, the church.
10. As Christians, we are aware of the need to reach out into the community and will do so as long as we can make a positive contribution.

Most small Bible study groups experience three functions—Bible study, prayer, and time for sharing. During the sharing time the members of the group relate what God has done for them and share their concerns. Affirmation can be extended to members during this time. Someone has said that people change only when they hear something good about themselves. If there is to be spiritual change in the members of the group there needs to be honest affirmation.

The sharing builds the need for prayer. Encourage members to mention in prayer the names of other members and their specific requests. Build interest in the small group by varying the prayer life. At times pray two by two. At other times give one request to each member. Show them how to pray in a conversational style so that each person adds to the one before him until all have prayed one prayer. Such prayers are more meaningful and tend to reduce repetition.

The leader needs to learn to be creative and to motivate. One of the best ways to keep the group spiritually growing is to know the available books on small groups. A short bibliography is given at the end of this article that will be helpful to the busy pastor who wants to make small groups live.

Failures in small groups

It is possible for a small group to die. If this appears to be happening, let it die, and then begin again. There are always reasons why failures occur in small groups.

Pastors, by their regular attendance, can contribute to the failure of a small group. A pastor may find one particular group especially appealing to him and concentrate his attention on it. Or the group may be grappling with a particular problem in Biblical interpretation; finally, someone says, "Well, Pastor, what do you think?" If he responds with what he feels is the answer to the problem, he will usually stop the dialogue on that question. A visit to a small group now and then may be healthy, but a pastor will be more effective by meeting with the group leaders regularly. Pastors who have formed a trust relationship with the leadership-coordinating group will find they share with him how the small groups are functioning.

Certain types of individuals may cause a group to fail. The dominantly verbal person is Enemy No. 1 of small groups; the

person who tends to promote his hobby-horse; the person who insists that his interpretation is correct; and the person who forces his particular religious viewpoints on the group are all likely causes for group failure. The leader is responsible to make sure that there is a balance of fellowship, study, and prayer according to the consensus of the group as described in the covenant.

Advantages of small groups

People who meet weekly for Bible study and prayer find many advantages in becoming involved in a small group. Small groups give members the freedom to discuss the Bible openly and apply it to their own lives. They have the opportunity to discover their spiritual gifts and exercise them in ministry. In the group they can be authentically human and still be loved and accepted; they can deal with the deep things of life and minister to each other. Small groups help members to evaluate attitudes in the light of the authority of Scripture. Small groups provide support for dedicated Christian living, bring spiritual healing to members, build lasting ties of friendship, and develop confidence in humanity.

Small groups are not a panacea for quantitative or qualitative growth in the church, however. They are only one of the church's avenues of ministry and outreach. But small groups can become an extension of the pastor as they provide ministry to more members of the church and relieve the pastor to perform ministry to the entire congregation.

The great need of the church is for a deepening spiritual renewal that will give each member the vision to understand his gift of ministry and how to exercise it in ministering to others. To give to one's fellows as needs arise and as the Holy Spirit directs involves sacrifice. Small groups can be an effective means of church revival by which it becomes the living organism that Christ envisioned.

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Small groups are only one of the church's avenues of outreach. But they can become an extension of the pastor as they provide ministry to more members and relieve him to perform ministry to the entire congregation.

A letter to God

Is the church prepared for the sweeping changes that would take place if evangelism were really given the priority called for in the concept of One Thousand Days of Reaping? The editor talks to God about it.

My dear heavenly Father:

As You know, the purpose of an "open" letter is to share thoughts not only with the One to whom the letter is addressed, but also with those who ought to read it. Of course, in Your case a letter isn't necessary at all. You know without my writing how I feel about the plan of One Thousand Days of Reaping. You know, too, that I believe in and support the visible, organized body that we on earth call the Seventh-day Adventist Church. You've told us that it is the supreme earthly object of Your affection, and I'm confident that is true in spite of our failures to follow Your counsel explicitly. So even if I seem to be negative at times in this letter, You'll understand that I don't mean in any way to tear down the body that You love and that Your Son gave Himself to consecrate and cleanse so that it could be without stain or wrinkle or blemish. I'm sure some in the church, though, will be unhappy with certain things I write to You.

You're aware, of course, of last fall's Annual Council action. It's another attempt to give priority to evangelism, to put actual soul winning at the top of our agendas not only in every segment of our ministries but in our actual expenditures of money, time, and energies.

As You know, a number of our world divisions are making excellent membership gains, comparatively speaking. Some divisions seem to be in a holding pattern, it's true. But when I think about the energetic genesis of this church, back during the great Advent movement and the way it has entered and established work in more countries and cultures than any other Protestant church, I can't but dream of what could happen if we really took seriously the concepts contained in the "One Thousand Days of Reaping" document!

But I can't help wondering also if this will be just another document that will eventually find a resting place in the archivist's tombs. Maybe You want it to go there! But if I correctly understand Your plan for this church, isn't soul winning (and soul nurturing, of course) the main objective (maybe the *only* objective) You have given us? To rescue souls from Satan's pit, to turn them from everlasting death to

eternal life—isn't this why Your Son came as an infant to live with us? Isn't this why He spent some thirty years living an unselfish, perfect life and devoted the last three and a half years to training a few humble, unlearned men to preach the good news of the salvation He provided? Isn't this why He sealed His work with His own blood? After His resurrection, didn't Your Son return to heaven, where He works unceasingly in the heavenly sanctuary, His command center, for the purpose of salvaging lost humanity? Isn't it true, Father, that the salvation of a soul is the only event that causes all heaven to rejoice, and at the same time it stirs up a fierce intensity of hatred in Satan's heart?

Your Son, when He was here with us, told us clearly about Satan's attitude toward us. He said that the devil is not only a liar and the father of lies but a murderer from the beginning. And then You had Peter describe him as a lion bent on devouring people. Isn't this what the great controversy is all about?

I like the way Your Son summed up this controversy: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10, N.I.V.).* The way He uses the word *only* to describe the thief's work makes it clear to my mind that we can have no compromise with the devil. And if I know anything at all about Your Son, He is just as determined to save people as the devil is to destroy them. It is a fight to the finish with no truce, no respite, no détente, and no bargaining.

I believe You know the end from the beginning (although some of us are toying with the idea that You don't really know everything and are growing in Your knowledge even as we are supposed to grow). But

I don't have Your total knowledge, so I have some questions regarding the church's response to "One Thousand Days of Reaping." Here we are in the midst of a mortal combat. I confess that it's difficult to put my finger on any denominational activity that could be classified as out-and-out evil. However, if the great controversy theme is what I think it is and if the gospel commission means what it says, I can't help feeling that we are involved in some activities that aren't of primary importance. In fact, they are detrimental to the evangelistic thrust of the church.

For example, think of the way we are spending money, time, and energy to erect plush structures. (I'm sorry! I forgot for a moment that You are acquainted with all these things far better than I am and could give me examples I haven't even dreamed of!) But remember how one of the points in the 1976 Annual Council action, "Evangelism and Finishing God's Work," was the setting of limitations of building projects? One statement specifically stated, "Let us demonstrate to our people and to the world that we do not believe in building extravagantly, as though we intended to make this world our home. We must remember that the only things which will survive the destruction of the last days are the souls that are prepared for the coming of the Lord. . . . The one purpose of this economy would be to release more funds for the church to use in giving the last warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people."

Since this action was taken it seems to me that there have been dedications of church offices, institutions, and places of worship that could be categorized as extravagant and out of harmony with our professed priority on soul saving. And this

If the gospel commission means what it says, I can't but feel that we are involved in some activities that aren't of primary importance. In fact, they are detrimental to the evangelistic thrust of the church.

expense is being incurred at a time when the world economy is anything but stable and seems to be careening toward a recession.

You're fully aware, too, how many of our sacrificing members have become disillusioned over excessive expenditures on brick, mortar, stone, and wood. Their hearts long to see the work finished and Your Son return. There is even discouragement among some congregations facing unnecessarily large monthly payments on building debts. We who preach stewardship principles to Your people in an attempt to train them in systematic benevolence dare not forget our own responsibilities as leaders to practice true stewardship principles in the use of these sacred funds so sacrificially given. Father, You have given us the wonderful concept of an owner-manager relationship to illustrate Your position and ours. Sometimes I think we who are leaders of Your church—Your ministers—have come to believe that we are both owners and managers and that the church members are merely to acquiesce in our management. Somehow remind us as leaders not to yield to the temptation to usurp Your place as Owner and abort Your stated mission for this church. The precious sheep You have entrusted to us as shepherds should be able to have confidence that the funds they give to this cause are being handled with great care and are being conserved for the purpose of extending the borders of Your kingdom through all forms of effective evangelism. If we could know, as You know, the exact day of Your Son's return, I'm sure there would be a revolution in our whole financial program. We would sacrifice and conserve funds as never before for the one purpose of reaching and saving lost humanity.

There is something else regarding this reaping plan, Father. It is much more than a numerical emphasis; it's an attempt to focus our attention on the value of a soul. If we could only see through Your eyes the pricelessness of people! If we could only fathom the real reason Your Son became man. Why He came to live with us, walking amidst those whose goal was to destroy Him, and who finally did! Why He died on a cross! Why this incomparable Jesus condescended to visit our lost world! If we could only realize His real motivation! Surely He didn't do this for buildings or for organizational positions or for political reasons or for power and fame. His humiliating experience had only one purpose as far as we earthbound sinners are concerned: to rescue us from Satan's clutches. I know He went through this to vindicate You before the universe, but doesn't that very vindication consist in showing the universe that Your character of love couldn't rest easy until as many of Your estranged children as possible were reconciled, even if it meant the death of Jesus Himself?

This priority for soul winning has another reason, Father. It hopes to combine theology with evangelism. We spend enough time debating and discussing doctrinal points. It's a mystery to You, I'm sure, how some ministers and teachers can spend so much pulpit and classroom time playing ego-building games with parishioners and students who desperately need to have a saving knowledge of Christ both for themselves and to share with others. It's an amazement to us, so it certainly must be to You, that there are "Gibeonite Adventists" who can use their talents and time producing documents that subtly undermine the beliefs and mission of this church just as the mixed multitude weakened Israel on her march to Canaan. Oh, how much a radical change is needed in our thinking! A radical reordering of our priorities! If we truly mean business in making soul winning our first work, then drastic changes are necessary on every level of church organization.

Your intent for us (if I read aright Your revelations regarding our life style, goals, and objectives) is that church leaders free themselves at any cost from the numerous demands made upon their time and energy that do not really contribute to the salvation of souls. In this respect Your Son set us an example when asked to settle an inheritance dispute. He replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbitrator between you?" (Luke 12:14, N.I.V.).

To take seriously Your intent for us would mean a change in our educational and health-care systems. It would mean serious alterations in our training of ministers. On this point, Father, is there some way—a special revelation, a vision, an angel messenger, or whatever—that You could appeal to the leadership of this church to train ministers as Jesus trained them? For three and half years the greatest Teacher the world has ever known trained His disciples for service by personal contact, association, and example. These original seminarians walked and talked with Him. They heard His words of cheer and encouragement to the weary and heavy laden. They saw the manifestation of His power on behalf of the sick and dying. In His classroom on the mountain-side, or beside the sea, or walking through the fields, He revealed to them the mysteries of the kingdom of God. They

traveled with Him from town to town and watched Him carefully unfold the truths of the way of salvation to despondent souls who had given up all hope. He could have revealed to them tremendous philosophies, concepts, and ideas. He could have inundated them with a barrage of knowledge, but He imparted to them only that which they could use in helping people to the kingdom. On every one of His journeys they could see how He talked to people, whether in crowded streets, lonely desert, by lakeside, or in the mountains. They shared His frugal fare, and with Him were sometimes hungry and often weary.

What a revolution would take place in the church, Father, if we could train men with this on-the-job type of instruction! True, we have one small soul-winning institute in Chicago trying to combine both practical and theoretical training, but it is having a struggle. I might as well be honest with You, Father (You know it as well as I do, anyway). Some among us are less than enthusiastic about the soul-winning institute. But the point is, Your Son sets us a tremendous example of where our priority should be.

I must end this letter. I am planning to write You again in the future. But I must add just another thought or two. This "Thousand Days of Reaping" plan has in its introduction a very important concept: the spiritual renewal of our lives as leaders. There can be no finishing of Your work, no priority given to evangelism, unless at the same time there is this spiritual renewal. Your Son promised that the Holy Spirit would be poured out in a special way on His followers. That took place initially and got the early church off to a tremendous start. The disciples were so filled with love for Your Son and for those for whom He died that the influence of the Spirit converted thousands as they preached and prayed. What rejoicing there must have been in the courts of heaven as Your followers, filled with the Holy Spirit, exhibited such love for one another and for lost humanity! Your Son's disciples, as executors of His will, brought the world the treasures of eternal life. They took literally the majestic missionary charter to go to the world with the gospel.

You have given to this church the same command in the framework of the three angels' messages. We are to preach that same gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. This means we are not

We are so bogged down with details, plans, promotions, boards, projects, and committee meetings that we hardly have time even to have a burden for the salvation of souls! We are not really doing the work You want us to.

to wait for the people to come to us, but we are to go to the people with Your glorious truth.

Finally, Father, I don't want to give the impression that I think we are able to go out and bring the final message of the gospel to the world apart from You and the Holy Spirit's power. No argument, however logical and irrefutable, will melt a heart or break through the hardness of worldliness and rebellion. Only the Holy Spirit can make our lips eloquent to save. Only a living knowledge of Your Son will make our witness effective. Every word and action is to fasten attention upon the all-powerful name of Your Son, Jesus Christ. He alone possesses that vital power by which sinners may be saved. His name is to be our watchword, our badge of distinction, our bond of union, our authority for our course of action and the force of our success. We are to recognize nothing that does not bear His name.

It would be very dramatic and wonderful if today we could have the same thing happen to us that happened to the disciples when after Pentecost they determined to do everything possible to confess Your Son bravely before the world. Father, help us, if You can, to pray the same way they prayed during Pentecost. Help us to show the same intense earnestness for a fitness to meet men and to have the ability and sensitivity to speak words that will lead them to Christ. As I read about their early experience my heart cried out that Your Son would fit us with a special unction to do the work of soul saving. We are so bogged down with details, plans, promotions, boards, projects, and committee meetings that we hardly have time even to have a burden for the salvation of souls! In addition, many of us are spending so much time on sports, TV, amusements, recreation, or running around the world seeing this and that that we are not really doing

the work that You want us to do.

I hope that our "Thousand Days of Reaping" will do something for this church to help us to focus on the work that You apparently consider more important than anything else—the saving of souls.

I appreciate this opportunity of writing to You. I want to thank You for all the correspondence you have sent me through the Scriptures and the pages of the Spirit of Prophecy. I can only praise Your name for Your goodness and Your power and say I hope that, along with my fellow ministers, I will respond in a positive way to Your appeal to go out, search for the lost, and bring them back to Your fold again.

Your unworthy and submissive servant,
Bob Spangler

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Is our goal to not win souls?

How would you answer the question "What factors will be most influential in giving absolute priority . . . to total evangelism?"

A pastor, responding to a questionnaire regarding the Thousand Days of Reaping challenge, wrote a very interesting reply: "The only real effective tool is trained laymen," he said. "The goal is not to win souls, but to train soul winners."

My first reaction was to exclaim, "Since when is it not our goal as gospel ministers to win souls?" A few days later, on a westbound jet, I came to understand better what that pastor meant—and to agree with him. The Christian man across the aisle was university-trained in city management, I learned as we fell into conversation, but two years ago he left all the frustrations of his career to take up selling Shaklee products. (Shaklee is a home products company much like Amway, Avon, and Fuller Brush, specializing in vitamins, detergents, and home cleaning agents.) For two hours this man held me almost spellbound, demonstrating how the sales outreach of his company worked. The most important thing I learned was that it is *not* his primary responsibility to sell Shaklee products! He trains and recruits people who do! I asked him why he didn't sell Shaklee products himself, and he replied that he most certainly does. He is, in fact, an expert and continually sells from his home, but his real success both financially and in company growth depends wholly upon his influence in recruiting persons who want a business of

their own and in training them to be successful. The company is so arranged that a portion of the success of these individuals becomes his, and thus by diligent recruiting and training he is building an empire that grows larger and larger, until at length he can be wealthy and independent.

Before our conversation ended, I saw two crucial principles: (1) this man was a master of the art of selling the product and (2) he is successful in recruiting and training others, reproducing in them his own success formula.

Our good pastor wrote: "The goal is not to win souls, but to train soul winners." Yet to charge him with recommending that it is not our business as ministers to win souls is to misrepresent him. If anything, pastors and administrators must be super soul winners, and then capably transmit these skills, this consecration and concern, and success to church members who can go forth and multiply the harvest! This pastor understands the inspired blueprint given by Ellen White in *Gospel Workers*: "In

laboring where there are already some in the faith, the minister should at first seek not so much to convert unbelievers, as to train the church members for acceptable cooperation. Let him labor for them individually, endeavoring to arouse them to seek for a deeper experience themselves, and to work for others. When they are prepared to sustain the minister by their prayers and labors, greater success will attend his efforts."—Page 196. "Let ministers teach church members that in order to grow in spirituality, they must carry the burden that the Lord has laid upon them—the burden of leading souls into the truth. Those who are not fulfilling their responsibility should be visited, prayed with, labored for. Do not lead people to depend upon you as ministers; teach them rather that they are to use their talents in giving the truth to those around them. In thus working they will have the cooperation of heavenly angels, and will obtain an experience that will increase their faith, and give them a strong hold on God."—*Ibid.*, p. 200.—W.B.Q.

"Let ministers teach church members that in order to grow in spirituality, they must carry the burden that the Lord has laid upon them—the burden of leading souls into the truth."

No longer afraid

A minister's wife shouldn't be afraid to give a Bible study—especially if she has memorized scores of texts and loves people. But this wife was. A simple device solved her problem and may help you as well.



Do you long to be able to share your faith, but you are afraid that you might be asked a question you can't answer? I was.

I collected all the Bible instructor helps I could find. I studied and memorized Bible verses so much that when I went to bed I couldn't fall asleep—the texts I memorized ran through my mind like a scroll. In spite of all this, when I thought of giving a Bible study, I was petrified. I couldn't remember my own name, never mind the texts I knew by heart.

I wasn't afraid of people. I loved people. I greeted strangers at evangelistic meetings. It was something about the idea of the study itself that I feared—the idea that I wouldn't know where to find an answer in the Bible to questions.

For years I accompanied my husband on Bible studies, but I never gave a study myself, and that bothered me.

Once while traveling with my husband, I remained in Kansas City while he went on to another city for a few days. While there, all alone in a motel, an idea was born that has revolutionized my life. I found a solution for my fear.

During the night the idea came to me to make a notebook containing all the important Bible doctrines and the texts that supported them. I would carry my book along with my Bible in my handbag at all times. When anyone asked me a question pertaining to the Bible, I could easily find it. Then I wouldn't be afraid to go out and share my faith. I got so excited I could hardly wait for morning to come so that I could buy a suitable notebook.

A heavy snowfall during the night didn't hinder me from making my way out of the motel, across the freeway, to the K-Mart. I found a nice little black loose-leaf notebook, got extra refills and a good fine-point pen. It didn't take me long to get back to the motel. Collecting my material, I set to work at once. I used J. L. Shuler's *Helps to Bible Study* as my guide. I wrote all day and far into the night.

How thrilled I was with my new book

Lillian Knowles writes from Adelphi, Maryland.

TOM BACULIFE

when it was finished! It gave me confidence, and as I had hoped, all fear was gone. I could carry my notebook along with my Bible as a reference book. I used that book for many years and have since made another one. This time I typed on my script typewriter, and it still looks home-made—I like it that way.

My book has come in handy on many different occasions. Once on a plane, I sat beside a young man who told me that although his family was not religious, his father had told the family just before going on that flight that he would like them to start reading the Bible. He felt a spiritual need in the family.

After enrolling him in the Voice of Prophecy correspondence course, I took out my little black book and asked him to read the lesson on "How to Become a Christian." (It's one of my favorites.) After he read it, he said, "I have never read anything so beautiful! How could I get a copy of this for my family?" I opened my notebook and took it out, telling him he could have that one. He hesitated, and said that wouldn't be right to take it out of my book. I reassured him that I had another copy and would replace it.

Several people, after seeing my book, mentioned that I should have it printed for others to use. My answer is that it is not possible. Such a book *must* be carefully and prayerfully made by one who sincerely wants to witness. When you spend time, you will see how valuable it becomes to you.

To help you get started, I'll give you the list of topics I now have in my notebook, which are arranged by categories with purchased dividers.

Angels

Three Angels' Messages

Baptism

The Bible

Bible—How to Understand It

Conversion

How to Become a Christian Christ's Second Coming

Second Coming of Christ

Christian Dress

Daniel 2

Daniel's 2300-Day Prophecy

Daniel 8

The Elijah Message

God's Purpose for This World

Healthful Living

Heaven

Heavenly Sanctuary

Jesus, High Priest

Judgment

The Great Day of Judgment

Law and Grace

The Lord's Day

Mark of the Beast

Millennium

Punishment of the Wicked

Remnant Church

Repairing of the Breach in God's Law

The Sabbath

How to Keep the Sabbath

The Change of the Sabbath

First-day Texts

The First Day of the Week in the New Testament

Salvation

What Must I Do to Be Saved?

Seal of God

Seven Last Plagues

Sins

Soul Winning

Spirit of Prophecy

Spirit of Prophecy in the Remnant Church

State of the Dead

Where Are the Dead?

Tithing

Unpardonable Sin

Your list of topics may be different than mine, and as you use your notebook, I'm sure you'll often make changes. Now, let me share with you my section on conversion, to give you an idea of how I organize each list of texts. As you can see, I do not quote the text here, but only give personal comments that I will use after I read or

quote that particular text to the person with whom I'm studying.

Conversion

Matt. 19:16. The supreme question that everyone asks at some time in his life is What must I do to have eternal life?

John 3:3. We must be born again. What does this mean? Being born again is the changing process from sin to salvation.

Acts 3:19. Before God can cleanse us from sin, we must repent and be converted.

Ps. 32:5. We must acknowledge our sin—have a sorrow for sin.

Prov. 28:13. Repentance will lead us to confess our sins, and then forsake them to obtain mercy.

1 John 1:9. If we confess our sins, Christ is faithful to forgive them. He will cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

2 Cor. 5:17. We can tell if we have been born again, because we will be changed. We become new creatures. Old things pass away. We no longer do things that God forbids. All things become new.

1 John 3:24. Another way we can tell if we are truly living a Christian life is that we know that Christ abides in us if we keep His commandments

Heb. 5:9. We obtain salvation through obedience.

Gal. 2:20. We can get power, courage, and strength to live a good Christian life by letting Christ live in us. We can live for Him and do what He wants us to do. By turning from sinful ways and by repenting and confessing all our sins, God can cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Christ will come into our lives and live His life in us when we invite His presence. It is then that we can have eternal salvation.

Preachers make notes and many times write out their entire sermons. They depend on such aids in their preaching. We also need notes and comments that we can use in our work of soul winning. Once you overcome fear, you will be used in a way you never dreamed of, and God will greatly bless you.

Prayers from the parsonage

So much begs to be done that even working day and night, I can't keep up. I'm already tired just thinking about today's demands; how will I manage tomorrow and next week and the next?

Why do I have so much to do?

Is it because I expect too much of myself? Have I fallen into the trap of thinking I'm the only one who can do the job? If so, Lord, make me realistic about my motivations, as well as my time and energy.

Is it because others expect too much of me? Then help me to think of people who need training and experience. May I be gracious in saying No and wise in delegating work.

Do I lack self-discipline? Please keep me from being distracted by mood or whim. Point me toward projects that *must* be done and help me to tackle them first.

Do I lack efficiency? Show me, Lord, better ways to work. I'm sure I could streamline many tasks and put more order in my life.

"If every moment were valued and rightly employed, we should have time for

everything that we need to do for ourselves or for the world. In the expenditure of money, in the use of time, strength, opportunities, let every Christian look to God for guidance."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 208.

Right now I feel as if I'm treading water while wave after wave of responsibilities engulfs me. I barely catch my breath. Oh, Lord, give me a clear vision of Your purpose in my life. Keep me focused on Your plan.

Please don't let me go under.

By Cherry B. Habenicht

One reader believes that "Let's Fight the Right Fight" in the December issue expressed the challenge that faces us as a church—"to convey to the world the message of God's amazing grace that we really do believe."

Preparing God's people

I am very impressed with your December, 1981 editorial, "What's So Unique About Adventism—2." I see in it that God is guiding His people in the preparation to meet the final crisis that is before us. I have always believed, deep in my soul, that God gave Ellen White to guide the church through the trying days just before the end. At present we cannot appreciate the importance of this provision that our Saviour in His infinite love and wisdom has given. Your burden to lead the ministers of this denomination into a study of her Testimonies tells me that God is moving to prepare His people for the end.—C. B. Howe, Avon Park, Florida.

I have appreciated very much the excellent articles recently presented upholding our well-established position on the sanctuary and associated doctrines as well as the Spirit of Prophecy. I believe that next to the Bible, the testimony of Jesus through the Spirit of Prophecy should systematically be brought to the attention of the church.—G. Cabbin, Norwich, England.

Jarred, but thankful

In the December issue C. Raymond Holmes states: "The problem is not that we have not had the truth. But we have not always told the truth about the truth" ("Let's Fight the Right Fight," pp. 10, 11). This jarred me, but I'm thankful for it. I thank God for some of the preachers who have come to us from other denominations, scrutinizing and analyzing our sometimes anemic preaching! I believe Brother Holmes has told it as it is. I was also glad to see in the same issue ("Weeding the Garden of Prayer," pp. 16, 17) that someone besides myself has observed the carelessness and coldness of our prayers, the meaningless clichés and even Unitarian petitions. There is need for prayer preparation as well as good preaching.—Jeremia Florea, Clinton, Arkansas.

"Let's Fight the Right Fight" truly expresses the great challenge presented to us as a people—to convey to the world the message of God's amazing grace that we really do believe. The Christian world is not yet convinced that we believe in God's grace, and from my observations, some of our members are not sure that we do either.

Let's shout it from the housetops and be living witnesses that justification by grace through faith is the "good news" to be proclaimed.—Willis C. Graves, Hinsdale, Illinois.

Motivating laity the key

Dudley, Cummings, and Clark have made a very important discovery in their study of the Adventist pastor ("Morale in Ministry," December, pp. 5-9). Especially is their work significant when compared with the church growth study completed last spring by the Institute of Church Ministry and reported in the July, 1981 MINISTRY.

Lay involvement in ministry and particularly the ministry of small groups is the key element in developing a growing church. Yet only about one in twenty Adventist pastors indicates that he gains satisfaction from training members to witness, involving members in the church's ministries, or working with small groups. Predictably, the greatest area of frustration and disappointment for Adventist pastors, according to the survey, is the motivation of laity for ministry. This is a deep problem with far-reaching implications. Everyone agrees that the mission of the church cannot be accomplished until the laity is fully mobilized for ministry, but that mobilization is the area where Adventist pastors are perhaps least effective.

It is amazing to me that in the same study, equipping the church for ministry ranked far down the pastor's list of suggestions for change. Does this mean that most pastors don't even care about this problem? It is more positive, perhaps, to see the suggestion that more continuing education and inservice training be provided. Maybe pastors realize that they are not skilled in the task of equipping lay ministers. Few topics would seem to demand more space in MINISTRY.—Monte Sahlin, Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Rapture and self-satisfaction

I appreciate the article about the lack of a Biblical basis for a pretribulational rapture ("Is the Secret Rapture the Blessed Hope?" January, 1982). The Scripture passages cited are the same as those I came up with in my own study as I attempted to explain to my congregation why I find no

basis in the Bible for this theory. The article added to my understanding, however, of why some Christians came up with the idea in the first place. One reason I am concerned about this teaching of the rapture occurring before the tribulation is that it tends to make people self-satisfied and unprepared for the hard work of enduring to the end as Revelation repeatedly says we must do. The message of a secret rapture is the easy way out and causes unreasonable panic among those who are not in on the secret.

Thanks again for an excellent article. I did not expect to agree with Adventist emphases. I am pleased to find that you in this case have not imposed theory on the teachings of the Bible. Now that the case for the return of Christ after the tribulation has been established, what does it mean for us in our daily lives? I hope you will take the challenge to apply doctrine to daily life seriously.—James M. Beckwith, Church of the Brethren, Pennsylvania.

I have especially been grateful for the articles on dispensationalism appearing in MINISTRY. I think it would be well for you to print an article or two setting forth the view that shows the church to be the new Israel and the culmination of God's plan.—Jay F. Shaffer, United Methodist Church, Pennsylvania.

I have almost come to the conclusion that we should believe in the reality of the Second Advent and agree to disagree on the details. The doctrine of the Second Coming divides people today as much as does baptism or views of the Lord's Supper.—Joseph Hollopeter, Christian Church.

Theologians communicate faith

I listened to our theologians during several recent Professional Growth Seminars sponsored by MINISTRY, and they brought a new consciousness to my mind of the importance of theology and scholarly study. These scholars and theologians bring a renewed appreciation and respect for our church and an assurance that our message is spiritually and intellectually sound. I commend you for providing the opportunity for our scholars and theologians to bolster our faith and communicate our life-giving message.—John W. Fowler, Mount Vernon, Ohio.

Shop talk

A custom-made TV spot, camera-ready newspaper ads, software for multi-media use, and Encounter II are all available to help you and your members become totally involved in *One Thousand Days of Reaping*.

The end of the beginning.

A lifeless world—dark, empty shrouded in thick clouds. A small planet, lost among a billion others, rotating silently around an obscure sun—itself a speck in an endless sea of stars.

Then came life—at the touch of the Creator's hand. Grass, trees, fish, birds, animals, and finally man. The God whose power knew no limitations surveyed the beauty of His new creation. In six days it was finished, and He saw that it was good.

A day to remember

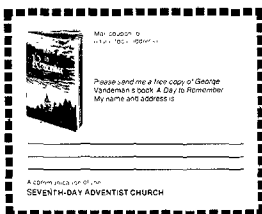
As the sun rose over the shining new earth on the seventh day, God talked with the man and

woman He had created. He asked them to remember this day, and every seventh day thereafter as a memorial of creation.

Today, centuries later, most of the Christian world has forgotten God's reason for giving man the

seventh-day Sabbath. They worship on Sunday, the first day of the week, not the seventh. Why the change? How did it come about? Is man's choice better than God's?

You'll find the answers in an attractive book, *A Day to Remember*. The author is George Vandeman, speaker on the TV show "It Is Written." You can have a copy free simply by mailing the coupon provided.



Evangelistic Advertising Packet

Did this ad capture your attention? Would you like to run it in your local newspaper or shopper's guide?

Camera-ready copy for this and similar ads is available in the Evangelistic Advertising Packet. All you have to do is arrange for advertising space, have your church's address and phone number inserted in the proper place, and wait for the responses! Each ad contains a response coupon. Most allow the reader to request a featured book, one features the vegetarian issue of *Your Life and Health*, and one enables the reader to request more information about the church. The follow-up literature to be used with these ads is available from Adventist Book Centers.

Each packet contains 12 doctrinal ads in two sizes, half-page and two-column. In addition, the packet contains the booklet *More Effective*

Advertising and design and copy suggestions for do-it-yourself handbills and mailers.

The entire packet was originally designed to sell for \$10.50, but you can now obtain it for only \$6.95. To order or for more information, write Department of Communication, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

Now—Encounter II

Encounter II, a personal witnessing tool similar to the original Encounter series on cassette and filmstrip, is now available in ten audio-visual presentations on the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.

Special efforts have been made by the Adventist Media Productions to provide up-to-date graphics with a unique continuity of style. For example, a fresh model of the

image of Daniel 2 was constructed in order to photograph the different sections illustrating the development of the various kingdoms described; computer-generated maps and charts depict significant information in vivid color and an easy-to-understand format; and a professional artist was commissioned to produce illustrations showing the sequential progression of the symbols appearing in these two Bible books.

Use Encounter II in Bible studies and small groups, seminars, et cetera. See it at your local Adventist Book Center.

A \$285 custom TV spot

Jan Doward, formerly of the General Conference Youth Department, is now providing a service to local churches that wish to place an advertising spot on television.

For \$285 he can provide a top-quality, 30-second spot on one-inch videotape with a single-concept message. It can be customized with the name of your local church, conference, or other organization, including your address or telephone number. Your own individualized voice-over message can be added if required.

Doward, who will also make contact with your local TV station and arrange for the spots to be aired, says he wants to match the beer commercials but give the viewer something far better in life. For further details contact Jan Doward Productions, P.O. Box 866, Crestline, California 92325.—Victor Cooper, General Conference Communication Department.

Evangelistic Multi-media Series I

If George Digel convinced you that you too can hold public meetings, using the

multimedia approach (see pages 18, 19), your next step will be to order the software.

Elder Don Gray and his staff spent more than two years writing and assembling the 20 half-hour programs, which cover such themes as Creation, the Sabbath, death, and spiritualism. The programs are especially designed for use by pastors and evangelists as aids to evangelistic series.

Twenty cassettes carry the narration and music on one track and cues for slide changes on a second track. The cue track is designed to be used with Clear Light Production equipment (Micro Star Programmer, Micro Star Memory/Programmer, or Star III Dissolve).

Each program has been designed for a three-carousel set and has been programmed for projection by three projectors onto a single screen. A fourth group of slides is included, made up of split-screen slides and Bible quotes on a background. An instruction sheet is provided to enable conversion from a three-projector program to a one- or two-projection presentation.

More than 5,000 slides are included in the set, which feature the church's most recent artwork, including paintings by Steele, Anderson, and Maniscalco.

The slides, cassettes, and scripts are offered as a single package for \$650, plus \$15 for postage and handling. Order from Adventist Media Productions, 1100 Rancho Conejo Boulevard, Newbury Park, California 91320. AMP personnel will assist you in the selection and purchase of the equipment necessary for the highest quality and most efficient presentation of these programs.

Recommended reading

“Multiplying Disciples” and “Life-Style Evangelism” will both challenge you to try new evangelistic approaches, and “To Dream Again” will help you maintain organizational health in your congregation.

Multiplying Disciples: The New Testament Method for Church Growth

Waylon B. Moore, NavPress, 1981, 129 pages, \$3.95, paper. Reviewed by Rudolph E. Klimes, associate director of the General Conference Health and Temperance Department.

Moore believes his main ministry is that of disciple-making, and that the reader can become a “multiplier” or “builder of multipliers.” In his cycle of leadership, Moore presents a model in which converts are evangelized by witnessing, disciples are established by follow-up, and multipliers equipped by man-to-man apprenticeship.

Where does disciple-making begin? “Within twenty-four hours the convert should be prayed for, personally contacted, and shown how to begin feeding on the Word of God.” For bridging the “baptism gap,” Moore suggests four follow-up methods: letters, intercessory prayers, sending a representative, and personal contact.

How does one then go about teaching and making others to multiply? Moore recommends five steps: tell him why, show him how, get him started, keep him going, and teach him how to pass on what he learns. The author believes anyone can disciple others. While he himself seems to prefer individual discipling, he also makes room for group discipling.

Moore has produced an outstanding introduction to the art of discipling. He has made no attempt to include a witnessing manual, or an in-depth follow-up handbook; he did this in a previous publication. He has tried to inspire the reader in disciple-making and provide for him the necessary basic information. In this he has succeeded.

To Dream Again

Robert D. Dale, Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1981, 154 pages, \$4.95, paper. Reviewed by Douglas Bennett, chairman of the religion department, Southern Missionary College.

It is the purpose of the author to demonstrate how church leaders can develop and maintain organizational health in congregations. Recognizing the three models most often employed for the revitalization of a church (changing policy, changing personnel, or changing

programs), the author advocates a basic plan for infusing a congregation with new life—discovering and clarifying its primary purpose. Attention is given to the healthy development of goals, without which Dale believes the church is doomed to decline.

Dale compares the dynamic stages through which a congregation passes to that of a person’s life cycle: birth, growth, maturity, decline, and death. Although dreams are basic to the survival and health of a local group, these dreams must be turned into realities. Six strategies are given for accomplishing this. The author explains the complexity of this development, clarifying the sources within a congregation from which goals emerge, and explaining why some voted church goals are destined to fail.

Although many books have been written in the area of church leadership, I have found none to equal *To Dream Again* in conciseness, completeness, readability, and practicalness.

Lifestyle Evangelism: Crossing Traditional Boundaries to Reach the Unbelieving World

Joseph C. Aldrich, Multnomah Press, 1981, 246 pages, \$9.95. Reviewed by Steven P. Vitrano, chairman, Department of Church and Ministry, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Lifestyle Evangelism is a book about Christian evangelism—not evangelism as generally perceived, but as a way of living. Aldrich does not think that the church’s traditional approaches are getting the job done. He writes from the conviction that “the greatest barriers to successful evangelism are not theological . . . [but] cultural.” By this he means that the Christian life style tends to put Christians in a subculture from which it is difficult to relate to a non-Christian or secular society in meaningful and effective ways.

He believes that the true Christian life style is like a melody or a symphony that people want to hear. What is needed, therefore, is not further emphasis upon how to say the words of the gospel, but how to play the music. “Personal evangelism,” he says, “falls into one of three basic categories: (1) proclamational, (2) confrontational/intrusional, and (3) incarnational/relational. All three are legitimate and used of God. But is it possible that one type of evangelism more effectively utilizes

and maximizes the individual talents of each believer and at the same time gathers the music into a more harmonious presentation?”

For Aldrich, incarnational/relational evangelism takes place when “a Christian becomes good news as Christ ministers through his serving heart. As his friends hear the music of the gospel (presence) they become predisposed to respond to its words (proclamation) and then hopefully are persuaded to act (persuasion).” This form of evangelism is most useful for the church because it requires no sophisticated level of theological or skills training—every member can get involved. It is always relevant because the Christian knows his neighbor as a friend and can relate the gospel to his real needs.

The second half of the book is devoted to an amplification of how life-style evangelism can be implemented by the individual church member, the church as a body, the leadership of the church, and the church pastor in particular.

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