

# Ministry

A Magazine for Clergy/June 1984

**Family-Life Education Survey**

1. What do you believe is the number-one problem in your community right now?

2. Would you think about attending any of the following programs offered in this area? (Select all that apply.)

- ☐ How to Handle Conflict
- ☐ Communication
- ☒ Unemployment
- ☐ Self-esteem
- ☐ Parenting Skills
- ☐ Dealing With
- ☐ Childbirth Preparation
- ☐ Divorce Recovery
- ☐ Stress Management
- ☐ Overcoming Loneliness
- ☐ Planning for Retirement
- ☐ Family Finances
- ☐ Grief Recovery
- ☐ Time Management and
- ☐ Other

3. What time of the day and day of the week would you prefer to attend these programs?

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Morning				
Afternoon				

your name, but it will help us to answer these questions about you.

Family Life Ministry That Works!

## Hardly necessary

I was stunned by the report of the 1983 Geoscience Field Conference ("Sermons in Stones," December, 1983). That twenty-one of the church's top leaders should spend thousands of church dollars and two weeks of the church's time to junket through the American West is nothing short of a public betrayal of the sacred trust given by church membership. Without question the issue of evolution-creation is significant, but the same seven statements of affirmation could easily have been voted on the basis of a report by the five Geoscience staff members. To send the leading administrators of the church on such a trip is similar to the Bank of America sending its top executives on an archeological tour of ancient sites where coinage was first used—nice but hardly necessary.

If such a tour is necessary to indicate the importance placed on a particular issue, when is such a tour planned for Europe, where a significant portion of the church is losing membership and has been doing so for some years? The real issues arising from this trip have nothing to do with evolution/creation; they have everything to do with the health of the church and its future.

The church has been betrayed by the misuse of the trust that it has placed in its leadership. Constant calls for sacrifice are made while leaders go on a tour that they are incompetent to perform, giving the church seven statements that are so general they could have been written without leaving home.—Leland Yialelis, Athens, Greece.

*Three of the four MINISTRY editors have had the privilege of participating in a Geoscience Field Conference, and we are unanimous in saying that it has been well worth the church's investment in time and money for these conferences. Just as a picture is worth a thousand words, so a day spent examining the fossil strata is much more valuable than the time spent in attempting to read and comprehend many geological textbooks. The purpose of the trip was not to make geologists out of church*

*leaders, but rather to give direct exposure to the complex theological and scientific issues in understanding the first eleven chapters of Genesis. The leaders were not asked to participate so that they could write an affirmation statement; in fact, the affirmation statement was not on the agenda.*

*For about two decades similar field conferences have been offered to the church's leaders as well as teachers. One has been held already in Europe (1981), and another in Europe is in the making for this summer (1984). In addition, North American pastors and Bible teachers can have the opportunity of attending a Geoscience-sponsored field conference beginning September 2, 1984 (see MINISTRY, May, 1984, p. 31).—Eds.*

## A high price

The editorial "Adventist Amalekites," (October, 1983, and February, 1984) impressed me very much. It was timely, if not long overdue. Those of us who are far away from "liberal" America are amazed to see the occasional bouquets and frequent brickbats being hurled at the church by those who have professedly dedicated their talents to God. I guess that is one of the high prices America and the church pay for the freedom bestowed on citizens and members. I am thankful that many of us living here in countries of the "third world" are not exposed to such fallacies. Many of us are innocent enough to stick by basic and fundamental tenets that gave rise to our beloved church. We shudder at what is happening within the church.—Kingsley C. J. Peter, Lahore, Pakistan.

## A word fitly spoken . . .

The March, 1984, issue contained an excellent editorial, "Take Heed Unto Thyself." I was most impressed not only because I agreed with all that you said, but because you said it so skillfully and so kindly. While naturally I take a different approach to many things that I find in your magazine, I appreciate receiving MINISTRY, for I find the quality of the articles to be good and very helpful.—Lutheran pastor, Tennessee.

*This compliment is a fitting farewell for executive editor, Russell Holt, who has recently taken the position of associate editor of Signs of the Times. We give our own final tribute to Russell on page 26 of this issue.—Eds.*

## Bible chronology is perfect

In regard to the article, "How Accurate Is Biblical Chronology?" (March, 1984), how sad it was for me to read a title such as this in a "Christian" magazine! Just by using this title you have raised doubts that make it appear the Bible is inaccurate. Every word of the Bible has been inspired of God, and this includes the time element. The chronology of the Bible is just as much the word of God as is any other part, and is, therefore, without error; and completely trustworthy. "The law of the Lord is perfect" (Ps. 19:7).—Baptist pastor, Illinois.

## A revolving-door ministry

I found the question and answers in "Parson to Parson: Moving and the Two-Career Family" (March, 1984) disturbing from several points of view, but let me share with you one perspective no one raised. Why do ministers *have* to move so frequently? Granted, there are problem situations of personality clash in which a minister who is failing could succeed in another congregation. Some men probably do grow stale in the same place year after year.

But it strikes me that in my denomination the ministry is a revolving door; pastors and associate pastors barely settle into their routines and get to know members by name before they're gone. Not only does this detract from continuity in the life of the church, it keeps members from fully trusting their pastors even while they're there. Who wants to confide in someone he doesn't really know? Maybe we need more ministers whose wives have steady jobs and who put down roots in a community. Perhaps we could see ministry for what it should be—service to people rather than a religiopolitical game.—James R. Gallagher, Lincoln, Nebraska.

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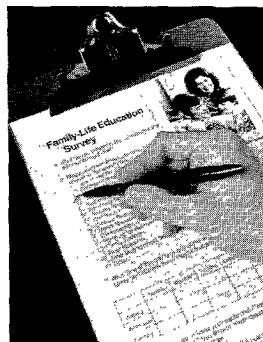
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# Ministry

A Magazine for Clergy/June 1984/Volume 57/Number 6



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ROBERT WRIGHT

**You Can Do Evangelism!/4.** The One Thousand Days of Reaping means evangelistic campaigns—small as well as big. W. B. Quigley, writing of a recent series he held, shows how easily you may hold your own.

**Sanctification and Perfection: Another Look/6.** Richard Rice. Now that the discussion of a few years ago has died down a bit, we can take another look at these themes. Sanctification is an important part of the Christian's life. And perfection is held before us as a goal—but in what way?

**Finding a Theme/9.** W. Floyd Bresee. What makes a good sermon theme? Why is having one important? How do you find and/or choose one?

**Whatever Happened to the Ark?/13.** Hints of what became of the ark are found in the Bible, tradition, and the Spirit of Prophecy writings. But A. H. Tolhurst suggests that where the ark is not has important implications for our understanding of the sanctuary and its cleansing.

**Family Life Ministry That Works!/16.** Monte Sahlin begins here a two-part series laying out in detail how a church may establish a successful family life ministry. This article covers defining the needs, adequate targeting and planning, and communicating well with the potential audience.

**A Passover Communion/21.** Communion, celebrated so regularly, can become an empty routine. Ken Wade offers an alternative form that can add new significance for your members.

**Teaching the Adventist Lifestyle/24.** Pastors tell how they help new members begin meaningful Sabbath observance, regular family worship, and so forth.

**Signs Wins! MINISTRY Loses!/26.** J. Robert Spangler.

**The Pastor's Wife Then and Now/27.** Changing roles, new attitudes on the part of the laity toward the pastor's wife (as well as her husband), a career of her own—Miriam Wood looks at these and the circumstances that underlie the changes.

**Parson to Parson/24**  
**From the Editor/26**  
**Shepherdess/27**

**Shop Talk/31**  
**Recommended Reading/32**

# You can do evangelism!

Most adult converts still come into the church through public evangelism. But audiences are becoming increasingly sophisticated. Can a pastor offer an evangelistic program that will attract and hold them? W. B. Quigley says Yes, describing one of the audiovisual "tools" now available and how it worked for him. □ by W. B. Quigley



During January and February, 1984, Pastor David Anderson, of the Fredericksburg, Virginia, church, and I united in an evangelistic series, using the "Good News for Today" multimedia program of color slide/sound presentations. Based on our experience, we are convinced that this program is a tool

that can greatly help evangelists from novice to most experienced. For the beginning evangelist the "Good News for Today" program offers the finest presentations along with a measure of security because of the pressure that it removes from the program. The series provides twenty-four complete sermons covering major doctrinal points complete with narration, musical background, and slide-changing synchronization. Once the evangelist throws the switch, a half-hour presentation follows that holds the audience's attention such that few preachers could improve upon. Each ends with a musical appeal that can be easily personalized by the evangelist.

In our series at Fredericksburg we decided to focus on three points of interest: the multimedia presentation, which began without announcement at 7:30 P.M.; a twelve-minute health talk advertised as "Health, Fitness, and Life Extension"; and finally a half-hour sermon by the evangelist. A miniconcert

with either organ, piano, or vocalists ran from 7:15 P.M. until the lights were dimmed, and of course, we used special musical selections as available before the health talk and the sermon. Our program was full enough to require that we watch the schedule carefully or else the last portion of the evening might end up anemic for lack of time!

Attendance at our series was low at the opening, possibly because of very severe weather, the fact that it was held in a church, and other factors of which we are unaware. However, attendance continued to build throughout the series, and members of long standing declared it to be "the best-attended series ever!"

You can order the same "Good News for Today" audiovisual materials that we used from the North American Evangelistic Research Foundation, P.O. Box 962, Eagle, Idaho 83616. Don Gray, secretary of the Idaho Conference, who led out in developing this series, is himself a successful evangelist. A new series of color slides for evangelism has been long overdue. Here is the listing of the twenty-four titles and a summary of their content:

1. *On the Edge of Tomorrow*: prophetic signs of Christ's coming.

2. *An Ancient King's Dream*: Daniel 2.

3. *Satan, Hijacker of a Planet*: origin of Satan and evil.

4. *Searching for the Real Messiah*: the historical Son of God.

5. *The Better Choice*: the home of the saved.

6. *O God, I'm So Lonely*: evidences of God in nature and the universe.

7. *Give Away Your Guilt*: salvation in Christ.

8. *The King Is Coming*: the second coming of Christ.

9. *God Speaks*: confirmation of the Word of God.

10. *A Day to Remember*: major presentation of the Sabbath.

11. *The Rest of the Story*: change of the Sabbath.

12. *God's Guardrail*: the ten-commandment law of God.

13. *An Empty Tomb*: baptism by immersion.

14. *The Other Side of Death*: nature of death, resurrection, and life.

15. *Bitter Harvest*: the final disposition of the ungodly, hell.

16. *A Thousand Years' Vacation*: the millennium.

17. *Your Summons to Court*: inevitable

W. B. Quigley is an associate director of the General Conference Ministerial and Stewardship Association and world coordinator of the One Thousand Days of Reaping.

**L**et's do public evangelism! With the assistance that a series such as the "Good News for Today" program can give us, there is little reason why we cannot "turn the world upside down" for Christ.

bility of the judgment.

18. *God's Last Day Church Identified:* Revelation 12.

19. *Sometimes I Wonder How to Thank Him:* stewardship of life.

20. *More Than Pie in the Sky:* health of the body and spiritual health.

21. *Search for Survival:* God's plan for survival, His future for us.

22. *Prophetic Beasts I:* Daniel 7, introduction of little horn.

23. *Prophetic Beasts II:* review, little horn, antichrist, mark of the beast.

24. *Sealed for Eternity:* mark of the beast and God's plan for His people.

The series comes in several different formats—from the most expensive triple-projector, computerized version to a single-frame filmstrip edition suitable for home usage. Here are the formats a pastor might consider:

1. The full outfit with 7,300 slides, three carousel projectors, cassette player, computer, and amplifier with speakers. An investment of \$4,000 to \$12,000, depending upon the quality of equipment, is required for this outfit. Slides, cassettes, and scripts alone can be purchased for \$830, or no more than ten cents per slide! Please bear in mind that this outfit is complex, and its operation cannot be left to a novice. However, the effects it produces are powerful.

2. An economy public auditorium model with two projectors instead of three. No computer is needed. Instead, an Entre dissolve unit controls the two projectors. Don Gray's team has chosen the 4,000 best slides for this package. The cassettes as well as the scripts are identical to the largest unit. The slides, cassettes, and scripts for this version are only \$375. Equipment costs will range between \$1,200 and \$1,500 depending on quality. For approximately \$2,000 a church or pastor can equip himself with this very high-quality outfit.

3. Filmstrip versions for home usage requiring only one projector can be procured for \$200 for double frame or \$159 in single frame. In both cases cassettes and scripts are included.

This outstanding series of audiovisuals can be used in various ways. My personal

preference is not to crowd an evening's program too much. I believe our times demand a streamlined program. Therefore, I would use the audiovisual presentation, fully automated with the cassette, on as big a screen as possible, using lenses as powerful as I could afford, and complement each presentation with a strong evangelistic sermon. Put Bibles into the hands of the audience either on an award basis or by lending them. The sermons should complement, not repeat, the subject presented in the audiovisual. I suggest a typical evening's program that begins at 7:15 P.M. with a miniconcert, even if it uses recorded music. Promptly at 7:30 P.M. dim the lights and begin the multimedia presentation without announcement or further delay. Immediately at its close, turn up the house lights, roll up the screen, and let the emcee welcome the people. Announcements, prayer, offering, and special music follow. The sermon should begin no later than 8:15 P.M. so that it is completely finished five or ten minutes before nine o'clock. The people need to know that they will always be on their way home by 9:00 P.M.!

This multimedia program lends itself to other presentation styles as well. Use it with a seminar in which the audience is seated at tables with notebooks and Bibles. Enter to soft music, and at 7:30 P.M. have the seminar director open the meeting with greetings, prayer, and announcements, after which the multimedia program is presented. He might even make a few remarks about it by way of introduction, indicating details to watch for. A special musical selection can follow after the close of the visual, and the remainder of the time is devoted to a Bible-study, seminar-style teaching session in which questions and discussion can take place freely.

Another possibility is to use the multimedia program in a conventional evangelistic format but end the service with it rather than using it at the beginning. A normal sermon can be presented, which the evangelist might wish to coordinate closely with the content of the visual presentation, clos-

ing the evening with it.

A word about advertising. We live in a day when evangelists are paying for direct-mail announcements of meetings, usually using colorful brochures, with Biblical beasts and other "attractions." For my next crusade I am going to follow a conviction I developed in my work with the one-day professional growth seminars for MINISTRY. Initially we used a colorful folder to announce our seminars, but gradually I became convinced that many things about the folders acted *against* what we were trying to accomplish. The folders were quite costly as well. To experiment, we ran a series of seminars using the folders, and then we ran a series using a simple, properly worded business letter carefully designed to project a professional appearance. In every case the letter brought greater results!

I suggest you try a well-prepared letter (mail it third class, however) announcing your series. Cover a target area that you can afford to circularize four times: (1) ten days before the opening night; (2) five days before the opening night, making sure delivery occurs on or after the Monday preceding the opening night; (3) five days after the opening night; (4) during the latter part of the second week of meetings, but before major subjects are presented. I believe the cost for such a system would be minimal and do as much good as a multicolored folder. If you cannot write in a dramatic and persuasive way, have someone else write the letter for you, but be certain that it is grammatically impeccable, letter-perfect in production, and on the finest quality paper. In short, it should look as good as a letter coming from the president of General Motors! If these elements are present, I believe it will be the most effective piece that can find its way to homes.

Pastor, minister, local elder, let's do public evangelism! With the assistance that a series such as the "Good News for Today" program can give us with its strong emphasis on prophecy, there is little reason why we cannot "turn the world upside down" for Christ!

# Sanctification and perfection: another look

*What is the relationship of justification and sanctification? How do they relate to works and faith? To salvation? In what ways do they differ? In what way does perfection serve as the goal of sanctification? And what is the content of perfection? □ by Richard Rice*



*Recently Adventism's understanding of the relationship between sanctification and justification has come under fire both from within and without the church. According to the critics, any attempt to synthesize the two inevitably leads to the subordination of justification to sanctification and thus undermines an*

essential achievement of the Protestant Reformation, namely, the recovery of faith alone as the basis of salvation.<sup>1</sup> Their analysis of Seventh-day Adventist theology raises a number of important questions, and this article will attempt to answer a few of them by briefly explaining the nature and purpose of sanctification.

In conventional usage, the term *sanctification* is synonymous with "growth in grace," or the development of character, which follows naturally from a person's commitment to Christ as Saviour. The English word *sanctification* comes from the Latin word *sanctus*, meaning "holy," and the idea of holiness underlies the Biblical view of sanctification. In its most fundamental sense, holiness is separateness, or otherness. The holy

stands in contrast to the profane or secular. The Old Testament applies the word "holy" fundamentally to God, and by derivation, to things and persons related to God, such as the Temple, the priests, and even the nation of Israel.<sup>2</sup> In the New Testament this word appears in discussions of Christian behavior,<sup>3</sup> referring to the quality of purity, or innocence, in a way that recalls the requirements of the sacrifices in the Hebrew system of worship. Thus, while the conventional understanding of sanctification represents a development of its original application, it agrees basically with the New Testament emphasis on personal purity and godly living. So, this article will use the term *sanctification* as synonymous with the process of character perfection, or growth in grace. In view of recent discussions concerning the experience of salvation, several characteristics of sanctification deserve special attention. In the first place, sanctification, as the New Testament

describes it, is an essential aspect of salvation. It is not secondary or subordinate to salvation proper, but belongs to the experience itself. The New Testament passages that specifically employ the term *sanctification* (such as Romans 6:22) indicate this, as do those passages that describe the concrete changes in personal behavior that salvation involves, whether in terms of good works (James 2:24), or of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), or of the progressive acquisition of several traits of character (2 Peter 1:5-9). According to the New Testament, then, a person is not saved and then sanctified, a person is sanctified as a part of salvation. The Protestant Reformers recognized this in their insistence that justification and sanctification always occur together.<sup>4</sup>

To emphasize that salvation necessarily includes sanctification, note that the experience of salvation may be described as a "multidimensional unity," an expression usually applied to the Biblical

Richard Rice, Ph.D., is an associate professor of theology, Loma Linda University, Division of Religion, Loma Linda, California.

**H**uman effort may be a condition of sanctification, but this does not render it in part a human achievement. We are not more responsible for our sanctification than we are for our justification.

conception of man. While for certain purposes it may be desirable to distinguish different dimensions of the experience, salvation itself is a totality, not a succession of different experiences. In this light, the expressions "justification" and "sanctification" describe not two separate experiences, but aspects of the inclusive experience of salvation.

The contents of *Steps to Christ*, Ellen G. White's most popular book, illustrate this. For the most part, the various "steps" do not describe separate, successive phases that a person experiences one at a time. Instead, they portray various aspects of the Christian life throughout its duration. For instance, one does not repent once and for all in an early stage of his Christian experience. Rather, the attitude of repentance must characterize one's entire life.

A second characteristic of sanctification deserves special attention in light of the recent discussions. The New Testament describes sanctification, as it does justification, as a divine activity. "It is God who justifies," Paul said in Romans 8:33.\* And in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 he wrote, "May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly." Some discussions of salvation create the impression that justification is God's work and sanctification is man's work. But the New Testament gives no support to the idea that God takes care of our justification and then leaves our sanctification to us. Rather, it represents God as responsible for both.

At this point someone may object that human effort is essential to sanctification while it has no part to play in justification. A careful examination of the New Testament passages pertaining to human effort, however, reveals that this is not the essential distinction. Philippians 2:12, 13 probably helps most: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." So, what may at first appear to be human effort, turns out, upon closer inspection, to be the results of divine activity. The Christian's good works are really the "fruit of the Spirit."<sup>5</sup>

A Christian cannot point to anything in the experience of salvation, in justification or sanctification, as his contribution or achievement. He has absolutely no grounds for boasting. Salvation is the work of God in all its aspects, from first to last.

To be sure, sanctification does involve human effort. But our effort in sanctification is analogous to that of our faith in justification. Faith is a *condition* of justification, but not a *contribution*—as if justification were somehow a cooperative achievement, partly man's work, and therefore, only partly God's work. Similarly, human effort may be a *condition* of sanctification, but this does not render sanctification in part a human achievement. We are not somehow more responsible for our sanctification than we are for our justification. Divine activity effects both. It is God who justifies, but it is also God who sanctifies. Justification perhaps more vividly or distinctly underlines the priority of divine activity and this is probably one reason why it receives such emphasis in our doctrine of salvation. But sanctification, when clearly understood, shows the same priority.

While justification and sanctification have important similarities, as aspects of the experience of salvation and as divine activities, they also differ in significant ways—particularly as Ellen White describes them. Notably, they differ as to the period of time that each involves. According to Ellen White, justification takes place instantly. It represents an immediate change in a person's status before God.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, sanctification is progressive. It is not complete in a moment, but occupies a lifetime.<sup>7</sup> Ellen White emphasized the progressive character of sanctification in response to the view prevalent in her day that sanctification does not take an indeterminate period of time, but can be fully realized here and now. Besides noting that instantaneous sanctification does not harmonize with the Biblical description of sanctification, Ellen White also criticizes this concept because it easily becomes a pretext for spiritual pride and

for disregarding the commandments of God.<sup>8</sup> Those who believe they are already sanctified often show little interest in the fruits of a godly life.

The progressive character of sanctification gives rise to the perplexing question of perfection. For if sanctification occurs progressively over a period of time and not all at once, one may naturally ask where this process is headed and when it is complete. Our brief examination of perfection will focus on some of Ellen White's statements, since Adventists are dependent largely upon her writings for their understanding of the subject.

Ellen G. White applies the term *perfection* to the process of Christian growth in two different ways. At times she speaks of growth *in* perfection, as when she writes, "At every stage of development our life may be perfect."<sup>9</sup> At other times she speaks of perfection as a goal of the Christian life, or of growth *toward* perfection. For example, she writes, "Glorious is the hope before the believer as he advances by faith toward the heights of Christian perfection!"<sup>10</sup> The idea that the Christian should direct his life toward the goal of perfection raises the further questions of whether he can attain this goal, and if so, when he can or will reach it. These questions have become particularly important to Seventh-day Adventists in view of the delay of Christ's return. Many believe that Christ has not yet come because He is waiting for His people to reach perfection of character before returning to this earth.<sup>11</sup>

To clarify some of the issues involved in the questions of perfection, we should notice that the idea of "goal" can function in two different ways. It may refer either to an ideal objective, or on the other hand, to a realistic objective. To illustrate, a sailor may direct his boat toward a star on the horizon, not because he hopes to reach it, but because traveling toward it keeps him on the right course. In contrast, he may sail toward a certain landmark, such as Catalina Island, because it is his actual destination. In different ways, both the



# Does perfection represent a destination that the believer will reach at some point in time, or is it instead an ideal, which, like the navigator's star, keeps the Christian traveler on the right course?

star and his landmark serve as goals to the navigator, although he expects to reach his goal eventually in the one case, but not in the other. The Christian life is often thought of as a journey toward the goal of perfection in character. In this case, does perfection represent a destination that the believer will actually reach at some point in time or is it instead an ideal, which, like the navigator's star, keeps the Christian traveler on the right course throughout his journey?

In answering this question, it is important to notice that Ellen G. White makes different kinds of statements relative to the issue of perfection. First of all, she makes numerous statements that describe perfection as a divine standard, or an obligation to be fulfilled. "The Lord requires perfection from His redeemed family. He expects from us the perfection Christ revealed in His humanity."<sup>12</sup> Besides the language of obligation or requirement, Ellen White also employs the language of possibility to speak of perfection, using words such as *may* and *can*. "God calls upon us to reach the standard of perfection and places before us the example of Christ's character. In His humanity, perfected by a life of constant resistance to evil, the Saviour showed that through cooperation with Divinity, human beings may in this life attain a perfection of character. This is God's assurance to us that we, too, may obtain complete victory."<sup>13</sup>

Statements like this appear to describe perfection as a practical possibility, which we can actually reach in this life. And if this were all Ellen White said, we could easily conclude that some will actually do so. Another kind of statement she makes, however, warns us against drawing this conclusion too hastily. For when she specifically describes the actual results of Christian growth, she indicates that God's people always come short of perfection. Thus she writes, "So long as Satan reigns, we shall have self to subdue, besetting sins to overcome; so long as life shall last, there will be no stopping place, no point which we can reach and say, I have fully attained."<sup>14</sup> No true Christian, there-

fore, will ever claim to be perfect: "We are never to rest in a satisfied condition, and cease to make advancement, saying, 'I am saved.' . . . No sanctified tongue will be found uttering these words till Christ shall come."<sup>15</sup> Indeed, far from claiming perfection, he will discover more and more ways in which he needs to change: "The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes."<sup>16</sup> Ellen White apparently did not hold, then, that we will actually become perfect in this life.

Some may argue that Ellen White contradicts herself. For if we will never reach the point where we can accurately claim perfection, why say that we can become perfect? Conversely, if we really can become perfect, why say we will always have besetting sins to overcome? In response to this, it is important to notice that in none of the statements described is Ellen White directly answering the question, Will we or won't we become perfect in this life? These various statements have a somewhat different purpose. Instead of predicting how far a Christian will grow in this life, they are intended to encourage the development of certain attitudes along the way.

She may have intended these different groups of statements for people with different personal problems. The first group, for example, may speak to those who underestimate God's expectations, satisfying themselves with a low level of spiritual achievement. To this group, Ellen White says, in effect, "God's standard is much higher than you think. It is nothing short of perfection." The second group may apply to those who are discouraged by the height of God's expectations, or disillusioned by previous personal failures. To such individuals, Ellen White says, "Take heart. There is no limit to what the power of God can do in your lives." And she may have meant the third group of statements for those who are overly impressed with their spiritual accomplishments, or who believe they no longer need be concerned with their spiritual growth.

Besides applying to the misconcep-

tions of different people, the statements may also refer to some important elements within the personal outlook of each individual Christian. They suggest that a growing Christian's experience will include the simultaneous development of several different attitudes: increasing appreciation for the height of God's standard, growing confidence in God's sanctifying power, and deepening distrust of one's own abilities. Interpreted in this way, Ellen White's statements define an essential tension within the Christian life. On the one hand, we need to believe that perfection is possible, that we can by God's grace reach the high standard that He has set for us. On the other hand, we must never claim to have reached this standard; perfection always remains beyond the level of our present attainment. Consequently, to the question, Can we become perfect? the Christian answers, Yes, expressing his trust in God. However, to the question, Have you become perfect? the Christian answers, No, expressing distrust in himself. If one or the other of these elements—trust in God or distrust of self—is missing, the essential structure of Christian faith will collapse and give way either to discouragement or to presumption.

We see, then, that Ellen White's statements affirming the possibility of perfection serve the purpose of encouragement, rather than prediction. They refer to an ideal that gives direction and motivation to the Christian's experience rather than to a specific level of achievement that will actually be reached at some point during this life.

When we think about perfection as the goal of sanctification, we need to remember that the content of perfection can be conceived in different ways. Many people think of perfection as primarily negative, as avoiding certain forms of behavior, or successfully resisting temptations to do wrong. In this vein, perfection is often equated with sinlessness, and people frequently speak of "sinless perfection." While perfection certainly involves the absence of sinful

(Continued on page 15)



# Finding a theme

*If you're frustrated at times because your preaching doesn't seem to move people to change, it probably is because they aren't sure just what your sermon is really calling for. And if your congregation doesn't know, maybe you don't either. Probably the most difficult part of sermon preparation is defining in your own mind, clearly and in a single sentence, the idea you want your listeners to take home with them. This sixth article in a twelve-article series on better preaching will help you do just that.*

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Toward Better Preaching □ 6 W. Floyd Bresee

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he white-haired couple sat together in their usual pew—the one down front. As their pastor preached on, the old man turned to his wife and asked in a loud whisper typical of the hard of hearing, “What’s he talking about?” She turned toward the preacher and listened intently for some time, then leaned over to

her husband and answered loudly enough so that both he and half the congregation could hear, “He don’t say!”

What that poor preacher needed was a sermon theme.

## **What is a sermon theme?**

The theme is the gist of your sermon in a sentence. Homiletics sometimes call it the “proposition,” “thesis,” “central idea,” or “central thought.” But

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whatever it’s called, don’t look at it as some formal, rhetorical requirement to get in your way. Grady Davis insists, “That the best sermon is the embodiment of a single generative idea is not a rule but an accurate reporting of fact.”<sup>1</sup> As you prepare your sermon ask yourself, What is my heart’s burden in this sermon? What specific thought do I want my people to take out the door with them? If I put this sermon into one memorable sentence, what would that sentence be? Answer these questions, and you’ll have your theme.

Do not, however, confuse your sermon *subject* with your sermon *theme*. Your subject is what you’re going to talk about. Your theme is what you’re going

to say about it. Congregations quite often remember the preacher’s subject, but the subject, by itself, has nothing to carry people through the week. It won’t help your people much to remember that your subject was “The righteousness of Christ,” but it will help them to remember your theme, “We are saved, not because we are good, but because Christ is good.” It won’t attract many people to your congregation’s fellowship if they remember that your sermon subject was “the church,” but some might be powerfully drawn by remembering your theme, “Surrounded by loving Christians, we learn to love Christ.”

J. H. Jowett emphasizes, “No sermon is ready for preaching, not ready for

**I**'ve caught myself trying, from the pulpit, to lead my congregation, with a discouraging lack of success—only to discover that the reason was I didn't know exactly where I was going myself.

writing out, until we can express its theme in a short, pregnant sentence as clear as a crystal. I find the getting of that sentence the hardest, the most exacting, and the most fruitful labour in my study. To compel oneself to fashion that sentence, to dismiss every word that is vague, ragged, ambiguous, to think oneself through to a form of words which defines the theme with scrupulous exactness—this is surely one of the most vital and essential factors in the making of a sermon: and I do not think any sermon ought to be preached or even written, until that sentence has emerged, clear and lucid as a cloudless moon."<sup>2</sup>

### **Why the theme is so important**

The sermon theme is important because it gives you something specific to aim at. Too many sermons aim at nothing in particular—and hit it on the nose. Henry Ward Beecher admits, "I used to go out hunting by myself, and I had great success in firing off my gun; and the game enjoyed it as much as I did, for I never hit them or hurt them. I fired off my gun as I see hundreds of men firing off their sermons. I loaded it, and bang!—there was a smoke, a report, but nothing fell."<sup>3</sup>

Have you suffered the discouragement of firing your sermonic gun again and again, only to have nothing fall? No lives changed? No souls won? Like the hunter, a preacher must learn that firing his gun is not enough. He must learn how to aim the thing. The sermon theme forces you to take aim.

*A theme makes your sermon easier to preach.* One writer claims to have figured out why American golfers have tended to beat British golfers with some regularity. In their approach shots, the British play for the green, while the Americans play for the pin. The more precisely and specifically you know what you're aiming at in your sermon, the more successful it will be. If the congregation doesn't know just where you're going, it is understandable perhaps. But if you don't know what you're aiming at, it is really unforgivable! I've caught myself trying, from the pulpit, to lead my congregation, with a

discouraging lack of success—only to discover that the reason was I didn't know exactly where I was going myself.

The farmer sent his son to open up the first furrow in a new field. If that first furrow wasn't straight, the whole field would be plowed crooked. Stopping by later, Father was aggravated to find it anything but straight. "Son, what happened? Haven't I taught you to focus your eye on one object in the distance, to keep your eye on it so you'd stay straight?"

"Sure, Dad, that's what I did."

"You did? What did you focus on?"

"On the old cow grazing over there in the pasture."

You can't plow a good furrow focusing on a moving object! You can't preach a good sermon unless you have something solid and immovable to aim at. A sermon with many good thoughts but no central

tion, they find it so much easier to know where he's headed and to go along with him.

How do you tell your congregation the theme? It may be very important not to be too prescriptive here. A sermon plan should be as personal as a toothbrush. I've told my wife that I'd know our union was really complete when she let me use her toothbrush. Sometimes I used to forget which one was mine. Finding out how excited she got when I used the wrong one, I would wet hers under the faucet and leave it on the sink just to tease her! She stopped it all by buying me a blue toothbrush; she figures any idiot should know blue stands for boy. Families share very many things—but everybody should have his own toothbrush.

And every preacher should have a right to his own way of putting his

**T**he sermon theme is important because it gives you something specific to aim at. Too many sermons aim at nothing in particular—and hit it on the nose.

theme wanders north a while, then turns west a bit, and finally ends up going south! How much simpler, and how much more satisfying, to step into the pulpit knowing just where you're going. A theme makes your sermon easier to preach.

*A theme makes your sermon easier to understand.* It eliminates "Columbus" sermons. When Columbus left Spain he didn't really know exactly where he was going. When he got to the New World he didn't know where he was. And when he got back home he didn't know where he'd been! Too many preachers stand up not knowing exactly where they're going. As they preach, their audience doesn't know where they are. And when it's all over, neither knows where they have been!

With a sermon theme, the preacher does know where he's going. And when he shares his theme with the congrega-

tion together. Personality should not be stifled by rhetorical rules. How you share your theme with your congregation is no exception. A few suggestions and options, however, might be helpful.

The backwoods preacher probably didn't realize he was suggesting good homiletical rules when he described his preaching technique by saying, "I just tell 'em what I'm goin' to tell 'em. Then I tell 'em. Then I tell 'em what I done told 'em." Let's state his three-pronged approach homiletically:

First, give your theme in the sermon introduction. The practical purposes of the introduction are to gain attention and to give your theme. That's telling them what you're going to tell them. Second, repeat your theme wherever practical throughout the sermon body. It often fits well just as you close a sermon division or as you begin a new one. This is telling them. Third, in the sermon

**I**f your whole sermon is going to focus on one idea, be very sure it's really true, not just dramatic or different. The best way to be sure your idea is true is for it to be Biblical, to grow out of Bible study.

conclusion, summarize what you've said and then call for action. Repeating your theme would surely be a part of the summary. This is telling them what you've told them.

Won't people get tired of all this repetition? They will if the theme is shallow. They won't if your main idea is big enough to be a theme. Don't be afraid to be understandable. A good idea takes time to soak in. Congregations get bored, not with the simple, but with the shallow. Besides, people listen only a small percentage of the time you're talking. Anything you really want to stick in their minds has to be repeated.

Isn't it more clever to save your theme until later in the sermon? Yes, and some sermons work more naturally that way. Not only should the preacher's way of organizing his sermon be as personal as a toothbrush, but sermons themselves also tend to be highly individualistic. Some sermons virtually insist on going a certain way. The rules of rhetoric ought not to interfere automatically.

On the other hand, although clever and clear is good, clever and unclear is not. Clear is always better than clever. Clever is an extremely dangerous temptation to the preacher's pride. When people hear a clever sermon they are impressed with the preacher. But when they hear a clear sermon they are impressed with the preacher's Lord.

A theme helps your sermon make a more lasting impression. You are sunning yourself on the beach under the soothing, relaxing warmth. Your eyes close, and you feel a nap coming on. But an erstwhile friend slips up with a magnifying glass and focuses the sun upon one spot on your arm. You jump, suddenly very much awake, your whole attention centered on that one spot! Have your sermons been lulling people to sleep as you bathed them with general truth and very little in particular? The theme acts like a magnifying glass to concentrate one idea till it makes people jump.

Amplify is better than multiply. Most sermons multiply. They go in one direction for a while, then try a new thought that branches off the first and

later follows another branch off the second. We end up preaching branches of branches of branches. There's no focus. Thematic preaching, on the other hand, is an amplification of one idea. It places the theme before the congregation; then in the sermon body it presents an idea that amplifies the theme, then another, and another. You keep bringing your listeners back to your central idea and focus on that one idea to make a deeper impression. This is what R. W. Dale recommended when he said, "We should all preach more effectively if, instead of tasking our intellectual resources to say a great many things in the same sermon, we tried to say a very few things in a great many ways."<sup>4</sup>

If an angry bear came charging me, I wouldn't want to have a shotgun that would only pepper him with a charge of small shot! I might just aggravate him.

**D**on't be afraid to be understandable. Congregations get bored, not with the simple, but with the shallow. Besides, people listen only a small percentage of the time.

I'd rather have a rifle that could hit him with a single bullet powerful enough to penetrate and stop him in his tracks! Take a sin or problem that happens to be mine, confine yourself to it, and it will penetrate the "thick skin of my indifference" to lodge in my heart. Throw in a fistful of other sins or problems along with it, and I may very well go away unscathed.

#### What makes a good theme?

*It must be true—Biblical.* If your whole sermon is going to focus on one idea, be very sure it's really true, not just dramatic or different. The best way to be sure your idea is true is for it to be Biblical, to grow out of your Bible study. The following list attempts to illustrate some good themes and some poor ones. (1) Which sample theme is most untrue? [See the end of the article for suggested answers to questions (1), (2), (3), and (4).]

a. The earth is cursed as a result of

sin.

- b. Jesus saves.
- c. Christ loves everyone—but He loves Christians more than non-Christians.
- d. Whom God loves He chastens.
- e. In heaven we will have both a city and a country home.
- f. God is love.
- g. The church is God's idea for helping us help others.

*It must be important—a big idea.* The theme needs to be significant enough to deserve a half hour from every listener's time. Ask yourself, "If I left this unsaid, what difference would it make?" (2) Which two examples from the sample list illustrate ideas too small for themes?

*It must be practical and interesting.* The theme should deal with a life situation. If it does it's probably interesting. On the other hand, many beautiful thoughts,

important thoughts, have been preached in the same way so many times that they automatically turn congregations off unless you find a fresher, more contemporary way of sharing them. (3) Which two examples most emphatically break the "practical and interesting" rule? (4) Which two examples attempt to illustrate themes that meet all three requirements?

#### How do you find your theme?

Don't settle on your theme too early. Your sermon preparation begins after you have chosen a passage or a subject but before you have decided your exact point of view on that subject. Always attempt to open your mind before you open your Bible. Don't force your ideas upon the Bible; let it force its ideas upon you. You aren't looking for man's answers to man's problems; you're looking for God's answers, and the best place to find God's answers is in God's Book.

**W**e must never forget that, in one sense, every sermon should have but one theme—Christ. We too often give our people something to believe, when they yearn for Someone to love.

Another reason for not choosing your theme too early is that the material you gather as you study may not fit the theme. To some degree you are always limited in your sermon preparation by whatever material happens to be in your hands at a given time. You may have an excellent theme; you may have outstanding material, but if the material doesn't fit the theme, you have big trouble.

Don't settle on your theme too late. Grady Davis warns, "Attempting to write the sermon before the idea is worked out is perhaps the most dangerous way of all and the most deceptive. A man can extemporize on paper as easily as on his feet. A fully written manuscript is no guarantee of a prepared sermon. It may be as carelessly done as if he got up and spoke without any preparation at all. If writing is a substitute for thinking the idea through, it rather guarantees that the sermon will never be thoroughly prepared."<sup>5</sup>

The best way to choose your theme is to let it develop as you study. Always begin with the Word. As you read, ponder, and pray over a text or passage, you will come up with ideas that might be worth preaching. Write them down. Each time you do, ask yourself whether something in this idea is big enough to be the central thought of your sermon—your theme. Keep a separate sheet of paper on one side of your desk. Every time you come up with a thought that just might become your theme, write it on that special sheet. By the time your sermon material has been pretty well gathered, the sheet should be full of possible themes. From it you should now be able rather easily to choose the theme you want. Now your theme has grown out of your Bible study. Now your theme will fit your material, because both come from a common source.

Having chosen your theme, follow some commonsense rules for wording it. Let's say you have found an idea you want to preach, from Hebrews 11:26. "He [Moses] considered the 'reproach of Christ' more precious than all the wealth of Egypt, for he looked steadily at the

ultimate, not the immediate, reward" (Phillips).<sup>\*</sup> You're especially impressed by the underlined portion. Here are five possible themes. When you have found what is most emphatically wrong with each, you will have come up with five rules for wording a theme.

1. A comparison between looking at ultimate and immediate rewards.

Rule: The theme gives a point of view, not just a subject. It doesn't tell just *what* you're going to talk about, but *what* you're going to say about it.

2. Spiritual productivity necessitates eventual goals, precluding the immediate.

Rule: The theme should be simple, not complex. It should be a deep thought expressed simply enough that people can carry it home.

3. Does successful living result from looking at ultimate or at immediate rewards?

Rule: The theme should be declarative, not interrogative. You can use questions in your sermon or in leading up to the theme, but the central purpose of a sermon is to give an answer, not ask a question.

4. Good eyesight results from overcoming shortsightedness.

Rule: The theme should be straightforward, not figurative. Illustrations are great, but not in a theme. "Eyesight" and "shortsightedness" could mean any one of several things. The theme must be worded so both the preacher and his congregation know exactly what he means.

5. Successful living does not result from looking at immediate rewards.

Rule: The theme should be positive, not negative. Don't concentrate on what success isn't; concentrate on what success is!

Following all five rules, you might come up with a theme such as: Successful Christianity results from looking at ultimate, not just immediate, rewards.

### Christ our underlying theme

We must never forget that, in one sense, every sermon should have but one theme—Christ. In choosing your

theme, always ask, "How does this theme, how will this sermon, uplift Jesus Christ?" We too often give our people something to believe, when they yearn for Someone to love. Be like Spurgeon, who was sometimes faulted for having nothing to talk about but Jesus. Spurgeon took pride in the accusation, saying, "Put me down anywhere you like in Old or New Testament, and I'll head straight for the cross."

How can you make sure salvation through Christ underlies every sermon? We once had a Chihuahua dog who went with us everywhere. At the beach our boys would try to tease her into the water. With a little contriving, they could sometimes manage to get her wet, but her swim was always a very brief one. Later we had a Gordon setter. When we took her to the beach, she was the first one wet. Why? It's simple. She loved water.

There are two ways to get Christ into your sermon. One is by contriving and purposeful planning, but the results are less than satisfactory at best. The other is to love Him. When you truly love Jesus, you can no more keep Him out of your sermon than you can keep a water dog out of water. Then you can preach like Paul, who said, "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2).

**Quiz answers:** (1) c; (2) a, e; (3) b, f; (4) d, g. Your answers may differ. Please don't let this interfere with your understanding of the three theme requirements.

<sup>\*</sup> From J. B. Phillips: *The New Testament in Modern English*, Revised Edition. © J. B. Phillips 1958, 1960, 1972. Used by permission of Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.

<sup>1</sup> Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. Jowett, *The Preacher, His Life and Work* (New York: Doran, 1912), p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Ward Beecher, *Yale Lectures on Preaching, I* (New York: Fords, Howard, & Hulbert, 1892), pp. 4, 5.

<sup>4</sup> R. W. Dale, *Nine Lectures on Preaching* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1890), p. 150.

<sup>5</sup> Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

# Whatever happened to the ark?

*Daniel 8:14 centers on the sanctuary or Temple. And the Temple's services revolved around the ark of the covenant. The author of this article suggests the fate of the earthly ark may have significant implications for the understanding of Daniel's prophecy.*

Viewpoint ☐ A. H. Tolhurst



*William Miller's Second Advent movement arose, at least in part, because of Daniel 8:14. And it was a refined understanding of this verse that provided the basis for the formation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Probably the majority of exegetes outside of our church see the sanctuary referred to there as*

being the Temple in Jerusalem. I believe, however, that a study of the central furnishing of that sanctuary, the ark of the covenant, helps substantiate the Seventh-day Adventist position.

When God commanded Moses to construct a sanctuary in the wilderness, it was His plan to hallow that manmade tabernacle with His presence. Note Exodus 25:8, "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." God gave to Moses detailed instructions for the building, its decorations, and its furnishings. Exodus 25:10-22 contains God's directions for making the ark of the covenant, a gold-overlaid cabinet that was to hold the tables of stone engraved with the ten-command-

ment law. The lid of the cabinet was made of solid gold and was known as the mercy seat. Above it stood two angel figures—cherubim—of beaten gold. The glory of God's presence was manifested above the mercy seat, between the cherubim.

The ark of the covenant was the focal point in the sanctuary. While the sacrifice of animals was necessary and important in what it symbolized, it was the ten-commandment law in the ark of the covenant that made the whole sacrificial system necessary. Only as men and women disobeyed the law of God were they declared to be sinners and in need of salvation.

The annual service known as the Day of Atonement also centered on the ark. On that day, according to Leviticus 16, the earthly sanctuary was cleansed. The high point of the service came when the

high priest sprinkled the blood from the sacrifice of the Lord's goat on the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant. The atonement for the sins of the people, and the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary flowed from this act (see Lev. 16:15, 16).

When Moses completed the building of the tabernacle, the Bible says that the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle so that Moses could not enter (see Ex. 40:33-35). Clearly God hallowed the tabernacle with His glorious presence. In doing so, He validated the services conducted there.

When the children of Israel finally entered the land of Canaan and Solomon completed the construction of a glorious Temple, God chose again to hallow it by His presence. During the service of dedication when the priests brought the ark of the covenant into the Most Holy Place of Solomon's Temple,

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**I** think it is particularly suggestive that following Daniel's time the Scriptures refer only twice to the ark of the covenant. Both references are in the New Testament.

the glory of the Lord filled the house (1 Kings 8:6, 9-11).

About five hundred years before Christ, after the destruction of Solomon's Temple and the Babylonian captivity, Zerubbabel rebuilt the Temple in Jerusalem. However, nowhere in Scripture do we find that the glory of the Lord filled Zerubbabel's Temple. Apparently the Shekinah glory was not present, and the ark of the covenant was strikingly absent. (See *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 596, 597.)

### The missing ark

As Haggai prophesied, the glory of this Temple was to be greater than that of the first—because Jesus, the Desire of all nations, would walk in it. However, it seems significant that God apparently made a distinction between the Temple that contained the ark and the one that did not. The former contained the visible manifestation of His presence, and the latter did not. I believe it would be fair to say that a shadow rested upon the restored Temple.

Ellen White explains why the ark of the testimony was not there: "Because of Israel's transgression of the commandments of God and their wicked acts, God suffered them to go into captivity, to humble and punish them. Before the temple was destroyed, God made known to a few of His faithful servants the fate of the temple, which was the pride of Israel, and which they regarded with idolatry, while they were sinning against God. He also revealed to them the captivity of Israel. These righteous men, just before the destruction of the temple, removed the sacred ark containing the tables of stone, and with mourning and sadness secreted it in a cave where it was to be hidden from the people of Israel because of their sins, and was to be no more restored to them. That sacred ark is yet hidden. It has never been disturbed since it was secreted."—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 195.

Jewish tradition supports this explanation. The writer of 2 Maccabees 2:4-6 declares: "The document also described how the prophet, warned by an oracle, gave orders for the tabernacle and the ark to go with him when he set out for the

mountain which Moses had climbed to survey God's heritage. On his arrival Jeremiah found a cave-dwelling, into which he brought the tabernacle, the ark and the altar of incense, afterwards blocking up the entrance. Some of his companions came up to mark out the way, but were unable to find it. When Jeremiah learned this, he reproached them: 'The place is to remain unknown' he said, 'until God gathers his people together again and shows them his mercy.'"

This is a significant statement, for it is contained in a body of writing that originated from Jewish authors between the times of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The point here is not where the ark was hidden, but that it was removed from the Temple and, as we shall see, never returned. (Another ancient Jewish tradition says that the ark was hidden in the vicinity of Jerusalem.)

The Jewish historian Josephus, writing in the first century A.D., described the attack on Jerusalem by the Roman general Pompey in 63 B.C. Pompey eventually broke into the city, and later into the Temple. The priests had apparently carried everything of value into the Most Holy Place, thinking it the safest place. However, much to the dismay of the Jews, Pompey entered this sacred chamber. Josephus describes what he saw there: "But there was nothing that affected the nation so much, in the calamities they were then under, as that their holy place, which had been hitherto seen by none, should be laid open to strangers; for Pompey, and those that were about him, went into the temple itself, whither it was not lawful for any to enter but the high priest, and saw what was repositied therein, the candlestick with its lamps, and the table, and the pouring vessels, and the censers, all made entirely of gold, as also a great quantity of spices heaped together, with two thousand talents of sacred money." *The Wars of the Jews*, 1. 7. 6. The most notable omission in the list is the ark of the covenant. It was not there.

Later, in A.D. 70, when the Roman general Titus destroyed Jerusalem and

the Temple, his soldiers carried the seven-branched candlestick back to Rome. A stone relief illustrating the capture of this treasure can be seen today on the inside of the victory arch that Titus erected in Rome following his campaign in Palestine. Quite obviously, however, the ark of the covenant was not found in the Temple at that time either.

We must not lose sight of the fact that the whole sanctuary service centered around the ark of the covenant, with the tables of God's law inside. As noted earlier, the blood of the Lord's goat was sprinkled on the mercy seat during the services of the Day of Atonement. This was the vital part of the service that accomplished the cleansing of the sanctuary.

One could reasonably expect that an important (I think we can designate it "the ultimate"; see Dan. 8:17-19) cleansing of God's sanctuary, spoken of in Daniel 8:14, would take place with "all the props on stage," so to speak. And how could the sanctuary be considered "restored to its rightful state" (verse 14, R.S.V.),\* i.e., fully functional, when that which was the focal point of its services was still missing? It doesn't seem likely that God would call attention through this important apocalyptic prophecy to an event whose validity could be questioned because insufficient care had been taken to make sure that the most essential items were there.

And so, because the ark has never been in any earthly temple since Daniel's time, it is not likely that any event in an earthly temple or sanctuary since that time could have been that to which God was pointing in Daniel's prophecy. (For example, following Antiochus Epiphanes' desecration of the Jerusalem Temple, that Temple was purified and functioned again as it had before Antiochus defiled it. But its functioning was still limited and incomplete. The ark had not been returned; the Shekinah was not there. This was not the ultimate cleansing and restoration implied by this prophecy.)

We must look elsewhere for the

**R**evelation 11:19 is the only scriptural passage in which an ark of the covenant is said to exist after the Babylonian captivity. Surely this must be the ark involved in the cleansing of the sanctuary.

fulfillment. And the Bible points the direction our search must take.

### **Bible references to the ark**

I think it is particularly suggestive that following Daniel's time the Scriptures refer only twice to the ark of the covenant. Both references are in the New Testament. The first, Hebrews 9:4, 5, points back to the first covenant, and the earthly sanctuary containing the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat. Clearly this is a simple reference to the tabernacle of Moses' time, and is not a description of the ark of the covenant subsequent to the Babylonian captivity. Significantly enough, though, this passage is making the point that the old covenant, with its sanctuary and services, has been superseded by the new covenant and Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. This post-Danielic reference to the ark, then, has its focus in the heavenly sanctuary.

The other reference is Revelation 11:19. This is the only scriptural passage in which an ark of the covenant is said to exist after the Babylonian captivity. This is the only time, following the secreting of the ark of the covenant in a cave, that the Scriptures specifically direct our attention to the ark.

Surely this must be the ark of the covenant involved in the cleansing of the sanctuary foretold in Daniel's prophecy. Note two things this passage in Revelation reveals about the ark. First, its location: "Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, voices, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail" (verse 19, R.S.V.).

And second, note the context of both time and event in which this revelation of the ark of God's covenant takes place: "the nations raged, but thy wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, for rewarding thy servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear thy name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth" (verse 18, R.S.V.). Clearly the heavenly ark is seen in the last days, and in relation with

the judgment that results in the reward of the saints and the destruction of the impenitent.

In conclusion, then, the two points we have made bolster the Seventh-day Adventist understanding that Daniel 8:14 refers to the heavenly sanctuary. First, the ark of the covenant, upon which the sanctuary services all centered, has never been in any sanctuary or temple on earth since Daniel's prophecy was given. No earthly sanctuary has been

completely restored. And the validity or efficacy of any eschatological cleansing under these conditions could well be questioned.

And second, the only two Biblical references to that foundational ark subsequent to Daniel's vision refer either indirectly (by context) or directly to the heavenly sanctuary.

\* Scripture quotations in this article marked R.S.V. are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1946, 1952 © 1971, 1973.

## **Sanctification and perfection**

From page 8

behavior, it has a positive as well as a negative side. It consists in the presence of certain attitudes and actions.

The life of Christ Himself, the ultimate manifestation of a holy character, most clearly evinces this. Certainly He never yielded to temptation, but somehow this fact alone fails to express the essence of His spiritual accomplishment. For what equally distinguished His life from all others was the fact that love was the constant motive of His actions. He devoted His entire life to self-forgetful service for others. Not once did He sacrifice another's welfare to His own advancement, and He crowned His ministry by giving His life for the salvation of men.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the essence of our Lord's spiritual accomplishment was the depth and constancy of His love. His never yielding to temptation is comprehended in His love, because His fiercest temptations were to leave the path of unselfish service with all that this meant.

Taking love, then, as the ideal of sanctification suggests another interpretation of the famous statement in *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69. "When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own." The consummation of the plan of salvation awaits a manifestation of Christ's love for others in the lives of His people. Only this will attract the world to what they have to say and enable them to complete their mission.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Geoffrey J. Paxton, *The Shaking of Adventism* (Wilmington, Del.: Zenith Publishers, Inc., 1977), pp. 135, 148.

<sup>2</sup> Ex. 19:6.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Rom. 12:1; 1 Thess. 4:3.

<sup>4</sup> John Calvin makes this point in the following way: "Why, then, are we justified by faith? Because by faith we apprehend the righteousness of Christ, which is the only medium of our reconciliation to God. But this you can not attain without at the same time attaining to sanctification; for he 'is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption' (1 Cor. 1:30). Christ therefore justifies no one whom He does not also sanctify."—*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, III. 30. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Gal. 5:22.

<sup>6</sup> "Justification is a full, complete pardon of sin. The moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, that moment he is pardoned."—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on Rom. 5:1, p. 1071.

<sup>7</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 470; *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 560.

<sup>8</sup> *The Great Controversy*, pp. 471ff.

<sup>9</sup> *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 65.

<sup>10</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 533.

<sup>11</sup> This view is frequently supported by appealing to the following statement: "When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69.

<sup>12</sup> *Child Guidance*, p. 477. Also: "God requires perfection of His children. His law is a transcript of His own character, and it is the standard of all character."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 315.

<sup>13</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 531. Also: "Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 664.

<sup>14</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 560, 561.

<sup>15</sup> *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 314.

<sup>16</sup> *Steps to Christ*, p. 64.

<sup>17</sup> Mark 10:45.

\* Scripture quotations in this article are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1946, 1952 © 1971, 1973.



# Family life ministry that works!

Most churches feel the need to develop a program of family life ministry—but often their attempts to do so are less than satisfactory. Monte Sahlin, in a two-article series, lays out in detail how you may plan and carry out a successful, ongoing family life ministry in your church. In this article he covers how you can define the needs in your area, how to figure how many to plan on, packaging the program successfully, and more. □ by Monte Sahlin



church board recommends disfellowshipping a young business executive for “adultery.” In the strained silence, an elder turns in anguish to the pastor and says, “We have to do something to prevent this sort of thing from happening. This is the second family that has broken up in our church this year.”

A conference president discusses with a church board its needs as a new pastor is selected. A young mother, trying to participate and oversee a toddler at the same time, offers, “We need a pastor who can help parents. People criticize us for our noisy children, or because of their Sabbath afternoon activities, but we

really don’t have anyone to turn to with questions.”

A local church planning committee reviews data from a self-study profile. “I can’t believe this!” exclaims a committee member. “This says the majority of our adult members are single. Is that true?”

Such scenes are becoming common in Seventh-day Adventist churches, pointing up the need for a stronger ministry to families. The divorce rate among Adventists has increased since

the 1978 study by Crider and Kistler demonstrated that 12 percent to 17 percent have dissolved marriages through the courts.<sup>1</sup> “Baby boom” Adventists have reached the child-producing stage, significantly increasing the number of parents in most Adventist churches. Single Adventist adults may not have increased in numbers recently, but they certainly have been getting more attention.<sup>2</sup>

Drs. John and Millie Youngberg, family life educators at Andrews Univer-

Monte Sahlin, a pastor and formerly the chairman of the Pennsylvania Conference’s Family Ministries Committee, writes from Worthington, Ohio.

**D**ouglas W. Johnson, director of the Institute for Church Development, Inc., gives a formula for calculating how many people might be expected at a well-advertised, carefully designed "entry event."

sity, see this interest in family ministries as a fulfillment of prophecy. "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers" (Mal. 4:5, 6, N.I.V.). \* According to the Youngbergs, the "Elijah message" has a concrete form in our world today as families experience healing from conflict and oppressive relationships. Many other Adventist scholars and lecturers agree that the quality of relational life in Adventist families has theological meaning.

Some Adventist leaders have discovered that an emphasis on family life is also fruitful evangelistically. Family life concerns are one of the major reasons that unchurched young adults begin to shop around for a church home, according to recent studies by the Princeton Religious Research Center and the Glenmary Research Center. Other studies also indicate that churches meeting the needs of single parents and couples with young children will reap impressive increases in membership.<sup>3</sup>

As a result, hundreds of Adventist churches have decided to move ahead with family ministries. Unfortunately, most have come to a complete halt a short time later, faced with the reality of the question: How do we organize a family life program in our church? A clear view of the difficulties becomes quickly apparent. Where do we get qualified people? How do we develop something that has substance and continuity; that will have integrity among the general public? We don't want people to feel that our program is a gimmick that moves immediately into other doctrines.

Observation of successful programs in several churches and work with a score of Adventist congregations that have started family life activities leads me to believe that the key to successful family ministries in the local church is careful program development: a definition of the needs, adequate targeting and planning, quality communication with the target audience, a small team of church members who are willing to learn some

key relational skills (they do not need to be mental health professionals), and a keen sense of how this ministry relates to the total church program. With these five items in hand, any congregation can succeed at family ministries.

### **Defining the needs**

Of course the church board or the pastor have a general sense of the needs or they would not be seeking to get something started. But this general sense of urgency is not enough. Successful programs "scratch where people itch." You need to know where your people, your congregation, and your community "itch" right now. How many are interested in parent skills? In grief recovery? In divorce recovery? In improving their marriages? In coping with single life? In strengthening family worship? In friendship and recreation with other Christian families? What kinds of activities would be helpful to them? What are they willing to invest in time, money, and personal involvement?

One way to define needs is simply to assemble the statistical data already available. You can construct a family profile of your congregation by spending thirty minutes with the church membership list and using the score sheet on page 18. For each person in the congregation, simply make a mark in the category or categories to which you believe he or she belongs. (If you are not acquainted with everyone in the congregation, have someone else go through the score sheet with you. The very largest congregations will probably require a survey.) The U.S. Census data on file at the public library will quickly give you similar information about families in the local community—the number of teenagers, married couples, single parents, divorced persons, widows, or families with children under age 13, et cetera.<sup>4</sup>

Statistical data will reveal the raw number of potential participants in various kinds of family life programs but cannot indicate their degree of interest or their felt needs. Various surveys will be necessary to uncover the felt needs of

the congregation and the community. A simple questionnaire like the one on page 20 can be distributed to active members during a worship service. You will have to interview inactive church members and the general public by telephone or doorstep visits. Compare standard sampling ratios with population totals in your area to determine how many interviews must be completed in order for the survey data to be reliable.<sup>5</sup>

But you can obtain even more specific information about the kinds of activities, topics, publicity, and locations that will draw a crowd by setting up one or more small group discussions with potential program participants. Marketing experts call these "focus groups." For example, our statistical data indicated that twenty-two families in the Central church and 413 in our ministry area had children under 6 years of age. In surveys, 65 percent of these expressed interest in attending parent education classes. So to get more specific information we formed a discussion group made up of two couples and two single parents with preschool children. One couple and one single parent were church members; the others were not. Another church member led the discussion, using a detailed list of questions compiled by the program development committee. A second church member sat in on the discussion and took notes. This method not only helps gather information; it also builds interest in the program under discussion.

### **Putting the plan together**

When you have defined needs, you can put together a specific plan of action for an initial family ministry. The church board should authorize a planning committee to put on paper (and bring back to the board for consideration) a proposal that includes a specific target audience, nominations for program coordinator and the ministry team, program design, curriculum resources, written objectives, a budget and a suggested starting date.

Douglas W. Johnson, director of the Institute for Church Development, Inc., gives a formula for calculating how many

**T**he more amenities included, the more attractive a seminar becomes. Refreshments during a break, a folder, pencils and notepads, and audiovisuals make the program more attractive and authoritative.

people might be expected at a well-advertised "entry event."<sup>6</sup> Start with the number of persons in the category as given by the census data and multiply this figure by the percentage that Adventists represent among the total church members in the community. This is usually between .5 and 2 percent.<sup>7</sup> Next, add the number of Adventist members who are in the same category. Let's suppose your community contains 4,250 single adults, your church represents one percent of the total church people, and you have seven single adults in your church. The figures would look like this:  $4,250 \times .01 + 7 = 49$  persons. This will be the number of participants you can reasonably expect to attract from among the single adult

target group. Johnson says, "On top of this figure may be added a goal that represents the number of members of the target group the congregation will work to involve."<sup>8</sup>

Current research in group dynamics indicates that an ongoing class or seminar will enroll no more than 40 people.<sup>9</sup> If a church expects to involve more than 40 participants in a family ministry, it must design a program with several groups, perhaps meeting on different nights or in different locations.

The coordinator for the program need not be an expert or a professional, but it is essential that this person have ability in organizing and carrying through projects, and have the trust of the target audience and the church board. The

program coordinator need not be one of the target category, but he must be able to communicate with these people. He should be an individual with a clear commitment to the church and to Christ, and a willingness to see this ministry as a long-term activity, an opportunity to learn new skills and be exposed to new ideas. It is foolish to move ahead without this. If you must wait for a qualified individual to develop this sense of call, the investment of time will eventually pay off in a program with a deep spiritual dimension.

The program coordinator will need a supportive team of volunteers. The size of the target audience and the anticipated program will indicate how large a team, but at least four specific roles must be filled. You will want two working assistants—one to deal with paperwork, purchasing, setting up equipment, making phone calls, distributing advertising, et cetera; and another to chat with people as they gather at the events, to get to know them personally, answer questions, be available to listen, and set up personal visits in the home. And you will need two "behind the scenes" supporters—one (possibly the pastor or an elder) to serve as an administrative counselor and a channel of communication between the ministry team and the church board; the other to rally intercessory prayer on behalf of the venture. The entire team should meet monthly or quarterly for evaluation, prayer, brainstorming, planning, sharing, and caring for one another. The quality of relationships within this team will determine to a large degree the success of the program.

For an effective program, content must clearly and helpfully address the needs expressed by the target audience. But "packaging" is also vital. Where will the group meet? Where the Adventist Church is well known and perceived positively, suitable meeting rooms at the church itself may be best. But sometimes the program will get off to a better start if you use the "Y," a local bank, or some other public facility. Often you can secure such community rooms without charge, but even if not, to have a

## Score Sheet for Family Profile

Church \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Family Category	Active Members		Inactive Members	
	With Children Under 18	No Children Under 18	With Children Under 18	No Children Under 18
Married, spouse is a member				
Ages 18-35				
Ages 36-64				
Ages 65+				
Married, spouse is nonmember				
Ages 18-35				
Ages 36-64				
Ages 65+				
Single, never married				
Ages 18-35				
Ages 36-64				
Ages 65+				
Single, divorced or widowed				
Ages 18-35				
Ages 36-64				
Ages 65+				

# No plan is complete unless it includes a simple, specific description of expected results. What is the desired effect on those who attend? What are the criteria for success?

comfortable meeting room at a recognized address is usually well worth the cost.

What time of year will the seminar or class be offered? Every community has favorable seasons, and seasons also when low attendance is guaranteed. For example, our church offered a health-screening event on the weekend that the football season came to its climax. Few came out. The same program, with the same advertising, in the same location a year earlier during the spring attracted ten times as many people.

When will the group meet? A young mothers' group might best meet on a weekday at midmorning. A teen/parent communications seminar might work well on Saturday afternoons. A couples group might need to be over by 8:30 P.M., while a singles group might flourish by starting about 8:00 P.M. And how many times will the group meet? Although one-shot events (all day or a weekend) would seem to make it easier for more people to be present, educational research indicates that for a program to have significant impact (especially in changing habits or attitudes) a number of sessions over several weeks is necessary. Lyman Coleman, author of *Serendipity* materials for small groups, says that people will attend six to ten weekly sessions more readily than twelve to forty weekly sessions, and he points out that if a "beginners group" is rewarding, people may be willing to take on a more extended commitment. Also, groups that meet every other week can be as effective as weekly sessions if the number of sessions remains the same.

The more amenities included, the more attractive a group or seminar becomes. Something to drink, refreshments during a break, a notebook or folder, pencils and notepads, audiovisuals and handouts, name badges, et cetera, make the program more attractive and authoritative. See that participants have an opportunity to mix and get acquainted. Clearly identify in your printed materials the sponsoring organization and the leaders, so that further contacts can be made and questions

asked.

With some target groups, child care is a crucial service. Young couples, parents—and especially single parents—cannot be expected to attend a class if child care is not provided. Grandparents and older brothers and sisters are almost never at hand to watch the children. Baby-sitters are difficult to find and costly. Quality child care is essential in your planning even if this means a slightly higher registration fee. Church volunteers are not your only source for child care, although this may be an ideal way to involve a teenage girl or a grandmother who feels she does not have other skills. You can also pay people for this service. The cost of a single baby-sitter for six couples is far less than all six getting individual baby-sitters. Use qualified non-Adventists if the available pool of Adventist volunteers are involved in other tasks.

One reason that family ministries are within reach of every Adventist church, no matter how small, is that a vast number of curriculum resources have been published recently. Most have detailed guides for the group leader and textbooks or other materials for the participants. More recently Adventist Life Seminars has begun to produce packages that include videotape lectures by such well-known Adventist speakers as Dr. Kay Kuzma, family life educator at Loma Linda University.<sup>10</sup> (The second article of this series includes a sizable list of available resources.) Many of these use inexpensive audiovisuals: overheads you can reproduce on a photocopy machine, flip charts, et cetera. The planning group must choose which curriculum resources to use, whether to follow one (perhaps in modified form) or to use two or three curricula together. Ask these questions, too: What supplies must be ordered? How long does shipment take? What are the policies concerning minimum orders and returning unused materials? *Never* plan to start the group, see who shows up, and then order materials. That appears inept to participants and guarantees a large number of unused materials. Of course the program

coordinator needs to be involved in the decisions about curriculum as do any guest instructors who will be helping. For example, a nurse may teach one unit and the pastor another, instead of the coordinator doing the whole thing.

No plan is complete unless it includes a simple, specific description of expected results. What is the desired effect on those who attend? What are the criteria for success? You need to list expectations precisely, *not* to satisfy academic or bureaucratic urges but to help the working team, the church board, and others involved to understand clearly what the activity seeks to achieve. This list is the ultimate measure of success or failure, and it keeps the program moving in the right direction.

Grammar, language, even correct spelling, are not essential in writing a good objective. Three considerations are fundamental however: 1. Make it specific, not general. 2. Make it something that can be done, a behavior. It ought to be something that one could observe on a videotape with the sound off! 3. Make it measurable. Some numbers need to be included: percentages, head counts, or whatever. No one other than the program team and the church board needs to see these objectives.

When you have reached this point, the planning committee can then work out a budget and schedule for the new ministry. The schedule provides specific deadlines for maintaining accountability, and the budget provides for realistic funding. When you know the total expenses, you can calculate a proposed program fee. The initial calculation may produce a fee that is unreasonable. If so, the church board needs to discuss the possibility of providing a subsidy for the program.

In most circumstances, charge a registration fee. Resist the urge to provide free programs. The public usually considers "free" programs to have some kind of "payoff" or ulterior motive, and is justifiably unwilling to get involved. (What was your response the last time you got one of those "free trip to Florida" offers in the mail?) When Adventist

**I**n most circumstances, charge a registration fee. Resist the urge to provide free programs. (What was your response the last time you got one of those "free trip to Florida" offers in the mail?)

family ministry programs are offered to the public with a modest registration fee or charge for materials, it enhances the public image of the program and makes it appear more professional. Charging a fee will actually increase enrollment in most circumstances. There may be exceptions to this rule in small towns where the Adventist church is well known and in low-income, inner-city neighborhoods.

We will discuss three more elements necessary for successfully running family life programs in your church in a concluding article, which will appear in the August issue of *MINISTRY*. We will point out how you can effectively advertise your programs, the necessity of having someone with relational skills on your working team—and suggest a program for training in relational skills, and we will indicate how you can create pathways into church fellowship for participants in your programs.

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

<sup>1</sup> Charles C. Crider and Robert C. Kistler, *The Seventh-day Adventist Family: An Empirical Study* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1979), p. 196.

<sup>2</sup> Such as the new monthly column entitled "Single Life" in *The Adventist Review*.

<sup>3</sup> George Gallup, Jr., and David Poling, *The Search for America's Faith* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), pp. 41-55, 79-107; Edward A. Rauff, *Why People Join the Church: An Exploratory Study* (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1979), pp. 72-86; J. Russell Hale, *The Unchurched: Who They Are and Why They Stay Away* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980).

<sup>4</sup> For more information on how to do this see *Pastor's Planning Workbook*, available from the Seventh-day Adventist Urban Ministry Resources Center, Box 287, Worthington, Ohio 43085.

<sup>5</sup> While there are many complicated ways of determining the size of a sample, you can use this chart as a guide. The suggested numbers allow for the fact that some interviews will not be completed. However, you must interview 80 percent of the sample in order for the survey to be accurate.

If the population of your ministry area is . . .	... use this number of people or families as your sample:
500	222
700	255
1,000	286
3,000	353
5,000	370
10,000 or more	400

Source: *Use a Survey to Fight Poverty* (Trenton: New Jersey Community Action Training Institute, 1967), p. 12.

Many practical books describe in detail how to do survey research. See, for example: Earl R. Babbie, *Survey Research Methods* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1973); Robert P. Vichas, *Complete Handbook of Profitable Marketing Research Techniques* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1982).

<sup>6</sup> Douglas W. Johnson, *Reaching Out to the Unchurched* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1983), p. 29.

<sup>7</sup> Herman Anderson, Martin Bradley, Paul Goetting, Patty Shriver, and Bernard Quinn, *Churches and Church Membership in the United States: 1980* (Atlanta: Glenmary Research Center, 1982).

<sup>8</sup> Johnson, *ibid*.  
<sup>9</sup> Lyle E. Schaller, "The Rule of Forty," *The Christian Ministry*, November, 1983, pp. 17, 18.

<sup>10</sup> Roger Morton, Adventist Life Seminars, RD 1, Box 248, Crystal Springs, Mississippi 39059; Audiovisual Department, Kettering Medical Center, 3535 Southern Blvd., Kettering, Ohio 45429.

## Family-Life Education Survey

1. What do you believe is the number-one problem facing families in this community right now?
2. Would you think about attending any of these Family Life Seminars if they were offered in this area? (Select as many as you wish.)
  - ☐ How to Handle Conflict
  - ☐ Communication in Marriage
  - ☐ Marriage Enrichment or Encounter Weekend
  - ☐ Understanding Children
  - ☐ Self-esteem
  - ☐ Parenting Skills
  - ☐ Dealing With Teenagers
  - ☐ Childbirth Preparation Class
  - ☐ Divorce Recovery
  - ☐ Stress Management
  - ☐ Overcoming Loneliness
  - ☐ Planning for Retirement
  - ☐ Family Finances
  - ☐ Grief Recovery
  - ☐ Time Management and Life Priorities
  - ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
3. What time of the day and day of the week is best for you to attend a class on family life? (Check those blocks that are open for you.)

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

4. We do not want to know your name, but it will help us to make this survey scientifically valid if you answer these questions about yourself:
  - A. Sex: ☐ Male; ☐ Female
  - B. Approximate age: \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Do you have children under 18 years of age in your home? \_\_\_\_\_
  - D. Are you . . . ☐ Never married; ☐ Married; ☐ Separated; ☐ Divorced; ☐ Remarried after divorce; ☐ Widowed.

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# A Passover communion

*Even though we celebrate them only once a quarter, our communion services easily can become mere formalities, neither involving our members nor making a contribution to their spiritual growth. Changing the routine once in a while focuses the congregation's attention on the service and encourages a fuller participation. The author suggests here a celebration of the Lord's Supper which not only offers variety but deepens understanding as it builds on Communion's roots in the Passover. □ by Ken Wade*

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*I've always known, at least in the back of my mind, that the Last Supper was a Passover meal—a seder. And I always felt that if I would take the time to understand the Passover better I would understand Communion better too. But I never got around to studying their relationship until just this year. As is*

often true, my wife provided the special motivation that got me going. She had read an article in *Guideposts* describing a group of Christians in Bowling Green, Illinois, who participated in a "Christian seder" at Easter. Fascinated by the insights that experience brought, she urged me to do something similar for our annual candlelight communion service.

I was interested in giving the usual communion service greater meaning and lifting it above the mechanical ceremony

it can so easily become. A comparison of the Christian communion with its Passover roots, we decided, would do this naturally and ideally. It wasn't our purpose to replace the traditional, but to add significance to it through a special service.

We made it a family event—after all, the Passover was celebrated by families in their homes. With everyone seated around tables, each group became a "family." Each selected its own "mother" who began the service by lighting the candles. Each group had a "father" too, to break and distribute the

bread. (The head deaconess had made the unleavened bread in large, round pieces, about three inches in diameter, perforated down the middle for easy breaking.)

I have also used this special service in a regular church communion setting and find it has just as much meaning to the participants, although the close family feeling is lost. Perhaps the best way to communicate the atmosphere of this service is simply to let you eavesdrop on our congregation as we experience a "new slant" (actually an old one) to the traditional communion service.

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Ken Wade, a pastor, writes from Portage, Wisconsin.

**B**ut Jesus changed this. Notice that when He broke the bread He did not hide it, but distributed it! In this act, Jesus portrayed the fact that the Messiah was no longer hidden!

## A Passover Communion Service

Scripture: Mark 14:12.

Most of us have realized for years that the communion service as first instituted by Christ found its roots in the Jewish Passover service. But if you are like me, you know little of what the Passover really was. I hope that tonight you may gain some insights that will make the communion service more meaningful to you.

You are all seated at tables. We won't even use the sanctuary tonight, because the Passover was never celebrated in a synagogue. In Jesus' day the whole family, from the oldest to the youngest, gathered around the dinner table and joined in the celebration. After all, the feast originated when *all* Israel—old and young alike—left Egypt. It has been celebrated for thousands of years as a remembrance of that deliverance.

Jesus passed it on to spiritual Israel as a memorial of the great sacrifice He made to free us from sin. "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7). This phrase had deeper significance to Jews in Paul's day than it does to us. Every year they had seen a lamb sacrificed and the blood—redeeming blood—painted on the lintel and doorpost. They must have been thrilled to suddenly see the full significance of what they had done for so many years—the full significance of Jesus' blood shed to redeem them from their sins.

*Redemption* was the theme of the Passover. And it is the theme of Communion too. I'll be sharing more of the Passover service with you later, but right now I'd like to give you a chance to participate in our service. For the Passover meant participation. It allowed no "bumps on logs"! The whole family joined in!

The service began with praise to God, and I'd like you to share with me now in one of the psalms that is still used in all Passover celebrations. I hope each of you brought a Bible. If not, we have a supply. Turn to Psalm 116. Psalms 115-118 are the psalms of praise used at the Passover. We will read antiphonally (responsively). I'll read the odd-numbered verses, you read the even-numbered ones.

### Read the Responsive Reading: Psalm 116.\*

*Redemption!* The psalmist here recalls how God redeemed him from destruction, and he offers his praise. Do you remember what it meant to you when you first believed on Jesus as your personal Passover Lamb who died to save your life? Oh, it is good to remember what Jesus really meant to you at that time! Does He still mean the same to you today?

Following the *kaddish* (time of praise and sanctification) at the Passover, where Jesus and the disciples reclined around the table, was the *rehaz*—ritual cleansing or purification. This may have been where the snag developed in that Last Supper. *Rehaz* had to do with cleansing the hands—but the disciples' feet were still dirty. The very preliminary step of cleansing had been overlooked.

They were reclining around a table with their feet outward. The *Mishnah*—rabbinic laws—stated that even the poorest man in Israel *must recline* to partake of the Passover meal. This practice developed because free men customarily reclined at a meal while the servants served them. At Passover, memorializing redemption from slavery, no Jew was to act as a slave. The Passover commemorated their *freedom*!

But no servant had been provided to tend to the disciples' needs. What could they do?

Against this background Jesus demonstrated that true freedom consists in freedom from selfishness and pride. He humbled Himself, taking the form of a servant, and washed the disciples' feet. John 13:13-17: "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

As we prepare to partake of Communion it is our privilege to enter into this same type of freedom from pride—to humbly serve our brother or our sister in the role of servant.

### Celebrate the Ordinance of Foot Washing\*

The Passover meal, as celebrated in Jesus' time, included several "courses." The Gospel accounts of the Last Supper focus particularly on the latter portion of the meal, beginning with Jesus' revelation of His terrible secret (Matt. 26:20-25). Earlier portions of the meal must have brought vividly to His mind the bitterness of what He was about to experience during the hours that followed, culminating in His death.

Every Passover meal includes bitter herbs—parsley and horseradish or watercress. Now, I don't know about you, but parsley is not one of my favorite foods. I've been told it's a good source of vitamins and minerals, but I still don't like the flavor.

These bitter herbs served to remind God's people of the bitterness of their bondage before He delivered them. Let us also recall the depths from which God has redeemed us and resolve never to return to their bitterness.

You'll notice that at each table we have a basket with three circular pieces of unleavened bread. These resemble what is used at a Passover meal.

\* The Order of Service is at the end of the article.



**A**s the Last Supper drew to a close, Jesus “took the cup”—very likely the Elijah cup—and as with the bread, distributed it. In so doing, He showed that this was to be the last Passover meal.

At the Passover, or seder, after the father dips the parsley in salt water, he takes one of the three pieces of unleavened bread, breaks it, and then hides half of it somewhere on the table. Later the children search for it, and the one who finds it receives a special reward. I'll say more about the significance of this act in a moment, but first a question: Why unleavened bread?

The Passover came at the beginning of the year—actually in the spring. And along with redemption, it symbolized a time for starting life anew. The old leaven, which was sourdough, not yeast, symbolized the old life. It must be completely excluded from the new life. Therefore, in preparing for the Passover, every Jewish householder searches the premises, purging out all the old leaven. Every metal pot that has come in contact with the old leaven must be held over the fire until it glows, and earthen pots must also be specially cleansed. The new year has no room for the old life. So the Passover served as a kind of mini-baptism, or rebirth. As we come to Communion and to a new year, may it be with a genuine, heartfelt resolve to leave the old behind and become, once again, new creatures in Christ Jesus!

At the Passover the father hides half of the piece of broken bread. It symbolizes the hidden Messiah whom all Israel hopes to see revealed.

But Jesus changed this. Notice that when He broke the bread He did not hide it, but distributed it! What significance this must have had to the disciples! In this act Jesus portrayed the fact that the Messiah was no longer hidden! He had been revealed, and those at the table with Him had had the privilege of partaking of Him.

In the Jewish festival the bread was eaten together with bitter herbs, but Jesus has taken the bitterness for us, that we might enjoy the sweetness of new life in Him. And so tonight we have the privilege of partaking of new, fresh bread unpolluted by old life. Let it be with full realization of its meaning. Jesus wants to generate new life in us every day of our lives.

---

### Recite the Prayer for the Bread\*

Before we partake of the bread, take the sheet of paper at your place, and recite the first brief reading with me:

We partake of this bread—  
The broken body of our Lord—  
In remembrance of our bondage,  
His sacrifice,  
And our freedom.

---

### Congregation Partake of the Bread\*

During the Passover, a total of four glasses of unfermented wine were consumed—just as the bread was untainted by fermentation, so was the wine. The four glasses of wine represented the four expressions of redemption in Exodus 6:6, 7. Let us read this passage together now. (Read Ex. 6:6, 7.)

But in addition to the four glasses, another glass of wine was always poured, but not drunk. It was for Elijah; and according to the custom, the father, when he poured this cup, would arise from the table and open the door of the house to invite Elijah to come in and partake of it—in hope that the prophet who was to appear as the forerunner of the Messiah would make his presence known.

As the Last Supper drew to a close Jesus “took the cup”—very likely the Elijah cup—and as with the bread, distributed it. In so doing, He showed that this was to be the last Passover meal. Its symbolism had been fulfilled. Elijah's mission had been fulfilled in John the Baptist. And the Messiah had come to them.

But another deep meaning is here too. The wine symbolizes Jesus' life in us, giving us power to live as He lived, and to prepare a people ready to meet their God. To the disciples, drinking Elijah's cup also symbolized that Elijah's mantle had fallen upon them. Now they must go and proclaim the coming of the Lord.

Has the wine lost its significance for us, who, as latter-day Elijahs, proclaim His glorious second advent?

---

### Recite the Prayer for the Wine\*

Now, before we take the wine, take the sheet and recite with me again:

We take this cup, Lord,  
Remembering that it is Your blood;  
Resolving to let Your life  
Live in us.

Empower us  
That we may walk worthy  
Of Elijah's mantle  
And Your life.

---

### Congregation Partake of the Wine\*

The Last Supper ended with a hymn—no doubt one of the psalms used at the close of Passovers for thousands of years. Let us read together the shortest psalm, Psalm 117, and then we will be dismissed by prayer.

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Read Psalm 117  
and Have the  
Closing Prayer\*

### Order of Service

Responsive Reading:  
Psalm 116

The Ordinance of Foot  
Washing

The Prayer for the Bread

Partake of the Bread

The Prayer for the Wine

Partake of the Wine

Congregational Reading:  
Psalm 117

Closing Prayer

## Teaching the Adventist lifestyle

*Many of the families brought into my church through evangelism have no idea how to do many of the things that those brought up as Adventists do as a matter of course. How can I train these families in such matters as family worship, handling children in church, preparing for and observing the Sabbath, et cetera, which make up the Adventist lifestyle?*

### **Sabbath school classes for the newly baptized**

Before an evangelistic crusade takes place, some members of the church should be trained in specialized areas of our lifestyle and way of doing things. Then those who are baptized should not be introduced into the regular Sabbath school classes or be expected to study the regular quarterly. Rather, there should be one or two classes (depending on the facilities of the church and the number of new members) especially for the newly baptized. In these classes, doctrines should be emphasized again, and also the reasons why we do the things we do in such areas as worship, Sabbathkeeping, and so forth. Qualified instructors should teach about family relationships, education of the children, health, finances, et cetera.

Some additional suggestions:

1. Supply an outline to each participating new member that indicates the topics and the length of each meeting.
2. Provide time for sharing experiences and feelings as well as for free dialogue.
3. Encourage this group to participate in church activities. Do not let them be isolated from the rest of the congregation.
4. Do not give the members of this group major responsibilities in the church right away. But let them have responsibilities within their group.—Alberto Gordobil, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

### **Develop a family ministry**

This points up the absolute necessity of a balanced, wholistic program of

ministry in a church that wants to grow. If you have a regular program of Family Life Seminars, parenting classes, Family Home groups, and other types of small groups, and a range of seminars covering physical, mental, and spiritual health, then these new families will learn the practical aspects of Adventist lifestyle or Christian living. Some of this learning may even happen before they decide to be baptized—it might even help some families seriously to consider becoming a part of the Adventist Church.

A local church that focuses all of its energies strictly on religious or doctrinal outreach activities—Bible studies, evangelistic meetings, Bible seminars and classes—to the exclusion of an equal number of offerings in the area of physical and mental health, cannot sustain a growth pattern. (The research data to support this from non-Adventist studies is considerable, and recent Adventist research says the same thing. See Dudley and Cummings, *Adventures in Church Growth*, pp. 26-29.)

Why not start a School of Christian Living with regular offerings of classes in health, family life, relational skills, witnessing tools, et cetera? This would supplement the Biblical emphasis in Sabbath school and other Bible classes already in the church program. Ample curriculum resources are available from Concerned Communications, the Home and Family Service and the Health and Temperance Department of the General Conference, and Serendipity Books.

Of course, offering classes and other small-group activities does not invalidate the need for one-on-one contact and assistance through such things as a "spiritual guardian" program. But it does bring in the content that gives meaning to the relational contacts, and it does make it possible for a busy pastor to

assemble needy individuals and couples and give instructions in an orderly, time-efficient way.—Monte Sahlin, Worthington, Ohio.

### **Spiritual guardians model Sabbathkeeping**

Assuming that the new Sabbathkeeper has been given careful instruction regarding the principles of Sabbath observance, the pastor and church need now be concerned only with giving guidance on the application of these principles. It seems to me that the spiritual guardian is the logical one to have the primary responsibility for this guidance. The new member needs a spiritual guardian who has the temperament, time, and interest necessary to nurture him for at least the first year after baptism.

I also believe that Sabbathkeeping can best be modeled. Why not have the spiritual guardian invite the new member home for Friday evening worship and supper? What better way to learn than by joining around the family altar as the sun sets and observing the special ceremony that greets God's day? After supper let the new Sabbathkeeper participate in the special family time as they sing and share memories of the week just past.

On another occasion the invitation could be to enjoy the Sabbath together. The spiritual guardian could plan the time after the worship services to include a visit to a park, a call on a shut-in member, and maybe even some time for reading church papers. With the impression this makes on the new member, very little more needs to be said.—Steve Willsey, Washington, D.C.

## Better caught than taught

It is true that to make changes in lifestyle, families need to be exposed to information about such topics as family worship, Sabbath observance, and proper decorum in church. Through sermons or Bible studies on the home, on worship, and on Christian growth, we may present these subjects as applications of the gospel to our lives. An abundance of resources (books, cassettes, and pamphlets) now exist on these themes. These may be loaned or given new families. Information by itself, however, may soon be forgotten unless people perceive it as relevant to their personal life situations. In other words, it must offer possible improvement in marriage and family relationships or afford the hope of strengthening one's connection with God. Only then does information have a chance of changing life habits.

Better than being *taught*, a new lifestyle may be *caught* by converts' being in the presence of those who are living it. Introduce new believers to joyful, winsome families in the church. Encourage members who are enjoying our lifestyle to open their homes to recent converts. Tie the new ones in with people who can model Adventist living for them. Seeing it lived will take it out of the realm of idealism and theory and make it practical.

Selecting one or more families longer in the faith to be guardians of newer families for a period of one to two years is one way of accomplishing this, though efforts should be made to keep this from becoming an "institutional" thing and to ensure that the families involved will have some interests in common.

Some pastors utilize the families of their elders and deacons as caring teams who are encouraged to minister in caring ways and to open their homes for individuals and families to visit. One pastor and his wife regularly visit their church families on Friday, Saturday, and weekday evenings, observing their needs, instructing them, and leading their families in worship.

Family clustering events—programs designed to involve all age groups—are becoming popular ways for families in church to mingle intergenerationally and learn from one another. Creative Sabbath school leaders can also stimulate young people with questions, topics to study, and/or verses to learn that will

lure parents into family worship and interaction on religious themes with their children.

Lifestyle change is the end result of a process that runs from the receiving of information through a restructuring of attitudes to alteration of habits and formation of new behavior patterns. While undoubtedly the working of God's Spirit in the life facilitates this so that wondrous changes may take place quickly, blessed are those new believers who have pastors and church members who will patiently nurture them during this process.—Ron Flowers, Takoma Park, Maryland.

## Multiple exposure

I think the key thing is that we not miss instructing converts as they are coming into the church. When I am preparing a family for baptism, I always cover the spiritual life—including studying the Bible for themselves, their prayer life, and witnessing. And if both hus-

band and wife are members, I bring in the blessings and importance of family worship. I continue to encourage them in this as I visit them.

My pastor's class gives a second exposure. I always require (to the extent that I can "require"! ) newly baptized members to spend six months in this class. This gives me the opportunity, as we go through the lessons (I use Profiles of Faith) on spiritual life, to reemphasize family worships.

Another important avenue of learning for new believers is through established members. We have regular family socials and fellowship dinners to encourage the congregation to form relationships that will allow this kind of learning.

And finally, a pastor occasionally can use the Christian Family Day in February to instruct the whole church on matters such as family worship, Sabbath observance, and so forth. In this way he's not aiming just at the new members all the time—and I'm sure the other members benefit from this reminder as well.—John McGraw, Wheaton, Maryland.

## Baptize in haste?

**A** member of your church has become engaged to someone who is not a Seventh-day Adventist. They've set a date—which would now be practically impossible to change—six weeks from the day they inform you of their plans. They want to be married in your church, and would like you to perform the ceremony. The nonmember knows this means he/she must be baptized, and is willing. How would you proceed in this situation?

If you have some ideas as to how a pastor might successfully handle this situation, please sit right down, put your suggestions on paper, and send them to us. The lead time required for the publication of MINISTRY means that we need your response right away.

We need questions as well. We will

pay \$15 for any question you submit on the practice of ministry that we use in Parson to Parson. Specific and detailed questions meet our needs best.

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# Signs wins! MINISTRY loses!

In January, 1978, B. Russell Holt, a youthful 32, joined our MINISTRY staff as an executive editor. In six-plus years MINISTRY, under his able editorial leadership, has become one of the leading ministerial journals in the world. Keep in mind that half our regular subscription list goes to ministers working outside the United States and Canada. Our circulation to the Adventist ministry is between 16,000 and 17,000 each month. In addition, the alternate issues go to nearly 250,000 non-Adventist clergy, mainly in North America.

Evidence of Holt's excellent leadership was recently underlined by an expert magazine consultant hired to critique the various journals printed by the Review and Herald Publishing Association. His critique was taped, and a transcription of it is in my possession. John Peters, an able consultant, said, "I think MINISTRY is one swell magazine." He continued, "It is a good job in every way. I can nitpick it a bit, but I said earlier it really engaged me, and I thought this was wonderful. I think that I have marked up the copies I had a little, because actually, if I can't find some fault, why should I come here!"

He made a few minor comments relative to improving the journal, but what touched us most of all is that his testimony was "I couldn't resist reading some of these articles that really I wouldn't normally be that interested in, but the magazine captured my attention." He spoke of the "nice format." He used adjectives such as "wonderful" and "marvelous." Naturally, we were thrilled with this excellent report on our journal, and much of the credit goes to Russell Holt.

Kenneth Holland, then editor of the now-discontinued *These Times*, and presently the editor of our new combined evangelistic journal *Signs of the Times*, is the one who recommended Russ to me. Holland knew him intimately since they worked together for a few years on *These*

*Times* in Nashville, Tennessee. His recommendation was so glowing and positive that I flew to Phoenix, Arizona, where Russ was pastoring. I interviewed him, along with his wife, Judy, a talented nurse, at an eatery well known to most Westerners, The Spaghetti Factory! After a couple hours of getting acquainted, I left with my mind fairly set on Russ as the man for the post. I went on to California to interview others, but God's Spirit continued to impress me that Russ was the one we wanted. Subsequent events have more than substantiated the leading of the Holy Spirit in selecting him.

The same Kenneth Holland who recommended Russ to me has shown extraordinarily good judgment by calling Russ to his side as one of the editors of *Signs*. We shall miss his quiet, unflappable demeanor. His judgment has exceeded that of many a person with far more years of experience. Although serious in deportment, his wit was quietly irresistible. I shall personally miss him not only as my right-hand editor but as a confidant. He is a trustworthy man in every respect.

Although his true love is editing and writing, Russell has a broad base of knowledge and skills that increases his value as a husband, father, school board member, Sabbath school teacher, local elder of a church, and chairman of the General Conference worship committee and the General Conference picnic committee. These activities, plus many others, show the broad-ranged contribution he has made not only to our journal but to the church in general. I know he will perform magnificently in his new task as associate editor of our new journal *Signs*.

Above and beyond all laudatory remarks, the highest honor I can bestow on Russ is to say that I know him to be a true, practicing Christian.

When someone asked Russ how he got interested in writing, he told the story of

taking a class in the history of church music in his college days. His final exam was an essay. When the paper was returned it had the notation "You should consider a career in denominational journalism." I don't know who that teacher was, but I could hope that other teachers will write similar notes to those who show interest and skill in editing and writing. There is a shortage of qualified individuals of this type.

We pray that Russ and his wife, Judy, and their two sweet children, Amy and Andrew, will enjoy their new home! And we want Russ to know that we shall be remembering him in our prayers as he continues to sharpen his skills as an editor with the Pacific Press Publishing Association.

So Russ, Judy, and children, we bid you adieu, and may God bless you.—J.R.S.

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## The pastor's wife then and now

*Many pastoral wives find themselves today in a crisis of conflicting expectations from within as well as without. How did the present situation come about, and what can you do to cope with it?*

Many roles are changing in today's world, and the role of the pastor's wife is no exception. These changes often cause feelings of confusion and frustration. During the 1983 Annual Council, Miriam Wood, teacher, editor, and minister's wife, moderated a panel discussing *The Adventist Pastoral Wife in Crisis*. Panel members (all pastoral wives and, interestingly enough, all nurses) were: Marguerite McGraw, Wheaton, Maryland; Lillian Grosboll, Hyattsville, Maryland; Lira Weiss, Silver Spring, Maryland; and Barbara Nelson, Bozeman, Montana.

Miriam has done a wonderful job of taking the results of the panel discussion and preparing this month's Shepherdess feature. Her article describes some of the pressures faced by the pastoral wife and the reasons for them. Many of you have dealt successfully with these things in your own lives. Won't you write me and tell me about the answers you have found? Whether you are a pastor's wife or the husband of a pastor's wife, we want to listen, and you'll want to read what these women have to say. It's important to you and to your church. —Marie Spangler.

The Adventist pastoral wife faces problems today that could never have been foreseen in the church's (and the world's) earlier, simpler years. And the decisions she makes in the next several years will have a profound effect upon the Adventist Church and the concept of a shared pastoral responsibility. But before describing how things are, we need to discuss how things used to be and why.

Churches exist in the context and framework of their times. In the nineteenth century the Adventist Church was male-dominated, as were other churches and secular institutions. Church and society deeply believed that a woman was an extension of her husband and that her role should be that of homemaker. The few who disputed this assumption were considered strange indeed.

When many evangelical religions came into being in mid-century, conventional wisdom was that the gospel commission made it imperative for the pastoral wife to continue to run her home smoothly and rear her children perfectly (usually with next to no money) and also function as her husband's full-time pastoral partner.

Surprisingly enough, pastoral wives apparently voiced almost no resentment or disagreement. In general, they seemed to accept their multiple roles submissively and, in most cases, enthusiastically. The mental picture is of a tired pastoral wife, dressed in her rusty "good" black dress, serving a meal to a large number of Sabbath guests, having grown the food, harvested it, and prepared it. Her husband and quiet children stand by immaculately dressed in the clothes she has made, washed, starched, and ironed. In addition, she has a bed always available for the homeless (made up with snowy sheets and homemade quilts), listens to the problems of the troubled at any time they choose, and always presents a serene countenance to the world.

But it worked! At least the failures were not often recorded. Pastoral wives usually had little formal education, but in this they differed little from their secular counterparts. Women did not need formal education, society felt. The role of pastoral wife probably gratified the human need to stand just a little above the crowd. Remember too that the role of preacher in those days carried with it great status. It is safe to say that during most of the nineteenth century the minister commanded the same kind of respect that physicians now enjoy.

With the dawn of the twentieth century, the pastoral wifely role did not change. If anything, it became even more demanding as the role of the pastor-evangelist developed. Now the wife needed to be a musician so she could take her place at the piano or organ night after night! As Adventist colleges came

into full being, along with theological departments, it dawned on faculty members that the future of the church rested, to a large extent, on the graduating ministerial students, and, by extension, on the girls they selected as wives. Throughout the 1940s college Bible teachers and other faculty members showed an inordinate interest in this matter and monitored romances carefully. Over and over the ministerial student heard, "The girl you marry will make or break your ministry." And usually the students submitted meekly to the guidance of their mentors.

Interestingly enough, the girls no more questioned this concept than did their husbands-to-be. (The girls who did not agree and voiced their feelings usually lost out as wives of future ministers.) When a conference president interviewed a senior theology student for his first pastoral-evangelistic role, he usually interviewed the fiancée as well and told her that if her husband-to-be was employed, her services were also being secured. Her time belonged to the conference just as much as did her husband's. She must accompany her groom on his pastoral visits, and exhibit tact and interest in others. She must dress quietly and modestly. She must learn, above all, to curb her tongue, and finally, she must never interfere with his work in any way. "She will be a hindrance to him in his work" was the worst thing that could ever be said about a pastoral bride. Listening to the firm, authoritative enunciation of these high standards, the frightened, timid bride acquiesced. It was that kind of era.

Most pastoral wives through the thirties and early forties did not have college degrees. In the postdepression era few Adventist families had the finances to provide advanced education for their daughters, and most did not think it necessary, "since she will just get married and raise a family." Many a ministerial student became engaged in college to a

girl who then dropped out to earn a bit of money for her wedding, leaving him with a college degree and her with no marketable skills or profession.

This picture seems negative, but the truth is that it worked gloriously! Remember that until World War II almost no married woman worked outside the home. Incomes were low, and the pastoral couple was not much poorer than most of the members. The pastoral wife had respect and admiration, and she basked in her leadership role. What did it matter that she and her husband worked around the clock, had no money, sometimes wore hand-me-downs from more affluent family members, did not own property and had no hopes of ever doing so? The two of them were engaged in a mighty work for God, and the wife believed this as much as her husband. Every day was a new challenge with new battles to be won for God, more souls to warn of the soon return of Christ. This was an extremely productive period for the Adventist Church, almost a golden age.

Then World War II changed everything—above all, the role of women in America and other lands. Housewives who had never expected to hold a job outside the home now found themselves urged into defense and munition plants to take the places of men in the armed forces. Families were disrupted. A totally new atmosphere dawned. Prices began to rise (as they always do in war), and paychecks loomed incredibly large, especially to women unaccustomed to earning anything. As pastoral wives saw these changes and realized how working outside the home could ease financial stress, a few ventured, with fear and trembling, into the war plants. They assured themselves it was only temporary. Even the secular world thought that women would go back home when the war ended. But it didn't work out that way. Returning war veterans found a wife accustomed to her own income and unwilling to see her husband as the sole provider.

Another outgrowth of the war was a new philosophy regarding the education of women. Many young women had been widowed, and having no preparation to earn a living for themselves and their children, they were terrified when the war plants closed. "If only I had had an education!" was the bitter cry. Crash courses in secretarial science, nursing, and other adult education programs

blossomed. More and more, girls began to have college expectations (the result of higher secular incomes and the aftermath of the war); some began to feel that although a woman might never have a job other than that of nurturer and homemaker, she should have a comprehensive education in order to keep up with her husband in his profession. Women were no longer content to be an appendage of their husbands. The "little woman" was on the march.

As prices rose and as other women found permanent positions in the marketplace, pastoral wives slowly began to leave the home for jobs. There were children to educate in the church school system, a monumentally high expense then and now, and people concluded that even though one's eventual home was to be heaven, one must have some sort of habitation on this earth, and it made good financial sense to own the latter, if possible. Lump sums were needed for down payments. At first pastoral wives generally chose jobs in the fields of teaching, nursing, and secretarial work (probably still the preponderant choices). These professions have one thing in common—one can enter and leave them rather easily, allowing the

pastoral wife to continue working steadily even though she must "uproot" frequently because of her husband's moves from one church to another.

But as emphasis on the equality of women in the professional world and on their right to self-realization becomes ever more insistent, the pastoral wife finds herself in a crisis situation. Increasing numbers of younger women are entering the fields of medicine, dentistry, law, economics, city management, and counseling. Success in these professions generally requires becoming established in a community. If a pastoral wife—a dentist, let us say—has just succeeded in building a good practice, and her husband is called to another church hundreds of miles away, must she give up her budding career?

Throughout the past century and nearly the first fifty years of this century, the church assumed that "good" wives would uproot themselves without any complaints (publicly, at least) and follow whither the husband's professional calling led. She would somehow, over and over again, make a new home and sustain her children through the traumatic experience of acquiring new friends. Is this the proper attitude for a

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## Prayers from the parsonage

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I'm going to visit Israel!

I will travel this land whose history and geography I've studied since childhood. I will see its people whose story I've followed with interest and compassion.

Protect me, Lord, I pray, for this country must always be alert to terrorism and attack.

Increase my understanding. Pictures fill my mind, but they are influenced more by *The Bible Story* artists than by reality. Even as I imagine Biblical scenes, may I accept the changes that are part of modern life.

Draw me closer to You. I cannot naively accept every guidebook claim, but I want to follow Your footsteps as accurately as possible. Surely, even at sites that seem artificial or commercial-

ized, I can acknowledge the spirit of those who first built shrines and the faith of believers who reverently worship there now.

Give me insight about the people. Jews, Moslems, Christians, Samaritans—so many religions seek expression. Druze, Karaites, Circassians, bedouins—so many cultures coexist. Soldiers at the border, scholars in the courtyard. Men at business, women at market. Guides who shepherd tourists and shepherds who follow flocks. I hope to learn from all of them what it is like to live daily in the Promised Land.

Keep me patient. When my "dream of a lifetime" involves long lines, mix-ups, and irritations, help me to remember that minor problems are part of any travel.

Thank You, Lord, for this opportunity.

Cherry B. Habenicht

pastoral wife to take? Are certain careers closed to her because of her husband's calling to the ministry? Should she not be able to follow a career of her choice? Should the "two for the price of one" concept in hiring ministers continue to prevail? What is right and what is wrong here? Indeed, is there a "right" or a "wrong"?

Obviously some very serious factors are involved. Inevitably, the attitude of pastors themselves comes under scrutiny. In earlier years, almost without exception, Adventist ministers identified so with their ministry that it was almost impossible to discuss one without the other. The dedication was nearly total. At the present time, however, some women have a growing feeling that not all men enter the ministry with this total sense of mission. The ministry does offer advantages—an honored place of leadership in the community, the opportunity for creativity and self-expression, freedom to come and go without the tyranny of the "nine to five" schedule so many must live with, travel, and salaries that may not approach those of large corporations, but include many "fringe benefits" and great job security. The materialistic goals of some ministers are quite evident in their attachment to the accoutrements of this acquisitive era. (And not all preachers would qualify as top-salaried corporate executives, so their lives may not be as voluntarily sacrificial as some might think.)

If the minister's dedication, then, is not as strong as one could desire, it is hardly fair to ask his wife to subordinate entirely her professional life goals to his. Women throughout history have always been willing to follow men of dedication, commitment, and vision, no matter what the consequences.

However, we must also admit that churches have an enormous need for a nurturer in addition to the pastor. The church needs a shepherdess. It is a unique role. No deaconess or other officer of the church can fill it; they can help, they can substitute, but only the pastor's wife can bring the role to full flower.

Some wives actually thrive on this life with all its hazards; ministry gives them a sense of strong fulfillment and a deep, vibrant joy. They cannot picture any other life as being half as rewarding. But for those who feel differently, the conflicts, both inward and outward, are serious. The evidence lies in the shat-

tering of all too many pastoral homes, with the loss of confidence in the ministry that inevitably follows. The once-unthinkable—that pastors and their wives would divorce—has become not only thinkable but to some couples the only solution possible.

The ministerial family does not enjoy the respect that it once did, or the high position in community life. In analyzing this situation, one arrives at the problem of commitment. Undoubtedly the total commitment of previous generations earned for them a deep respect among their members. Respect must be earned. They—our forebears—earned it. Today a pastoral wife must engender this respect by showing that she is a committed, loving, caring person. Even though she works outside the home—and there is no reason to think that this condition will change—a pastoral wife will have to find her own ways of showing concern, concern with the needs of members. The nurturing role has a vacancy shaped just to her specifications.

Another problem area in the parsonage is the quality of the marriage. Nonministerial couples can openly seek professional counseling when they find

women whose husbands earn only modest salaries. But today's wives will have to look carefully at every aspect of their employment. No one else can as successfully fill the nurturing role in the home as the wife. And no one else can so successfully fill the nurturing role in the church as the pastoral wife. The continued functioning of the church depends on an acceptance of this responsible role. Again the word that comes to mind is "commitment." Both partners will need to be committed to their marriage and to the church if the pastoral role is to continue to serve the church in all its vitality. This means that a pastoral wife will have to study the nature of her outside employment and its place in her life. She must weigh the obligations of her job against the paramount obligations of her role as a pastor's wife. She holds the key. Undoubtedly this will require her to make professional sacrifices from time to time.

As we have noted, in previous generations prospective ministerial wives were scrutinized very carefully—in some cases, so carefully that their mentors could be charged with interference. Now the pendulum seems to have swung

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themselves experiencing heavy marital problems. But pastoral couples feel a certain reluctance to take this route. They need to have "neutral" counseling available in such a way that their problems do not become a part of the administrative scene in the conference office.

And to whom does the pastoral wife go when she needs spiritual help in her own life? In other words, who is her pastor? Because he is a human being in a marriage relationship, her husband cannot really fill this role. Many wives are currently voicing their deeply felt need for a pastor, someone who understands their spiritual problems. Conference administrations need to plan to meet this need.

The economy in the Western world seems to demand that pastoral wives work outside the home, as do other

completely to the other side, and one wonders if a little old-fashioned counsel and scrutiny might not pay large dividends for the future of the ministry. New ways of alerting prospective pastoral wives to the fact that they will be marrying "the ministry" as well as the man need to be instituted. Conceivably, every SDA college and university should offer a course in, shall we say, "The Dynamics of Being a Minister's Wife: Its Positives and Negatives." Conferences ought to require this of every ministerial fiancée. If the marriage occurs after college days, then the conference could make a correspondence course available and insist on its completion. Conferences would recoup the minimal expense of financial "wifehood" courses many times over by saving couples from divorce when the stark reality of pastoral life dawns on both partners.



Beyond this, all too often the minister has put such emphasis on his professional role that he has virtually ignored his family, other than admonishing his wife and children to be "good examples." Dressed in his Brooks Brothers suit and well-shined Florsheim shoes, with his sparkling white shirt and quietly striped tie, he leaves the domestic battleground of childish whines, dirty dishes, clothes that need washing, and errands to be done. He tells himself that he is "doing God's work," and who can argue with that? Well, his wife can if she is carrying two jobs—one paid and one unpaid. I do not wish to denigrate the importance of the ministry or to suggest that the pastor become a domestic servant. But he does need to sit down and think through his marriage situation fairly, squarely, and perhaps with a season of private prayer. Perhaps we need to develop a companion

course to the wifhood seminar, a course in "How to Be a Preacher and a Husband."

Many feel that conferences ought to pay the pastor's wife for assisting her husband (as an "Assistant to the Pastor," not an "Assistant Pastor"). Many wives are paid for doing for others the same kind of work which the church so badly needs her to do. If a wife could be paid for assisting her husband, the late twentieth century would finally see the development of a team concept that would fit the needs of the church. The rate of pay would vary, of course, with the skills, training, and inclinations of the wife involved. Not all wives would be interested in this role, but probably a surprisingly large number would welcome it.

We cannot expect simple answers to complex problems—and no problems

are more complex than those facing today's pastoral wives. They are beset on every side by conflicting philosophies, conflicting demands, conflicting loyalties. Much prayer and intelligent thought will be needed in addressing the present crisis. As never before, the Adventist Church needs strong pastoral wives, deeply committed to the Lord, to ministerial wifhood, to enduring marriages—women with hearts large enough to encompass the vast needs of the members. Our churches need the example of committed pastoral couples (not perfect couples, because no humans are perfect). Our members need to have their own faith strengthened by seeing victories in the lives of their pastor and his wife.

The pastoral wife is in crisis. How her crisis is met will affect the future of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

# Continuing Education for Adventist Ministers

## What's Happening?

- Mark Finley's book *Decisions* has been made into a continuing-education course and presented by local conferences as a gift to 5,000 ministers.
- Toward Better Preaching is a course offered by MINISTRY magazine. It's not too late to send in your \$3.00 for the study guide. One thousand non-SDA clergy are taking this course, costing them \$12.00. Send your money to: Ministry

Services, P.O. Box 217,  
Burtonsville, MD 20866.

- Special courses are being prepared for ministers' wives.
- Conferences are already planning workers' meetings and other programs as

continuing-education events.

One union Ministerial secretary and his wife are holding ten-day workshops in each of their conferences.

- Watch for the full-page ad next month introducing two new home-based courses.



For further information, contact your local conference office and request the booklet "Continuing Education Guidelines for SDA Ministers."

## Church music convention

"Dimensions in Church Music and Worship," a convention cosponsored by the SDA Church Musicians' Guild and the Hymn Society of America, will meet at Southern College of SDAs, Collegedale, Tennessee, July 6-10, 1984.

This year's convention will have a dual focus: children in church music, and hymns. W. Thomas Smith, executive director of the Hymn Society of America, will help with the educational process necessary to introduce the new hymnal to our church by giving insight into the texts, their authors, the tunes, and their composers.

Helen Kemp, an internationally recognized specialist with children's choirs, will talk about vocal preparation, music suitable for various age groupings, and how to organize and maintain a children's choir program in your church.

Write: Marjorie Rasmussen, 36634 Angeline Circle, Livonia, Michigan 48150.

## The Bible Enters the Computer Age

The entire Bible is available on a computer database system known as the WORD Processor. Compatible with Apple, IBM-PC, Osborn, Kaypro, TRS-80 and other similar systems, the WORD Processor has 4.5 million characters conveniently stored on eight standard diskettes. It has the capability of displaying (or printing) any text or portion of the Bible as well as the ability to search for any

word or combination of words. For example, it will scan through the book of John and stop at each verse containing the phrase "lamb of God." For further information write to Advanced Intelligence Computers, 7301 Garland Ave., Washington, D.C. 20912, or call (301) 270-3107.

## Sanctuary papers available

In connection with the preparation of his book *The Sanctuary, 1844, and the Pioneers* (see p. 32), Paul Gordon photocopied more than four hundred articles and pamphlets. These presentations on the sanctuary by Adventist pioneers constitute more than one thou-

sand pages and represent their writings on the subject between 1844 and 1905. A limited printing of 200 is now available. You may secure a postpaid copy by sending \$15 to: The Ellen G. White Estate, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

## Movement of Prophecy

Would you like to have a slide program that will acquaint your members with the historical roots of their church and how the Lord has led in its development? Orley Berg, formerly on the editorial staff of MINISTRY and now retired, has designed a seven-program slide presentation, Movement of Prophecy, that

illustrates the Millerite era, the disappointment of 1844, the rise of the Seventh-day Adventist movement, the Spirit of Prophecy, and many other aspects of denominational history and the lives of the pioneers. Many photographs of actual sites make this series especially interesting and valuable.

Each program contains approximately eighty slides accompanied by a manuscript narration. Cassette narration is also available for \$12.95. Cost for the entire set is \$112.50. Include \$3.50 for postage and order from: Bible Lands Pictures, 45356 N. Oak View Dr., Oakhurst, California 93644. Phone: (209) 683-7468.

# Come to New Orleans, 1985

Plan now to attend the Ministerial Presession to the 1985 General Conference to be held in New Orleans, Louisiana. The dates for the presession are June 23-26, 1985. Continuing education credit will be offered for more than 30 professional growth seminars, in addition to the inspiring, Spirit-filled plenary sessions planned. It is imperative that those attending book hotel accommodations early. The official travel agency for the presession is Travel Lite Company, 541 Lincoln Road, No. 401, Miami Beach, Florida 33139, U.S.A. The toll-free number in the continental United States is 800-327-8338. Travel Lite has reserved a block of 1,200-1,500 rooms near the Superdome, where the presession and GC session will take place. Further details on accommodations and seminars will appear in forthcoming issues of MINISTRY.

# Recommended reading

## The Reformation and the Advent Movement

W. L. Emmerson, *Review and Herald Publishing Association*, 1983, 214 pages, \$9.95. Reviewed by Patrick Boyle, stewardship director, South England Conference, Watford, Hertfordshire, England.

Emmerson's thesis that the "roots" of the Seventh-day Adventist Church lie in the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century is one with which few Adventists would disagree. In essence this is the view held by Ellen White in *The Great Controversy* and elaborated by LeRoy Edwin Froom in his *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*. However, Emmerson argues that Adventist roots lie largely in the soil of what we now call the Anabaptist or Radical Reformation. It is to them rather than to Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin that we are indebted for our theological inheritance and our openness to truth. While careful not to downplay the significance of justification by faith and its importance, nevertheless the author does highlight the limitations and weaknesses of the magisterial Reformation and clearly shows how and why it was a "halfway Reformation" and the major Reformers, for all their achievements, "halfway men."

The genius of Seventh-day Adventism is not simply that its roots lie in the sixteenth-century Reformation, but that it is the full flowering of that Reformation. The truths we profess—justification by faith, the Sabbath, believer's baptism, the Lord's Supper and footwashing, health reform, conditional immortality, the Advent hope, and the holiness of God's law—all have come to us sanctified with the incredible sufferings, the astonishing courage, and the indomitable faith of the men and women we dare to claim as our fathers and mothers in Christ. Whether it is the story of Hippolytus Eberli burned at the stake by the Catholics or Felix Mantz drowned by the Protestants, the total loyalty of these men and women to Christ presses home to our hearts the high

cost of truth. If Seventh-day Adventism can be credibly called "God's ecumenical movement," then it must have a more meaningful appreciation of the faith it possesses and the responsibility laid upon it to publish by precept and maintain by practice "the commandments of God" and "the testimony of Jesus."

*The Reformation and the Advent Movement* inevitably calls for comparison with Dr. Bryan Ball's *The English Connection* (see MINISTRY, May, 1982). Both books are concerned with origins, and in this they are similar in purpose. However, the focus is different. *The English Connection*, as the title indicates, has a more limited purpose than Professor Emmerson's book and is more heavily theological. *The Reformation and the Advent Movement* is broader in scope in that it attempts to show why the Advent Movement arose in America, not in Europe.

While this book has certain minor defects, such as no index and inadequate maps, it is a book that every person interested in the "roots" of Seventh-day Adventism should read.

## The Sanctuary, 1844, and the Pioneers

Paul A. Gordon, *Review and Herald Publishing Association*, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1983, 157 pages, \$8.95 paper. Reviewed by B. Russell Holt, executive editor, MINISTRY.

Do Seventh-day Adventist understandings of the sanctuary and judgment rest on the writings of Ellen White, as critics without (and in recent years, some within) the church have charged? Or do these doctrines have a scriptural foundation? Paul Gordon decided to go to primary sources—the writings of those church leaders who developed and defended these doctrines—to see where they based their teachings in these areas. The result is this book in which Gordon allows the pioneers to speak for themselves through articles appearing in *The Present Truth* and *The Advent*

*Review and Sabbath Herald* between 1849 and 1905. His conclusion: "The evidence simply does not support the charge that Ellen White originated the present sanctuary doctrine."

Gordon does not intend to give a complete account of how the pioneers developed and arrived at agreement in these areas. Rather, he takes up his study primarily at the point where that consensus has been reached and demonstrates from their writings the scriptural foundation upon which they built. This book is valuable reading for anyone who wants not only to understand better how those of the past understood the sanctuary and its associated doctrines, but also to understand these things better himself.

## The Battle for the Family

Tim LaHaye, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1982, 249 pages, \$6.95, paper.

The author, who wrote the best-selling *The Battle for the Mind*, describes the subtle influences of humanism on the American home.

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