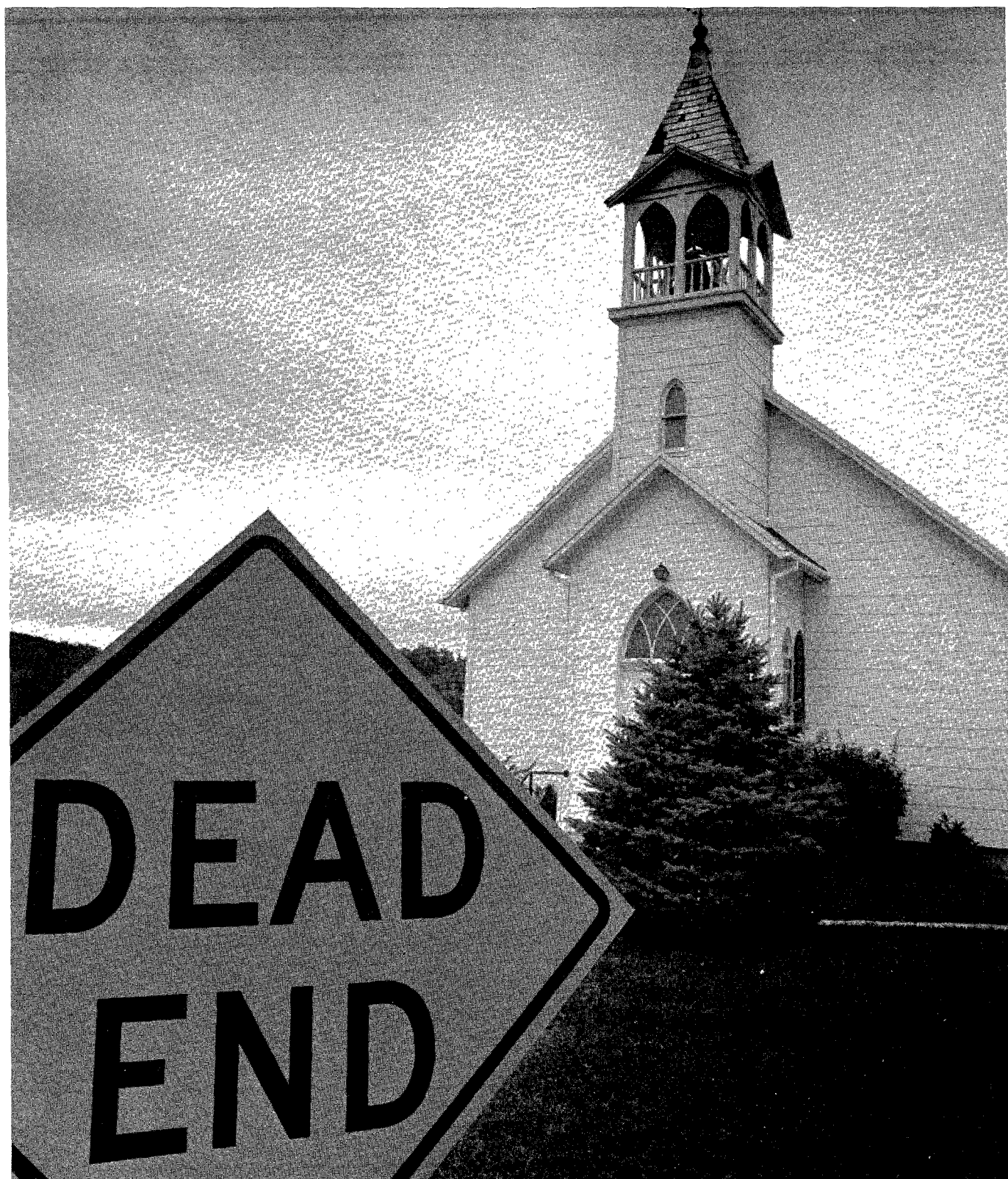


Ministry

A Magazine for Clergy/October 1984



Dream or Die!

Letters

Future reward

Like many Protestant ministers, I need extra income in order to make ends meet. Some years ago I taught gospel piano to a Seventh-day Adventist minister's wife and children. I became quite friendly with the family, and when they left Staten Island they gave you my name and asked that I be put on the MINISTRY mailing list.

As I say, I am most deeply appreciative for your having mailed your magazine gratis all these years. My boyhood minister used to say, "You'll get your reward in the first resurrection." Perhaps this was a rather flip remark, and maybe some would not consider it theologically accurate. Yet, what it expresses is very valid: The acts of love we do for Jesus here on earth will one day have their reward, which will not be measurable in dollars and cents.—Protestant pastor, New York.

Family prays for MINISTRY

I love MINISTRY so much that my family does not forget to pray for it during our family prayer meetings every day. Salute the saints for us.

Let me share this joy with you: Last Sabbath 205 souls were baptized, and 315 are preparing for the next baptism. An assistant director of education for this district is now studying the Sabbath school lessons with us. Remember him in your prayers.—A. Agyei, Agona-Ashanti, Ghana, West Africa.

Sanctification and perfection

In response to Dr. Rice's article "Sanctification and Perfection: Another Look," (June, 1984), the subject of perfection has been tossed about a great deal in and out of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

It has been my understanding that the Inspired Word teaches that Adam and Eve were created perfect. Naturally when man sinned he automatically took on a carnal nature. This will be changed at the second coming of Christ (1 Corinthians 15). However, character is a different subject altogether. The Fall of man damaged the character of man

almost beyond repair. If I understand *The Great Controversy* correctly, his character would have been beyond repair if it were not for the grace that God implants within the soul (p. 506). We are assured over and over in inspired writings that we can overcome sin through the power of God.

My main point is this: I believe we accept, without hesitation, that Adam and Eve were created perfect. Would we deny that God has the power to change our lives to the same status? I am not saying that our carnal nature will be changed. I am saying that I believe God has the power to develop our characters to perfection if we will only give Him permission to do so.

The Great Controversy states, "The power which Christ imparts enables man to resist the tyrant and usurper."—*Ibid.* What I hear some Adventists saying is that if we will really rely upon Christ we will almost but not quite be able to overcome sin.

It is my understanding that the whole plan of salvation is that God will enable man to overcome sin, if man will allow God to help him.

May God help each one of us to become totally surrendered to Him and allow Him to live out His life within us. "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).—Leo Campbell, Alexandria, Minnesota.

Bible chronology is trustworthy

In response to the question in the March, 1984, issue of MINISTRY, "How Accurate Is Biblical Chronology?" my studied opinion is that it is amazingly accurate and worthy of our confidence.

Unfortunately, in the early periods we do not have sufficient solid evidence from contemporary sources to provide the degree of proof that we would like, but we can say with confidence that the Biblical materials are far more worthy of trust than are the wild statements current in the world.

But in the period of the Hebrew

monarchies, where there is a vast amount of chronological material that long was regarded as erroneous and not worthy of trust, we are today in a position to provide evidence that it is accurate, in full accord with established chronology of contemporary times, and worthy of complete trust.—Edwin R. Thiele, Angwin, California.

Calling God a liar

To even ask the question "Did Matthew Twist Scripture?" is to call God a liar, and deny not only the power but the very being of the Holy Spirit.

It is stupid to think Matthew would say something happened because a prophet said it would. Rather, when it happened, it was proof of the wisdom and power of God. He had revealed it to His man years before it happened. God planned His part, and knew what sinful man would do.

"This is my beloved Son" was spoken just for John the Baptist, Peter, James, and John. And God spoke at other times for the sake of the people, not for Christ. Jesus stated things because they were timely and true and relevant, not because Isaiah said He would say them.

Jesus cried the thing those who crucified Him wanted to hear, and yet did not hear. To us He said, "I understand the despair David felt. No man should despair; this is the gateway to glory."

Men follow men and listen to men who try to portray Christ saying and doing things He did not do or say. Why should anyone listen to Jarnes, Dodd, or any man, when we have the Word of God and the Holy Spirit? "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you" (1 John 2:27).

If a man has been called to preach and has the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, that man does not need your paper, or the knowledge of any man. Now if you can use your paper to glorify God before all people, then more power to you.—Leslie Jacobs, Winchester, Tennessee.

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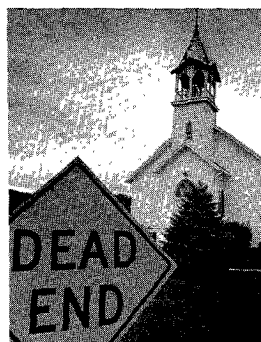
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Ministry

A Magazine for Clergy/October 1984/Volume 57/Number 10



COVER: DAVE SHERWIN

A Festival of Praise/4. Bonnie L. Casey and Tim Garrison. Thanksgiving is a good time to remember those who have less material blessings to be thankful for.

Dream or Die!/6. Is it time for the Adventist Church to bear down harder on liberal tendencies creeping into the church? Or is it time to abandon what some would call old-fashioned standards? Or is it time to dream new dreams? Gordon Bietz's article will give you courage to dream again!

The Preacher's Weekly Dilemma/9. Lawrence Downing has discovered a way to avoid the Friday Adrenalin Crisis. His suggestions for constructing a sermonic year could help you reduce your stress level.

Finding the Common Touch With a Christian Scientist/10. What would you say to a Christian Scientist if you sat next to him at a party? Jan Haluska shares insights into Christian Science belief with an eye to helping others understand, befriend, and witness.

Preparing Your Sermon/12. In the tenth article of our Toward Better Preaching series, Roy Naden examines the parts of a sermon and shares techniques for strengthening each part.

Women of Mission/18. Roger Dudley reports on an important conference for women held recently at Andrews University.

Sharpen Your Church's Image/20. Chad McComas suggests nine quick, painless ways to do a check and sharpen your church's first impression.

Absalom's Ilk/23. Ken Wade.

Baptize in Haste!/24. What should a pastor, confronted with the opportunity to marry a couple, do when it seems one partner may be willing to join the church just to please the other partner?

On Being Mrs. Pastor/26. Muriel Phillips.

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A Festival of Praise



Sligo Seventh-day Adventist church, in historic Takoma Park, Maryland, sits at the southern tip of Montgomery County, which a recent government study found to be the most affluent congressional district in the United States. Yet within just a few miles of the church, in any direction, are hundreds of individuals and families in need of food, clothing, shelter, and financial assistance. Over the years Sligo's more than three thousand members have built a reputation among the community as partners with local social service agencies in meeting these fundamental human needs.

Each November this commitment to service is reemphasized in a dramatic way. For the past thirteen years Sligo has celebrated the Sabbath before Thanksgiving with a "Festival of Praise." The central event of this festival is a processional offering in which the entire congregation may participate. As part of the service, members carry hundreds of grocery bags full of food to the front of the church, and after the service these food bags are distributed to needy families in the metropolitan Washington, D.C., area.

The last five festivals have been coordinated by Sligo associate pastor Tim Garrison. In this interview he describes how the festival is organized and tells how this tradition encourages congregational participation.

□ by Bonnie L. Casey and Tim Garrison.

Q. *How did the Festival of Praise begin, and why has the tradition endured?*

A. It began as a brief Thanksgiving service during the study hour. At that time there was no processional offering involved, but there was such a positive response to even this informal service that it soon was moved to the worship hour.

Bonnie L. Casey was the editorial assistant for the Sligo church staff at the time of the interview. Tim Garrison is an associate pastor of the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist church, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Q. *With all the people and details involved, this Festival of Praise must be a real organizational feat. What is the first step in the process?*

A. No one in church work will be surprised that the first step is putting together a committee, usually composed of the minister of music, the head deacon, and several volunteers. When the committee first meets I hand out a comprehensive "To Do" list with dates, duties, and names. In that way they all know what are the responsibilities of each. At least once more before the festival we get everyone together and go over the "To Do" list item by item to see that everything is being done.

Q. *What are some of the things the committee must tackle well in advance of the festival?*

A. We have to order some special food items and find a source for hundreds of paper grocery bags. Besides that, I need to work with a graphic designer for a special bulletin cover, and the minister of music needs time to recruit and rehearse extra musicians. Then we need the names of families who will receive the food. Names that come to us from social service agencies are already screened, but requests from church members, or those that come through our own Community Services center, must be screened by our staff.

Most services focus on the speaker or the music, not the congregation. But during the Festival of Praise the focus is on the congregation. Few services offer people such an opportunity to participate actively.

Q. *Why must they be screened at all? Isn't the request for food a proof of need?*

A. The screening is not at all meant to humiliate the people who request food or make them think we are suspicious of them. We do it to determine the kind and amount of need as well as to help prepare our members for what they might find. Invariably, some church members delivering bags of food will return and report to us that "their furniture was nicer than mine! Why did they get a free bag of food?" But in recent years we have seen many middle-class poor—people who appear to have a lovely home, but who have fallen temporarily into great need because of prolonged illness or unemployment. Part of our task is to inform the members making deliveries that the needs are genuine, even though they may not outwardly appear to be so.

Q. *You make a special effort to decorate the sanctuary for the festival. Why do you think this is important?*

A. For several years we have hung large banners behind the choir loft and along the outer aisles. These banners carry quotations from Scripture and other appropriate sayings for the season. Many Sligo members will tell you that it just wouldn't be the Festival of Praise without them. One reason is that the interior of our sanctuary is quite plain, not having any stained glass windows, so the colorful banners help to focus our visual attention and heighten the mood of celebration. But more important is the fact that the banners represent the participation and efforts of so many lay members. One group of members designed them, cut them out, and sewed them together, and another group takes them out of storage and irons them every year. These banners are about five feet wide and fifteen feet long, so ironing them is a considerable task! A week before the festival willing members bring their irons to church and we iron the banners on the floor of the sanctuary. (There's another detail I have to remember—long extension cords.)

Q. *When people arrive at church on the morning of the festival, food is already on display up on the platform. Where does this come from?*

A. On the Friday morning before the festival several of the pastors get the van from our Community Services center and go to the local open-air market to pick up fresh produce. We load the van with apples, oranges, bananas, potatoes, carrots, and onions. Then we stop by a local bakery to pick up a few hundred loaves of bread. When we get back to the church, we take a few hours to arrange the produce in large wicker baskets on the platform, adding to the beauty of the display on Sabbath morning.

Q. *Do you have a special budget for buying all this food?*

A. No, but during the processional offering, people may place money in baskets on either side of the platform marked "Poor Fund." This money is used throughout the year to meet requests for emergency assistance which come to us through our emergency aid committee. We use a small portion of this poor fund to pay for the fresh food distributed during the Festival of Praise.

Q. *Do you give your members any instructions on what kinds of food to bring, or do they just empty their cupboards of whatever they and the kids don't like or don't want?*

A. The week before the festival we request foods for certain families with special needs, such as the numbers of refugees from southeast Asia, who might not appreciate a can of ravioli. We also request that people bring canned or dry goods, especially those that require little preparation, since some families have limited facilities for cooking.

Q. *The main event in the Festival of Praise is, of course, the processional offering, when people bring their food as well as*

money to the front. What do you do to make this as orderly as possible?

A. Deacons dismiss the members row by row, but still it takes twenty-five to thirty minutes for the whole procession to take place. During that time a brass choir plays music that helps to make it a more reverential occasion. As the food is brought down, a whole front row of volunteers take it out of the bags and arrange it according to type in a very colorful display.

After the procession we take time for a short homily by the senior pastor and a brief expression of appreciation to the congregation. Someone from the community, usually from a social service agency that has provided us with names of needy families, will come and say a few words on behalf of the people who will receive the food. We think this has been very effective in helping the members feel that what they are doing is worthy and appreciated.

Q. *What happens to the food after the service?*

A. We make a special appeal for at least two hundred volunteers to rebag and deliver the food. This tradition is so well established by now that we have no trouble getting adequate volunteers, who deliver about four hundred bags of food to 125 to 130 households. Each bag contains a card saying, "A special gift to you at this Thanksgiving time from the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist church."

Q. *Most Sligo members seem to feel that, next to Christmas, this is the high point of their church year. Why do you think this is so?*

A. Most worship services focus on the speaker or on the music, not on the congregation. But during the Festival of Praise the focus is on members of the congregation as they bring their offering to the altar. Few services during our church year offer people such an opportunity to participate actively.

Dream or die!

There is not much to do but bury a church when the last of its dreams are dead. The Seventh-day Adventist Church stands today at a crossroads between the memories of the past and the dream of the future. Now is the time when we must decide whether to bury ourselves in legalism, to lose ourselves in permissiveness, or to dream together the dreams that will lead us to a vivific future! □ by Gordon Bietz



o paraphrase Dickens: It is the best of times; it is the worst of times. It is an age of wisdom; it is an age of foolishness. It is an epoch of belief; it is an epoch of incredulity. It is a season of light; it is a season of darkness. It is the spring of hope; it is the winter of despair. We stand today at the crossroads of the future to

determine the direction of the church. Will the future bring the best of years or the worst of years? Sociological studies of religious movements indicate that we have only two options as we stand at this crossroads—both bad.

The further religious organizations move from their founders the closer they come to an inevitable struggle between those on the one hand who attempt to preserve the fire of the past by means of laws and creeds (legalism) and those on the other who accept a loss of identity or a loose identification with the world (permissiveness).

Legalism is a trap that distracts the church from spreading the gospel. By preserving the forms and traditions of the past, it becomes a "clever cage of rules by which alarmed members think to keep their treasure safe, but it entraps them instead—and the treasure somehow slips away."

Permissiveness, however, is not a better road. It recognizes that the essence of the church will never be preserved by rules and regulations or by focusing on creeds and doctrines—but it purchases escape from the cage of legal-

ism at the price of loss of identity. The inner fire and devotion that lead to a distinctive lifestyle are lost, and a lowering of standards and commitment results. Legalism seeks to preserve the church even if the form is all that can be preserved. Permissiveness, by focusing on individual freedom, loses the identity of the church altogether. The ditch on one side is not significantly more disastrous than the ditch on the other.

That the Seventh-day Adventist Church is at just such a crossroad is aptly illustrated by the polarization occurring in some doctrinal discussions. But we can learn lessons from studying the roads that other religious movements have taken. First those movements that have chosen the road of legalism.

Last fall I went with my family to the Smokies to see the autumn colors. While there we noticed a number of people who looked as if they had come from the middle nineteenth century—the Amish. Here is a society living in another age. In establishing their identity, they have so avoided the world that they are no longer making an impact on it. To ensure the purity of the church they practice "shunning." You may have read about a farmer, Robert Bear, who was shunned by the Reformed Mennonite Church. His wife and six children moved out of his house, and the entire

Mennonite community refused to have any contact with him. Needless to say, it broke this man, who called his life "a living hell."

Besides shunning, the Amish have also developed the *Ordnung*, or "rules of living," to protect the church from the influence of the world. For example: "No ornamental bright, showy formfitting, immodest or silklike clothing of any kind. Colors such as bright-red, orange, yellow and pink not allowed. . . . Hat to be black with no less than three-inch rim and not extremely high in crown. No stylish impression in any hat. No pressed trousers. No sweaters. . . . A full beard should be worn among men and boys after baptism, if possible. . . . No decorations of any kind in buildings inside or out. . . . No bottle gas or high line electrical appliances. Stoves should be black if bought new."—John A. Hostetler, *Amish Society*, pp. 59, 60.

The Amish have certainly maintained their identity, but their impact on the world is more in the nature of a curiosity than a living witness. In their attempt to preserve their identity they have locked themselves into a nineteenth-century time capsule.

Another group that arose with great fervor and evangelistic zeal was the Quakers. They faced mobs, martyrdom, and imprisonment to communicate their

Gordon Bietz is pastor of the Collegedale, Tennessee, Seventh-day Adventist church.

Will we travel the road that ends in legalistic isolationism? Will we travel the road that leads to permissive pluralism? Is there not another option? Another road?

message. But as time passed, others joined them, and children were born; their devotion and evangelistic zeal began to wane. Those who remembered the good old days wondered how to preserve the former fire and enthusiasm. They reacted to their fears for the future by taking what were generally agreed-upon principles of the Christian life and spelling them out in specific detail so as to wall out wickedness from their world. Matters of dress were specified, and even such things as whether cemetery grave-stones were to lie down or stand up!

Likewise the Jews at the time of Christ were seeking to preserve the dream of Abraham in the legalism of the Talmud that measured a Sabbath day's journey by feet and defined in detail how to fast. But they only proved, as have others, that the attempt to preserve the heart of religious zeal through formulations of law will not work.

The general history of the Christian church follows the opposite road—the road of permissiveness. As the church became acceptable and institutionalized, it began to adapt to the world until the fire went out of its spirit. During the Middle Ages the church was more worldly than religious. This process was repeated continually. The Wesleyan revival that swept England with fire and enthusiasm became Methodism. I suggest that today Wesley would not recognize the church he founded. The Lutheran movement that began the Protestant Reformation became Lutheranism, and I wonder what revolution Martin Luther would bring to the church he founded?

Which way for our church?

Will we travel the road that ends in a legalistic isolationism, where we become simply a carefully preserved relic of the past, an anachronism? Will we travel the road that leads to a permissive pluralism in which we lose our identity in total absorption by the world? Is there not another option? Another road?

L. A. King writes: "To date no denomination . . . has maintained its original distinctiveness and power. It is difficult in succeeding generations to

reproduce the vividness of the original experiences, and so at least some later converts will have less than the original devotion. . . . Defensive isolation keeps the form but loses the fiery life; relaxed permissiveness—the commonest development—keeps an institution from having great distinctiveness or impact."—*Legalism or Permissiveness: An Inescapable Dilemma?*

Must our church travel one of these roads? I pray not.

Many of us have been nurtured on the story of the little boy Samuel working in the Temple for Eli the priest. "The word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision" (1 Sam. 3:1, R.S.V.). I would like to suggest that such a description of conditions at the beginning of the ministry of Samuel describes the condition of our church today. Of course it is a ready-made story for children. Little Samuel hears the voice of God calling him. He mistakes it as Eli's and keeps running to him until Eli tells him to say, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth" (verse 9). And a vision comes to Samuel because he is listening, listening for the voice of God.

Eli had received other communications from God concerning his sons. But Eli wasn't really listening. Maybe he was caught up in a controversy of the times. Maybe he thought he could no longer change his ways. At any rate, he wasn't listening; he wasn't acting on what he knew.

But Samuel listened: "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." Today we need to remember that memory verse of long ago. Today we need to be prepared to receive a vision from the Lord. Today it is time that we listen for a dream. To avoid the polarities of permissive pluralism and legalistic isolationism we must dream again.

"We are all of us dreamers of dreams,
On visions our childhood is fed;
And the heart of the child is un-
haunted, it seems,

By the ghosts of dreams that are dead.
From childhood to youth's but a span
And the years of our life are soon
sped;

But the youth is no longer a youth,
but a man,
When the first of his dreams is dead.

...
He may live on by compact and plan
When the fine bloom of living is
shed,
But God pity the little that's left of a
man

When the last of his dreams is dead.
Let him show a brave face if he can,
Let him woo fame or fortune instead,
Yet there's not much to do but to
bury a man

When the last of his dreams is dead."
—William Herbert Carruth,
"Dreamer of Dreams"

And might I add to William Carruth's poem that

There is not much to do but to bury
a church

When the last of its dreams is dead.

According to Robert Dale, a movement has reached the final stages when it no longer focuses on its dream but becomes caught up in nostalgia of how things were in the past. A healthy church is born out of a dream; a diseased church is one that prefers simpler yesterdays to uncertain tomorrows. A church that sets a mood of uncertainty by reflecting on the "I remember when" stories of the golden era is signaling that it has begun to lose its dream for the future. The healthy church builds on and is renewed by its dream. The diseased church doubts and questions as it moves toward organizational death. Elder Robert Pierson's last address to the church as General Conference president was a plea to avoid somehow the progression from movement to machine, the steady, almost inevitable, progression from a first-generation movement begun with dream and vision to a fourth-generation machine attempting to run a bureaucracy to preserve the forms that were created in the fervor of yesterday.

It is time to dream again.

There must rise again among the people of God a dream. A vision that captures the essence of the Seventh-day Adventist movement. The future of our

If you had done a doctrinal purity study of the early Christian church, I doubt you would have been pleased. But they were caught up together in a vision, a dream, given to them by Christ.

church will be found not in absolute doctrinal purity but in the moving of the Spirit of God as the people follow a dream. If you had done a doctrinal purity study of the early Christian church, I doubt you would have been pleased. Peter didn't always understand Paul, and the Jewish Christians certainly had some different views than the Gentile Christians. But they were caught up together in a vision, a dream, given to them by Christ. Their dream was to give the good news to the world, and they were one in Christ in that effort.

If you had done a doctrinal purity study of the early Seventh-day Adventist Church you would have found many different views. But they were one with a message to give to the world. They were caught up in the excitement of a movement with vision, a movement that had the courage to dream. The message of Adventism was not the dry musings of their teachers. The message of Adventism was not the reminiscences of their parents. The message of Adventism was not the codified beliefs of the church manual. The message of Adventism was the living reality of their lives!

Unity? Yes! They had unity, but not the kind of unity that comes from formal assent to creedal statements. Not a unity caged in formulations of systematic theology. It was the unity of a dream!

It is time to dream again, to have vision and commitment as did those who were the founders of our church. To dream like Joseph Bates.

Joseph Bates had a dream to publish the new truths he had discovered, so in May, 1846, he prepared a forty-page tract entitled *The Opening Heavens*. Money to publish was supplied by an Adventist woman who sold a rag carpet she had recently woven.

It is time to dream again, like J. N. Loughborough.

Twenty-year-old Loughborough had been preaching on Sundays for three years, when he cast his lot with the Sabbatarians and accompanied Hiram Edson as a circuit-riding preacher and later pioneer of the work in California and England.

To dream like Uriah Smith, who at 21 joined the Review office in Rochester, New York, where his thirty-five-thousand-word poem "The Warning Voice of Time and Prophecy" was running in the *Review*. The printshop did not have proper tools, and he blistered his hands trimming publications with a penknife. Smith remembered that the tracts they published were square in doctrine, even if the pages were not.

To dream like Stephen Haskell, who heard his first sermon on the Second Advent at age 19 and was so thrilled that he talked about it to everyone he met. A friend challenged him to preach, and Haskell jokingly promised to do so if he would provide a hall and audience. The friend complied, and Haskell was stuck. Soon he combined part-time preaching with selling the soap he manufactured.

Time doesn't permit us to speak of James and Ellen White, J. N. Andrews, and a host of others who caught the dream of a movement with a message to give to a dying world.

We can't do the work just as they did. We shouldn't seek to emulate them exactly, for times have changed. But we must dream again as they did.

The greatest song of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is still unsung, and we will have the opportunity to write the tune of that song, to dream that dream. For where can nonbelievers see the dream in our church today? Where can nonbelievers read an unequivocal message about the value of Christian sacrifice, the promise of the Advent, the worth of Sabbathkeeping, and the promise of the gospel? They can read the message in our writings, but where can they see it in our lives?

In fact, would not a majority of the secular world today describe our church and its members as a people living more or less like everyone else, acting more or less on the same principles, buffeted by more or less the same confusions, threatened more or less by the same dangers, and as resourceless as the rest of their fellowmen?

It is time to dream again! Certainly our church, with the everlasting gospel,

has a dream for those in fear of a nuclear holocaust. Certainly our church, with the message of the soon advent of Jesus, has a dream for a world run out of solutions. Certainly our church, with the concept of the Sabbath rest, has a dream for a world filled with stress. Certainly our church, with its understanding of the sanctuary, has a dream for people who don't know where God is and what He is doing. Certainly our church, with its concepts of health, has a dream for a world being inundated by disease. Certainly our church, with its concept of man as a steward of God's creation, has a dream for a world struggling with starving people and ecological nightmares.

It is time to reject the idea that we can encapsulate the church in the nineteenth century, legalistically preserving the form without the fire. It is time to reject the idea that we can destroy the pillars of the church and its very *raison d'être* with a permissiveness that defines the church by the world rather than by God's Word. The dream of Adventism needs to be caught by our generation. That dream has faded as too many days have come and gone. It is time to dream again.

That dream has waned as generation after generation is born into a church without having experienced its message. It is time to dream again.

That dream has been dissipated by argument over doctrinal nuance. It is time to dream again.

That dream has been undermined by confidence-destroying church decisions. It is time to dream again. To dream of a people consumed with an appetite for God's Word rather than for the words of others. To dream of doctrines that change the way people behave rather than simply being subjects for discussion. To dream of the unbeliever seeing an unequivocal message in our lives.

It is time to dream again. To dream of a people transformed by their beliefs. To dream of a church converted by its doctrines. To dream of a church that leaves the world wondering, "Behold, how these people love one another!"

The preacher's weekly dilemma

How do you go about the important task of deciding what you will preach on? Last-minute decisions not only add to the stress you must carry, but also are likely to result in an unbalanced spiritual diet for your congregation. In this article, Lawrence Downing relates the various approaches he has tried and tells what works for him. □ by Lawrence Downing



What shall I preach next week?" The proverbial Monday morning blues have special significance for the preacher who must decide, week after week, what new sermon offering will be laid before his expectant congregation. The question becomes more significant in direct proportion to the passing of the days. Other

questions—old friends by virtue of their frequent appearances—reintroduce themselves as the Sabbath morning deadline approaches and nothing is yet on paper: "Why do I do this to myself?" "What's the point; does anyone listen anyway?" "Why am I unable to discipline myself and avoid this?" "Am I a failure?" By Friday, panic has firmly established itself if he still sits waiting for that one last blast of inspiration.

Like childbirth, sermon preparation involves both pain and satisfaction as the new creation is conceived, develops, and is eventually delivered. In each is a certain amount of passion as well as risk and uncertainty. Both are stressful situations. And when the whole process is completed, the result cannot be recalled whether or not one is pleased.

I have tried four solutions to the chronic "What shall I preach next week?" problem. Three have been rejected.

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1. The Sudden Inspiration Method. Also known as the Adrenalin Crisis Method, this one has proved too traumatic for me. My system can stand only so many last-minute decisions. Besides, the sudden burst of fire from on high frequently turned into a sputtering fizzle in the pulpit.

2. The Monthly Sermon Plan. This was only partially successful in relieving my stress. I still had crises twelve times a year.

3. The Sermonic Quarter. This method improved on the previous one by reducing the stress points from twelve to four. But every quarter the crisis was reborn. I prefer even less anxiety.

4. The Sermonic Year. For the past eight years I have followed this method, as have many clergy past and present. Now I know not only what I will preach next Sabbath, but what I will be preaching twelve weeks or twelve months ahead!

My sermonic year begins the first Sabbath in October. In order to be ready for that date, I have the secretary prepare, during the first part of June, a

chart for each month containing spaces for the following information: date, preaching text, Old and New Testament readings, sermon subject, ideas, and title. Camp meeting provides me a block of free time to fill in the blanks. During these nine days I develop the sermonic year schedule. Prior thought, of course, has been given to subjects I'd like to explore in the coming year. I also examine sermon lists from previous years to see what I have been using for texts and subjects, and I consult my lectionary readings. This last tool is not well known among Adventists, but I have found it helpful when putting together a sermonic year.

The lectionary I use is published jointly by several denominations who use it in common. There is an A, B and C series covering the church liturgical year. For each week, the lectionary lists at least three Scripture passages relating to the season of the church year. Using these in planning sermons makes me less apt to repeat pet subjects, brings me into contact with passages that I might not

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Finding the common touch with a Christian Scientist

Christian Science appeals to both the scientific method and a particular view of reality in defending its claims to present the truth about God and man, sin and suffering. The author, a former member, shows how these relate to the atonement so that we may relate more knowledgeably to Christian Scientists.

□ by Jan Haluska



icture yourself at a party. The hostess is witty, and the other guests are affable. Midway through the pleasant evening you find yourself seated beside a gentleman who mentions that he is a Christian Scientist. What now? Of course, you can stick to sports and the weather, or you can ask him a few polite questions

about his religion. If you do the latter, his answers will be so foreign to orthodox Christian doctrine that you may get entangled in a discussion that prompts the hostess to organize an emergency game of charades.

Let me suggest a more acceptable alternative. You can simply concentrate on the beliefs you and he have in common for the joy of mutual witness—as long as you know something more than average about Christian Science. Popular wisdom centers largely on the catch line “Christian Science is neither science nor Christianity.” Many people

regard the religion as a cult of kooks whose value system appears to be inverted. That kind of attitude will do no good in your conversation with a real-life adherent of Christian Science.

Actually, a few years ago the gentleman at the party might have been I. A member of that church until my late twenties, I served as president of my local Youth Forum, conducted worship services as first reader of the Christian Science Society at my college, and did so again as first reader in the English language services in the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Heidelberg, Germany. Though no longer a student of Christian Science, I am grateful for the many blessings I received during those early years.

But to get back to the subject, an

orthodox Christian needs some background before he can share his faith with a Christian Scientist. Therefore let's examine that catch line more closely.

First, let's try to understand Christian Science's claim to be scientific. Christian Science bases its claim to be scientific on its use of the scientific method, which we learned about in our high school chemistry, physics, or biology course. In using the scientific method, we looked at the evidence, formed a hypothesis, and tested it to a conclusion. Mary Baker Eddy, whom church members call “the Discoverer and Founder” of Christian Science, hypothesized that since evil has neither power nor reality, sin and sickness cannot stand in the face of clear thinking founded on God's power and goodness.

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Man's salvation lies in realizing his own perfection and by faith hanging on to the "divine idea" of man which Jesus presented. All this is very far from mainstream Christian thought.

"The cause of all so-called disease is mental, a mortal fear, a mistaken belief or conviction of the necessity and power of ill-health. . . . Without this ignorant human belief, any circumstance is of itself powerless to produce suffering."—*Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures*, p. 377. She goes on to say that by concentrating on the truth of God's power in all situations one can rid oneself of this "ignorant human belief."

Christian Science emphasizes the next step in the scientific method by testing its hypothesis in seeking healings through the use of such thinking alone. Christian Scientists call these demonstrations. Let's look at a few demonstrations that I can attest.

My family became Christian Scientists based on an incident of healing when I was about 1 year old. My mother was suffering from acute anemia, and I had scarlet fever. A Christian Scientist neighbor gave my mother several of her journals. Reading them, my mother became convinced that there is no disease and that this truth could make us free. My father, returning home from work that evening, found a healthy wife and child!

My childhood was studded with such incidents. Not all were as spectacular of course, but they were unmistakable. Even later, demonstrations were part of my life. While in Army basic training I faced a test of marksmanship that would determine whether I would remain with that company or begin training all over again. The morning of the test was foggy, but, typically Army, we had to shoot anyway. For me it was just one more demonstration; each time a target popped up, a narrow tunnel would clear in the mist. I finished with the highest score on the range that morning.

I must admit that the demonstrations did not always come—I wore glasses and visited the dentist. Still the success rate was enough to establish credibility. Psychiatry does not cure all mental patients, and economics fails to predict some monetary phenomena. Yet both are called sciences. Mrs. Eddy advanced the claim directly: "The charge of

inconsistency in Christianly scientific methods of dealing with sin and disease is met by something practical—namely, the proof of the utility of these methods; and proofs are better than mere verbal arguments or prayers which evidence no spiritual power to heal."—*Ibid.*, p. 355. In other words, if it doesn't always seem to make sense, the fact that it works should convince the observer anyway.

Accordingly, the Christian Science Church is careful to document demonstrations of "scientific mind-healing." Testimonies of healing that are published in the *Christian Science Sentinel* and the *Christian Science Journal* must be confirmed by reliable witnesses. Thus Christian Science believes it has as decent a claim to scientific credibility as many commonly accepted sciences.

And what about this religion's claim to Christianity? We should begin by recognizing that Mrs. Eddy asserted a Biblical basis for her beliefs. She wrote, "As adherents of Truth, we take the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal Life."—*Ibid.*, p. 497. Yet she made no secret of the fact that Christian Scientists are to read their Bibles in only one particular way: "The one important interpretation of Scripture is the spiritual."—*Ibid.*, p. 320. In Mrs. Eddy's view, for example, Genesis presents a mostly false picture of Creation and its aftermath, the crudeness of which moves us toward a picture of man as being *entirely* spiritual, not material at all. In this view, man is utterly perfect now.

To understand why, we need to glance at Platonism, which holds that if we were to destroy every example of a certain item—say every chair—in the world, the *idea* "chair" would remain intact and would be as perfect as always. Therefore the ideal is more real than the material to a Platonist. A Christian Scientist sees the ideal as the only reality and matter as having no actual existence whatever. Because man exists, he is entirely ideal, spiritual, perfect. He is consequently free from both sickness and sin and needs only to realize it.

Of course, that leaves no room for the

atonement through blood that orthodox Christianity teaches. In fact, "the efficacy of the crucifixion lay in the practical affection and goodness it demonstrated for mankind."—*Ibid.*, p. 24. Thus one's hope rests not on the death of God Himself but on the sacrificial example of an ideally perfect man, according to Mrs. Eddy. Christian Scientists hold firmly to the conviction that Jesus was not God: "Christ is the ideal Truth, that comes to heal sickness and sin through Christian Science, and attributes all power to God. Jesus is the name of the man who, more than all other men, has presented Christ, the true idea of God, healing the sick and the sinning and destroying the power of death. Jesus is the human man, and Christ is the divine idea."—*Ibid.*, p. 473.

Man's salvation, then, lies in realizing his own perfection and by faith hanging on to the "divine idea" of man which Jesus presented. That idea is called Christ. All this is very far from mainstream Christian thought.

Yet it is oddly akin to the central dogma of another great religious system. Consider some verses from the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the Hindu scripture that so moved men like Emerson and Thoreau: "14. From the world of the senses . . . comes heat and comes cold and pleasure and pain. They come and they go: they are transient. Arise above them, strong soul. 15. The man whom these cannot move, whose soul is one, beyond pleasure and pain, is worthy of life in Eternity. 16. The unreal never is: the Real never is not. This truth indeed has been seen by those who can see the true. 17. Interwoven in his creation, the Spirit is beyond destruction. No one can bring to an end the Spirit which is everlasting."—Juan Mascaro, Jr., trans., *Bhagavad Gita* (New York: Penguin, 1982).

Let us compare that with another statement by Mrs. Eddy: "Truth demonstrated is eternal life. Mortal man can never rise from the temporal *débris* of error, belief in sin, sickness, and death, until he learns that God is the only Life.

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Preparing your sermon

A sermon, like anything else, is made up of parts. But how can you blend the various parts so that you still have one sermon instead of several separate speeches on unrelated topics? The tenth in our series of twelve articles on preaching suggests construction techniques for building an organized, unified sermon.

Toward Better Preaching □ 10 Roy Naden



captivating introduction, a convincing body, and a convicting conclusion—bring them together, and you have a truly effective sermon. But how can you develop all these elements and blend them effectively week after week? We'll examine the elements separately, then note how each fits into the overall pattern that

becomes a sermon.

The introduction

The literature on homiletics is far from harmonious on which is more important, the introduction or the conclusion.¹ And the tension highlights the incredible importance of both. If you don't win your congregation's attention in the first few seconds, you won't likely have it later. So the first few words need painstaking thought and development. There are at least four appropriate ways to begin.

A quotation. Often you may find it easy to develop an opening sentence that will captivate attention. But if you find yourself having difficulty, you need not despair. An appropriate quotation that someone else labored to bring into existence can often fill your need.

Good books are rich in quotable material. Some time ago I picked up a

book by Mort Crim and found a score of excellent sentences like these:

"Only once did Jesus tell of a person going to hell. That person was a rich man who let a beggar starve to death at his front door."²

"Modern man has discovered lots of answers but not *the* answer. He knows about how-to but very little about what-for. He seems more capable of extending life than enriching it. He is long on pleasure but short on purpose."³

"If life is not more than a cosmic accident, a mindless joke, a swirl of confusion and color splashed across the black backdrop of meaningless time, then perhaps the discotheque is man's truest expression of reality. There, bathed in the flashing brilliance of psychedelia, rocked by the pulsating rhythms of the electronic beat, stimulated by the sensuous gyrations of the go-go dancers—there, in miniature, is the story and glory of life."⁴

A captivating quotation—for which appropriate credit is given—lets the congregation know that the preacher is reading more than weekly newsmaga-

zines. And if the one credited is a well-known figure, his words will lend authority as well as gain attention.

A story. A well-told, brief, pertinent illustration never fails to gain immediate attention. For example you could begin:

"The thirty thousand inhabitants of St. Pierre were doomed to die. Like a catastrophe in a ghôulish nightmare, in just sixty seconds the lives of the entire population, except for one man confined in a dungeon, were snuffed out. But it was no dream; it was a cruel and indiscriminate reality. And only a single citizen escaped!"

"One carefree spring morning in 1902 a sharp underground shock was felt in Martinique, the tiny tropical island in the Carribean . . ."⁵

Perhaps the most important fact about stories is that they be true—unless you specify them legend or myth. Specific, correct details such as date, place, and persons involved establish veracity and add interest to a story.

A question. If your sermon is on some difficult or controversial theme, you can grasp attention by declaring the theme in

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A captivating quotation lets the congregation know that the preacher is reading more than weekly newsmagazines. And if the one credited is well known, his words will lend authority as well as gain attention.

the form of a question. If you are speaking about marriage, you might begin, "It's all very well to say that marriage lasts 'till death do you part,' but is there more than one kind of *death*?" If the theme is Christian perfection, you could ask, "Is it possible to be perfect? Do we even know what perfection means? Can imperfect, fallen humans ever attain what they cannot even think or imagine?" If your sermon is on the gospel commission and personal responsibility to share one's faith, you might say, "Is there any practical way to preach the gospel to *every creature in every country* of the world, including the millions in Russia, China, and the Arab countries, where it is a crime to share Christianity?"

A text. It may sound old-fashioned, but to begin by reading your text still has merit, especially if the text holds some unusual or paradoxical thought. For example, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:19); or, "Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs" (chap. 15:25); or, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10).

Through a carefully chosen *quotation*, *story*, *question*, or *text* you can develop a captivating introduction.

The body

While well aware of the technical aspects of the literature⁶, such as transitions and propositional clauses, we'll go right to the heart of the issue for this brief treatment of the subject. It is in the body of the sermon that the preacher develops his theme, and as often as practical, that should be through the exegesis of a passage of Scripture.

Young preachers, especially, find it difficult to find enough meaningful things to say in the thirty minutes of a weekly sermon. Maybe some of us older

preachers should admit to the same problem. But a preacher committed to expounding the meaning of a text—be it a single verse, a series of verses, a chapter, or a whole book—is hard pressed to keep his sermon within the time allotted! And many congregations are hungry, even starving, for the bread of the Word. Topical preaching has a place, but in my opinion not a frequent place in the pulpit. According to the research in the church growth literature, preachers who have committed themselves to a fruitful pastorate must stay in a church for at least seven to ten years. Topical preaching will wear thin long before you've preached five hundred sermons.

Once you've selected your scripture, use it not just as a starting point for an aimless stroll, but to dictate the specific path and direction of the study. Formulate a theme from the passage you wish to present, and then break that theme into an appropriate number of points.

Andrew Blackwood showed an inclination for two points. Harry Emerson Fosdick spoke of "not more than four points." Callaway leaned toward three points. John A. Broadus recalled the proverb, "three heads like a sermon," and led his students in that direction. There is no need to be rigid; as Parker once observed, "everyone must have his own way." But the more points you choose, the less likely that they will be remembered!

In my seminary homiletics classes I suggest three guidelines for selecting the main points or headings of a sermon. They should always be exegetical, sequential, and memorable. The points become the skeleton. Some bones, cheekbones, for example, can be most attractive when only barely covered. The same can be true with the points of a sermon. Without any covering they would claim little fame. But if you present them prominently, in good taste, surrounded with explanatory material, your framework of points will abide in memories for a long while.

W. E. Sangster, the master preacher of Westminster Hall, preached on the

prodigal son in a way that one could never forget. Just three points:

- Sick of home
- Homesick
- Home

To encourage those of us who will never mount the steps of such eminent pulpits, let me quote structure examples from some young seminarians in my homiletics class in the fall of 1983—with their permission.

Preaching a biographical sermon contrasting the characters of Peter and John, Janet Esh produced this outline:

- Two fishermen
- Two fiery fishermen
- Two fishermen on fire

A sermon on the slaying of the giant Goliath led Skip Johnson to progress through these points:

- Unkind brother
- Unencouraging king
- Unconquerable giant

Telling the story of the woman taken in adultery, Osmond Lesis explained:

- Her condemnation
- Their frustration
- His solution

Llewellyn Williams' sermon on the glory of the resurrection had just two well-chosen points:

- Skepticism reviewed
- Faith renewed

Whenever possible, your development of the theme of the text should be *exegetical* rather than *homiletical*. Then there should be some logical *sequence* in the way the theme develops. Each point should be related to the others so there are not three little sermons, but rather one sermon in three steps. And there should be some *memorableness* about the way it develops so that when the hour is over something has been implanted in each worshiper's mind that the Holy Spirit can use to continue to speak in the secular hours of the week ahead.

If you have, say, thirty minutes for your sermon and you take four minutes for the introduction and reserve five for the conclusion, you will have only about 21 minutes for the body. If you have three points, that leaves only about seven minutes per point!

Preachers who have committed themselves to a fruitful pastorate must stay in a church for at least seven to ten years. Topical preaching will wear thin long before you've preached 500 sermons.

Some of the greatest preachers—Spurgeon, for example—didn't stop at the development of main points, but he carried their systematic development of the theme into subheads as well.⁷ But let's use youthful preachers again to illustrate. Janet Esh divided her three main points as follows:

- I. Two fishermen
 - A. Alike good
 - B. Alike bad
- II. Two fiery fishermen
 - A. Son of thunder
 - B. Son of blunder
- III. Two fishermen on fire
 - A. John made it
 - B. Peter makes it

Roy McGarrell showed a real mastery of development in the sermon he prepared on the subject of pain. After telling a story from his own pastorate of a small passenger boat on its way upstream from Georgetown, Guyana, being destroyed by a time bomb, killing several of his members, he constructed his sermon this way:

- I. Suffering pain
 - A. Piercing in its reality
 - B. Nagging in its continuity
 - C. Excruciating in its intensity
- II. Pain of suffering
 - A. The problem of suffering
 - B. The polarities of suffering
 - C. The purpose of suffering
- III. Suffering with the pained
 - A. The Father's love is limitless
 - B. The Father's grace is measureless
 - C. The Father's power is boundless

Before concluding this brief section on the development of the body of the sermon, we should mention two other essential observations. Your sermon—every sermon, no matter when it is preached—should be soteriological. If Jesus Christ is not *lifted up*, how can He draw all men to Himself? If Jesus Christ is not *seen*, how can people be attracted to Him? If Jesus Christ is not *heard*, what word of life is there to hear? No message, no matter how persuasive, organized, or important, has a place in a Christian pulpit if Jesus Christ is not the basis and focus of it all.

To preach the Second Advent without the Christ of the Second Advent is to miss the *point* of it all. To preach the Sabbath without the Lord of the Sabbath is to miss the *focus* of it all. To preach the sanctuary without the great High Priest of the sanctuary is to miss the *blessing* of it all. To preach the cross without the Christ on the cross is to miss the *power* of it all.

And to this I must add that the body of the sermon must speak to people where they are. It must address their needs, their hurts, their fears, their problems, their anxieties, their apprehensions. As you visit with your congregation you must make it your business to know where the people are in their thinking, where they are in their belief system, where they are in their devotions, where they are in their community relations. Preaching to felt needs in the context of exegesis with the focus on the Lord Jesus is what the art of preaching is all about.

The conclusion

What the body of the sermon is to the theme, the conclusion is to the aim. At the beginning of the preparation of the sermon one must establish first the text, second the theme, and third the aim. The aim answers the question, "What do I wish each member to do after listening to this presentation?" The conclusion seeks to activate that aim.

"It's the final struggle that determines the conflict," the Greeks said about oratory. And it is your conclusion that will make or break the prayer-saturated effort that you have put into preparing your sermon. After you have *declared* your theme in the introduction and *developed* it in the body of the sermon, it is time to *apply* that theme in a very personal way—to lead each worshiper to some specific action. Too many preachers have about five standard conclusions: to love God, to love each other, to pray, to study, to witness. All are laudable aims, but they by no means exhaust the aims of all sermons. Worse yet, they are not as specific as a good aim should be.

Aims are best expressed in terms of the

listener's post-sermonic action: what do you want him or her to *do*? The action may be cognitive, affective, or psychomotor, but it must be *action* of some kind.

Enough for theory; let's illustrate. At the end of a sermon on Goliath, Skip Johnson wanted all worshipers to see Jesus as the strength of their Christian lives. So he concluded in these words:

"Everyone must start winning somewhere or he'll be beaten everywhere. What in particular do you need to conquer today? Identify your enemy. Then cry to God, and in His strength go out and slay it.

"Before me I see the spectacle of a headless giant lying on the ground. May the Son of David be your unconquerable, all-powerful hero today!"⁸

Llewellyn Williams, in concluding his evangelistic sermon on the resurrection, said in part:

"Years ago a man found a Spanish coin in Florida. It bore the date 1496 and the Latin words *plus ultra*. He knew that at one time the coins of Spain had borne one more word—*ne plus ultra*. Why the change? In the early sixteenth century Spain controlled both sides of the Straits of Gibraltar, and the two promontories, one on the African shore and the other on the European shore were called the Pillars of Hercules. Spanish coins were stamped with a representation of these two great outposts of the western world, the last known habitable part of the earth toward the west. On the maps of the Pillars of Hercules appeared the words *ne plus ultra* (no more beyond). When Columbus sailed through the pillars and into the western horizon and discovered the new world everything changed. Spain became a mighty empire with lands beyond the pillars—the mines of Peru and Mexico, and the sun-drenched hills of California. And the legend of the coins was changed to *plus ultra* (more beyond).

"Before Christ came to this world, despair cast its shadow over the graves of men, '*ne plus ultra*—no more beyond.' But through the gospel, He brought immortality to light. From Joseph's new tomb the Light of life shone forth, so

The sermon must speak to people where they are. As you visit with your congregation make it your business to know where the people are in their thinking, belief system, devotions, community relations.

today, on the memorial of every child of God, faith writes, 'plus ultra—more beyond.'

"For you, through Jesus Christ, hope has been rekindled and faith renewed. Together, parents and children, brothers and sisters, friends and loved ones, all who have been separated by the cruel hand of death will be resurrected to life immortal. What a glorious hope! What a joy!

"What difference does the Resurrection make? All the difference in the world. I want to rededicate and recommit my life, my lifestyle, my thought, and ideals, to a resurrected, living Christ and ensure I'll meet Jesus and my loved ones at the great white throne. Will you do that with me too, now?"⁹

Sermon preparation is hard work. I know no effective preacher for whom the development of a sermon is a short or easy task. But to this thrilling work we have been called.

Prayerfully prepared, a worship sermon with a captivating introduction, a convincing body, and a convicting conclusion will be used by the Holy Spirit to bless and nurture your members.

¹ Andrew Blackwood, *The Preparation of Sermons* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948); John Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979); H. G. Davis, *Design for Preaching* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958); Donald Demaray, *An Introduction to Homiletics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974); William Evans, *How to Prepare Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1964); W. M. Kroll, *Prescription for Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980); R. Montgom-

ery, *Preparing Preachers to Preach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1939); M. Reu, *Homiletics: A Manual of the Theory and Practice of Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967); R. E. White, *A Guide to Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973).

² Mort Crim, *Like It Is* (Anderson, Ind.: Warner Press, 1970), p. 51.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁵ Unpublished manuscript by the author.

⁶ Blackwood, *op. cit.*; Walter Russell Bowie, *Preaching* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954); Davis, *op. cit.*; Demaray, *op. cit.*; D. Demaray, *Proclaiming the Truth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979); Evans, *op. cit.*; T. H. Pattison, *The Making of the Sermon* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1902).

⁷ Charles Spurgeon, *Treasury of David* (New York: Association Press, 1913); ———, *The Treasury of the New Testament* (New York: Association Press, 1913); ———, *The Treasury of the Old Testament* (New York: Association Press, 1913).

⁸ Skip Johnson, unpublished sermon.

⁹ Llewelyn Williams, unpublished sermon.

Finding the common touch with a Christian Scientist

From page 11

The belief that life and sensation are in the body should be overcome by the understanding of what constitutes man as the image of God. Then Spirit will have overcome the flesh."—*Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures*, p. 289. (Italics original.)

Certainly all great religions of the world have areas of agreement. But it is striking that the *Bhagavad Gita* would require much less "spiritual" translation for a Christian Scientist than does the book of Genesis. Christian Science does not lie within the generally recognized boundaries of Christianity.

Nevertheless, the man at the party

reads the same Bible that you do and would be blessed by participation in a pleasant conversation of mutual witness. How can you engage him in a sharing time while avoiding the terms whose meanings illustrate the great gulf between your thinking and his—Creation, grace, death, man, Christ?

Perhaps the only way to do it is to begin where Mrs. Eddy herself does. On the first page of *Science and Health* she writes: "The prayer that reforms the sinner and heals the sick is an absolute faith that all things are possible with God." This "absolute faith" in the power and goodness of God is worth talking about; after all, it is the linchpin of any Christian theology, not just the Christian Scientist's. The apostle James tells us that he is prepared to show his faith by his works. The committed Christian Scientist will be delighted to do the same. If you can show him that you also have experienced God's love, guidance, and protection through prayer, you will have established a basis for rapport. Simply asserting your belief in these things by rejoicing together in such texts as Romans 8:28 and Philippians 4:13 would help. You might notice with him

how Jesus, standing at the tomb of Lazarus, gave thanks for the miracle before it had physically occurred and how well that illustrates Paul's definition of faith as "the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Christian Scientists find their attention drawn to the story of Lazarus very often in the daily study helps provided by their church.

Once the two of you have established a relationship, you might explore a few differences in a gentle way. If you feel that refusing medical help in favor of prayer amounts to presumption, you might turn to the temptations of Christ in the wilderness and consider with him just at what point true faith will decline a miracle. His church directs him to avoid debate, yet he may share some challenging ideas on the subject.

By skirting the traps inherent in the wide divergencies between Christian Science and the more orthodox Christian denominations, and by concentrating on the great common theme of faith lived daily, you both can share the fellowship of them that love Him. That is, after all, one of the great joys open to those who would follow our Lord. It is worth seeking.

DON'T PLAN
YOUR SUMMER
WITHOUT PLANNING
FOR PRESESSION!

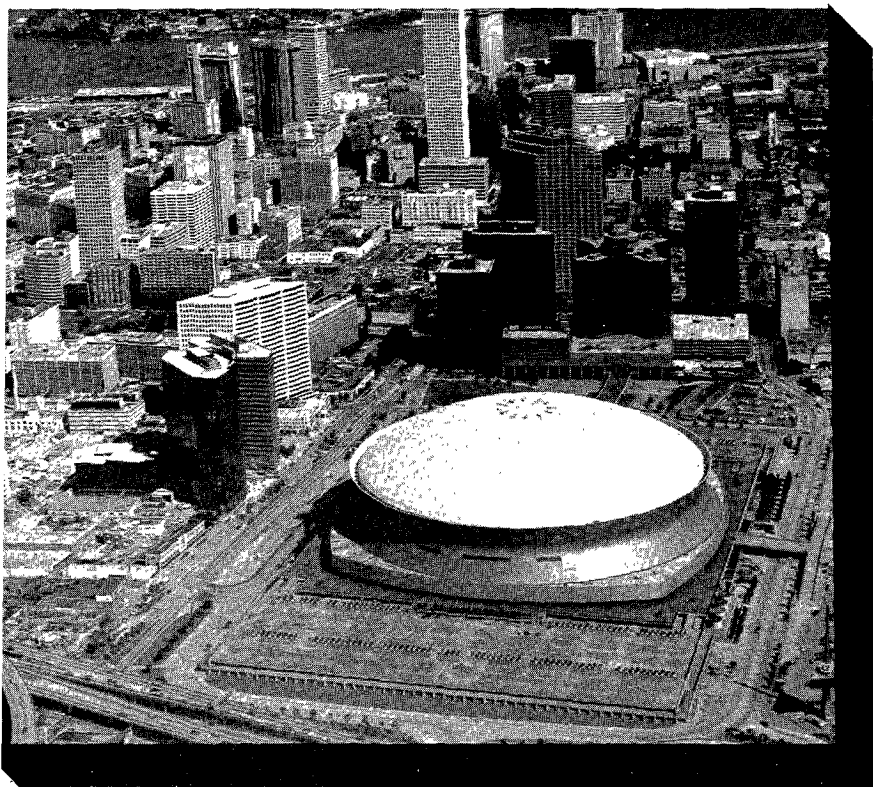
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Women of mission

Recently the Association of Adventist Women sponsored a conference on the campus of Andrews University. Drawing people from all over the world, it balanced concern with some aspects of women's position in the Adventist Church today with celebration of what women have done and are doing in the church. Roger Dudley concludes the following report on that conference by listing what he understands Adventist women would appreciate from their church. □ by Roger Dudley



n the very day that the Democratic candidate for President of the United States of America was making history by announcing that his choice for Vice President was a woman, Adventist women were meeting to consider their mission and role in the work of their church. From Washington, D.C., to California,

from Canada to Florida, and even from over the waters they came to Andrews University to attend the Women of Mission conference, July 11-15. The timing was only a coincidence. Yet these events may signal a new attention to the needs of women and a realization that they must be taken seriously—both in the nation and in the church.

MINISTRY invited me to cover the conference for them. As "eyes and ears" for the Adventist ministerial force, I find myself in a quandary. How does one absorb the events of five early-morning-to-late-evening days packed with seventy-some presentations and describe them adequately? A running account would be far too lengthy and would seem unfocused. Rather, I have chosen to share some impressions and tell what I think they mean for the Adventist Church.

First, some overall impressions: I was overwhelmed by the hard work and incredible planning that preceded this conference. Twenty-five committees worked for months in advance to ensure that all arrangements, down to the smallest detail, would be just right.

Roger Dudley is the associate director of Andrews University's Institute of Church Ministry.

Many contributed generously to provide the necessary finances.

I was also impressed by the sound balance that was evident. Attendees ranged from college age to octogenarian, and represented many races and cultures. Men too were well represented, both as presenters and attendees. And we were made to feel welcome and comfortable. No radical feminist attacks on our male chauvinism!

The program also showed good balance. Presentations of Biblical studies were mingled with inspirational and human-interest features. Workshops, a vast amount of music, an art exhibit, and a play rounded out the presentations. While we did hear some prophetic calls to the church to open up areas of service for women, we also heard words of appreciation. Among other things, women noted with approbation Neal Wilson's appeal at the 1980 General Conference session that the church employ more women in leadership positions. And they spoke with appreciation of the recent developments that have seen women serving as elders in local congregations.

Furthermore, the conference did not attempt to push women into the professions but affirmed the validity of God's call to service in the home as well as in

the church and the workplace. Jane Thayer's presentation on "Adventist Women in Homemaking" was received as one of the highlights of the conference. Balance was also seen in the selection of three women to be honored as Women of the Year. Lenora McDowell, a homemaker who has given dynamic leadership to the Home and School Association in Avon Park, Florida, represented home and community life. Anita Mackey, retired clinical social worker from Santa Barbara, who has collected a string of civic awards as long as your arm and who was one of the women selected to welcome Queen Elizabeth II to her community, represented women in work life. And Mary Walsh, longtime Bible instructor and author, represented women in denominational service.

Women's contributions

Perhaps many of us are not aware of the contribution that women have made and are making to the mission of the church. Nancy Vyhmeister surveyed the world units of the church. She discovered scores of women filling important posts in each of the world divisions—treasurers, departmental directors, editors, managers, school administrators, and pastor-evangelists. She shared let-

The number of women serving as treasurers and departmental directors peaked in the first thirty years of this century. A slow decline ensued, and has continued until recently.

ters from Germany, Madagascar, Sweden, the Philippines, and Finland describing the work of six women who serve as pastors in those fields.

Pat Habada described women in Adventist education. Over the years five have served in the General Conference, and at the present time in the United States one serves as a union conference director (Frances Clark) and five as local conference directors. Helen Evans Thompson has recently been elected vice president for academic affairs at Loma Linda University.

Now I invite you to follow me as I visit some of the exhibits and meetings. My impressions deepen as I examine the display at the back of the meeting room. First compiled for the Dallas General Conference session, it pictures the work of about ninety women in our history, beginning with Ellen White, Annie Smith, and Rachel Oakes Preston, running through Kate Lindsay and Lora Clement, and coming down to Elsa Luukkanen (Finnish pastor-evangelist who has won hundreds of converts), Betty Stirling, and Ruth Murdoch.

I have opportunity to listen to some "women of mission," and I am taken with their dedication to God's work. Betty Ahnberg tells how God used her childhood experiences to prepare her for her role as Aunt Sue in Your Story Hour. Ethel Bradford describes her team ministry with her pastor-administrator husband. Judy Ronk shares her feelings about being an elementary teacher: "I love to encourage children when they make a mistake. I love to trust them. When they feel smart, I feel wonderful." Jeanne Simmons, social ministries leader at the All Nations Adventist church, explains her mission: "People in trouble can pick up the phone at any hour and call me." Police stations, fire departments, and hospitals refer needy folk to her.

Joan Banks, a chemist who has suffered an unwanted divorce, relates how God healed her pain and gave her a healing ministry for others going through such losses. June Bowen tells how she has worked by the side of her chaplain

husband in a ministry to graduate students in need. Natelkka Burrell, pioneer black woman educator, describes how God guided her mission. "I had a wonderful mother who taught me how to love people rather than be concerned about the color of their skin."

I wish you could have heard the full stories of these and other women. Many were so moving that at times I had to brush away a tear. Take Collette Crowell, for instance. She is just completing her Seminary studies and will soon return as a pastor to the Upper Columbia Conference. She sensed God's call to the ministry so intensely that she changed her career plans, braved the opposition of her parents and many others, and broke up with her boyfriend to answer it.

Not only celebration

The conference was marked, however, not only by celebration but also by concern. While the majority of church membership is female, and while the church employs thousands of women, most of them fill traditional posts as secretaries, teachers, and nurses. Even in American society, with its strong stress on equal rights, men still occupy most leadership positions. In fact, in some ways women have lost ground. Bertha Dasher presented charts showing that the number of women serving as treasurers and departmental directors peaked in the first thirty years of this century. A slow decline ensued, and has continued until recently. The reasons are not clear. It may be that the personal ministry of Ellen White made female leadership more acceptable to the church during her lifetime and for a period thereafter. History also indicates that women often served because men just were not available. In times of worker surpluses women are likely to be shunted aside to provide jobs for men.

Whatever the reasons, many believe that the gospel calls for more equal treatment. Gerhard Hasel told the conference that Genesis 1 and 2 present a Creation with full equality between the sexes. Both constitute the image of God.

Genesis 3 introduces a situation that inaugurated a first among equals. But the restoration of human beings means, among other things, a return to the state of the original creation. Madelyn Haldeman offered that "the restrictions posed after the Fall are no longer in force in the new life offered in Christ."

And what about the ordination of women to the gospel ministry? This issue did not dominate the conference. Few of the participants have heard a call to the pastorate. Given home responsibilities and personal preferences, women are not likely to flood into the ministry in large numbers. Other issues are of more concern. Yet the question was considered because, as Gordon Hyde pointed out, to many it symbolizes the openness of every area of the church to all faithful members without regard to physical characteristics such as race and gender.

After careful study Raoul Dederen stated that no theological barrier to the ordination of women exists. Yet he noted that in the New Testament ordination is a recognition by the church of God's call, and he asked if the church is in harmony on this matter. Most present would accept this view but would ask the church to consider carefully the Biblical, theological, historical, and social roots of this issue to determine if we are in line with God's message to the contemporary world. In her address as president of the Association of Adventist Women (sponsor of the conference), Betty Howard challenged: "If our church ever signals that it approves the repression of the human spirit—the denial of full opportunity to exercise individual gifts and calling to any person—it will be a terrible tragedy."

What the church can do

So what do women want? While I do not claim to speak for them, I offer some impressions gained from the speeches made and the resolutions voted:

1. They would like study material dealing with their concerns to be supplied to the church by means of articles in our church papers, monographs, and
(Continued on page 29)

Sharpen your church's image

It is easy to become so comfortable in your surroundings that you no longer notice them. What does your church look like? What kind of impression do services make on visitors? Here are nine things you can do—most of them are free—to present a clean, crisp image that will make people want to visit your church again and again. □ by Chad McComas



Do you consider your church to be sharp—on the ball? Can you take as much pride in it as you would like? Even a church that presents a very professional image can find some areas in which it can improve. You can move your church along the scale from being a good church to being a sharp church.

And don't worry that dollar signs are peering around every turn ahead. The following nine hints require little money or time. Most of the suggestions concern carrying out your church's functions in a professional way.

1. Polish platform performance.

Our church services will be more professional as those who lead the congregation take their duties more seriously. For instance, whoever will present the Scripture reading should read the passage over several times so that he can read well during the service. Preparation will help him read with greater feeling and will help prevent him from stumbling over the passage.

Whoever is to present the morning prayer needs to think about what he is

going to say ahead of time. He should consider which members in the church need to be mentioned in that prayer. All of the members will be inspired by a prayer that incorporates both feeling and meaning. Someone who tries to pray from the top of his head will most likely go through a certain routine of thoughts and sentences that the members hear every week.

The content of the offering appeal also needs attention before it is delivered. The congregation should be informed how the offering is going to be used.

Those sitting up front must also remember their posture and how they look to the congregation. If they are attentive, the congregation will follow suit. But when someone on the platform slouches, with legs spread, and looks around the room in a bored manner, the congregation tends to pay more attention to him than to the speaker and the service. In many churches those on the

platform move to seats in the congregation just before the sermon begins. This tends to focus the congregation's attention on the speaker. (And families of those regularly on the platform particularly appreciate this arrangement.)

2. Welcome your visitors.

Too often a church forgets to welcome its visitors in any special way. When a visitor walks into a church and is not greeted or receives a half-hearted welcome, he is likely to think the church is either stale or unfriendly. A hearty greeting from a friendly member speaks of a growing church.

Supplement the welcome in the foyer with a good greeting in the Sabbath school class and in the church service. Try having your church get acquainted with its visitors before the service begins. Some have them stand and tell who they are and where they are from. This allows the congregation to spot the visitors and

Chad McComas is pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Astoria, Oregon.

A sharp church is constantly trying to think as visitors think; it explains what it is doing. Much is new and strange to the visitor. A sharp church realizes this and tries to make the visitor feel at home.

place names with the faces. Visitors need to feel you are interested in them and that you are glad for their presence. The more attention you pay to visitors, the more they want to become part of your church.

3. Handle the children's story carefully.

Many churches now have a children's story as part of their weekly service. I would suggest that those that do should not have the children sit on the steps of the rostrum facing the congregation. While the children do look cute sitting up in front, this arrangement presents them with the temptation to wave to the congregation and to look around instead of listening to the story. It is far better for the children to sit on the front pew so that they can face the storyteller and not be distracted or distracting.

4. Explain yourself.

We tend to take our services and practices for granted. We are used to the way we do things and don't think about it, but not so the visitor. He or she can feel totally lost trying to decide what we are talking about or doing.

A sharp church is constantly trying to think as the visitors think; it explains what it is doing. A visitor doesn't know what Investment is, or thirteenth Sabbath, or the ordinance of humility. He isn't aware of where the Sabbath school classes meet or what the Missions Extension Offering is. Much is new and strange to the visitor. A sharp church realizes this and tries to make the visitor feel at home.

5. Survey your foyer.

What does your church foyer look like? Bright, clean, and cheery? Are the walls nicely painted with no handprints? If you have plants, are they alive and healthy? Are stacks of old *Reviews* and Ingathering materials in the corners?

Is your first impression as you enter the church a positive one? Do you get the idea that this church is concerned about its image? A few nice posters, plants, or fresh flowers can let others know you care

about your church. A clean, attractive foyer is a must.

6. Examine your hymnals.

The hymnals in the pews can say much about a church. If they are worn out, torn, and have ragged edges, the visitor may feel he's in a church that's going downhill. If most of the congregation sits in the back, the hymnals there probably show more wear than those in front. Simply exchanging some of those worn hymnals with some from the front will freshen up the area where visitors are likely to sit. Purchase new ones, a few at a time, to replace some of the worst books. See if there are nicer books in other rooms or in the piano bench. You may even want to rebind some of the books. Since a new church hymnal is coming out in 1985, you will probably

Simply exchanging some of those worn hymnals with some from the front will freshen up the area where visitors are likely to sit. Replace the worst books a few at a time.

want to hold off purchasing many books at this time, but replacing the very worst ones may not be a bad idea.

7. Inspect your church sign.

Make a quick check. Is your church sign in good shape? Is it easy to see? Is it freshly painted and clean?

Do you even have a sign? A business without a sign tells you something: Either the owners are not making it or they don't want your business. A church with a professional sign says something also: We are proud of who we are and want you to know it. We want you to come visit us. If your sign needs repair, people who aren't members will likely think you have little to offer. A first-rate sign gives visitors and neighbors a good impression of the church. Signs on the edges of town giving directions to the church add to that good impression.

8. Do a spring cleaning.

Clutter easily piles up in a church. A messy church tells visitors that people don't care much about their church or what others think about it. It says that they don't give their church priority. A sharp church does "spring cleaning" constantly, not allowing things to pile up. Old bulletins are removed from the pews. The windows are clean. The carpet is vacuumed, the chairs in the rooms are orderly, and everything is in its place.

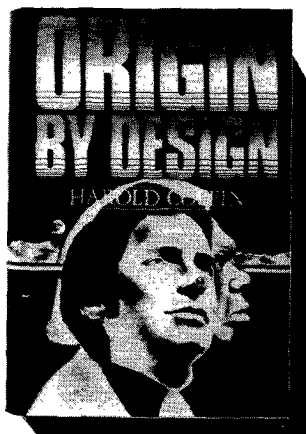
9. Consider your report board.

Many churches have the Sabbath school report board in front of the church. A quick glance usually suggests that the church is dying if the board lists the total membership, along with last week's attendance, and more often than

not the attendance numbers one half or less than one half the total membership. You can guess what a visitor thinks when he reads that! Place the report board in a less conspicuous area for those members who can't get along without it, or just list membership and not attendance. Perhaps you will be able to do away with it totally. We want to build our church image, not harm it.

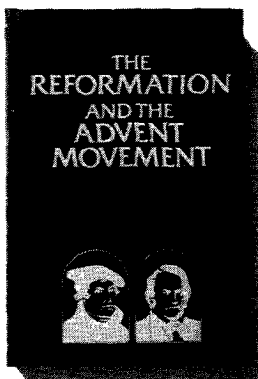
These nine suggestions involve no great difficulty. As you have read them you no doubt have thought of many more simple little things your church can do to sharpen its image. The sharper churches attract visitors. They are the churches that grow. And they grow because people like what they see and want to be part of the congregation. Why not try a few of these hints and turn your good church into a sharper, more professional-appearing church?

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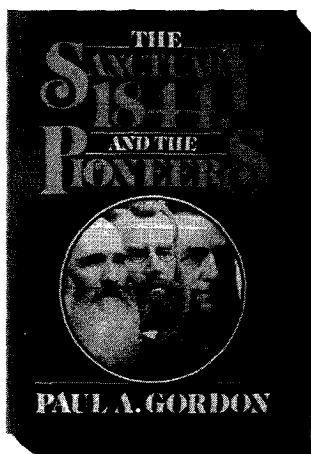


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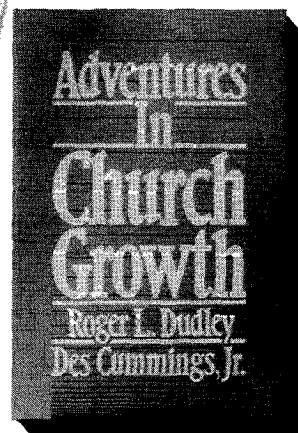


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Dig Deeper!

Absalom's ilk

Both David and Absalom found followers among the discontented of Israel. But their movements differed entirely in tone, outcome, and standing before God. How did they differ—and what does this say to us?

"Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way of the gate; and when any man had a suit to come before the king for judgment, Absalom would . . . say, 'From what city are you?' And when he said, 'Your servant is of such and such a tribe in Israel,' Absalom would say to him, 'See, your claims are good and right; but there is no man deputed by the king to hear you.' Absalom said moreover, 'Oh that I were judge in the land! Then every man with a suit or cause might come to me, and I would give him justice'" (2 Sam. 15:2-4, R.S.V.).

Thus Absalom spread discontent among King David's subjects. Absalom, who owed his very life to his father's mercy. Absalom, who owed his own presence in Jerusalem to his father's willingness to hear the cause of a "widow" from Tekoa. Absalom, the king's handsome, favored son, planted the seed of discontent that bore fruit in open rebellion.

After only four years at the gate, Absalom managed to spread unrest throughout all the land. Starting with the loyalty of only a few malcontents, he ended with an army large enough to drive Israel's most famous warrior from his fortress in fear for his life.

I visited a large church near an Adventist institution some time ago. The teacher for the general lesson study introduced himself, introduced the topic of the lesson, said a little bit more about the topic, and then launched into a discussion of his opinion about various unrelated topics, all leading up to a concluding tirade against some recent employment policy changes at the institution. The implication of his speech was that if only the right people were in power, such injustice would not happen.

I couldn't help thinking of Absalom.

But really, what was so wrong with what Absalom did? Wasn't he just following in his father's footsteps? First Samuel 22:2, R.S.V. tells us that when David escaped to the cave at Adullam

"every one who was in distress, and every one who was in debt, and every one who was discontented, gathered to him; and he became captain over them."

In a way, Absalom did follow his father's example. But only in a small way. David never went about looking for malcontents. He never stirred one person to rebellion against the king. In fact, he repeatedly showed his own loyalty to the leader that God had chosen. We read that when Saul first became angry with David, Saul threw his spear to pin David to the wall. "But David evaded him twice" (1 Sam. 18:11, R.S.V.).

Twice? Why twice? The picture I get here is of a nimble young man dodging a

throne in the hands of the God whose promises he trusted.

Until the coming of the Lord this world will never see an end to injustice. No doubt its ugly head can be found even within the church. Neither will there come an end to men and women who arise to challenge that injustice. Thank God for that. Thank God for men and women like David who will stand on the courage of their convictions and pray and strive until they see God's justice win the day.

But beware! How many who would fight for justice are of Absalom's ilk, and how many are of David's? How many, if they could sneak into the camp and find

The picture is of a nimble young man dodging a spear that flies past him and lodges in the wall. What would your reaction be if you were the most skillful warrior in the country?

spear that flies past him and lodges in the wall. What would your natural reaction be in that situation if you were the most skillful warrior in the country? If you knew that you had been anointed to replace this wicked king on the throne? And if you knew that you had won the hearts of the people and that they would crown you king on a moment's notice of their old king's death? I fear my natural reaction would have been to yank the spear out of the wall and send it back to its owner. Right where he could keep it close to his heart! I feel sure that that is what Absalom would have done.

But not David. He dodged the spear, let Saul retrieve it, then dodged it again! And a few days later he took the king's army out to fight the king's enemies.

Why? Because he considered Saul to be the Lord's anointed. And he was willing to place his own right to the

the established leaders defenseless, would say with David, "The Lord forbid that I should put forth my hand against the Lord's anointed" (chap. 26:11)? How many feel that the leaders are "out to get them" (perhaps they even feel that leadership has tried to pin them to the wall)? How many who have suffered injustice would pick up the offending leader's spear and walk away with it as a testimony of loyalty? Are there some who instead would take the spear and thrust it through the heart of their defenseless victim?

The struggle for justice must always go forward in the world and in the church. And those who lead in the struggle will always find willing followers from among the discontent. But when I feel inclined to follow, I must make sure: Am I following a David, or an Absalom?—K.R.W.

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 date 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?

No greater evangelistic challenge

I can think of no greater evangelistic challenge than to address a situation exactly like this! Assuming the "willing nonmember" is a young man, much in love with his fiancée, I would arrange to give Bible studies to him at least twice a week, but if possible, three times, and prepare him thoroughly as a Christian. If he is willing, and has learned to love a fine Christian young lady, the Spirit of God will grace this beautiful situation, and bring him to an experience in Christ. If I could meet with the couple together part of the time, and him alone the rest of the time, it would be ideal. I would hope to baptize him on the Sabbath morning either one week prior to his wedding date or just a day or so prior. The church would be fully informed of this beautiful experience, and it would be a cause of much rejoicing among the families concerned, and the church family at large.

The evangelistic repercussions of this could be widespread, reaching into the young man's family, relatives on both sides, and the youth of the church.—W. B. Quigley, Silver Spring, Maryland.

Offer a "marriage dedication"?

Is the non-Adventist party a Christian? At what stage ("on the books" or sincerely trying)? In other words, what basis for understanding does he/she have?

What's the reason for such hurry? True love can usually wait a while longer. Is a pregnancy involved? What are their ages?

Without answers to these questions, here's a partial reply:

1. Get them to postpone the wedding date for a while. If this is impossible, then proceed to the second suggestion.

2. Establish an accelerated study program preparing for baptism. The Holy Spirit will impress you as to when the individual is ready.

3. If they insist on a marriage in six weeks or so, then probably they are unwilling to "wait upon the Lord." Therefore, the whole process is more a test for the minister than for them. In that case he should kindly and prayerfully suggest another minister or a justice of the peace.

Maybe we are overdue for another service similar to the baby dedication. Why not a "marriage dedication" for any marriage that has not in the past received the blessing of the church? This would give time for studies as well as giving a gentle way out for the minister while still leaving the door open for the young couple.—H. Dale Warren, D.D.S., Corvallis, Oregon.

Handle with care

Whenever I've been confronted with a similar situation, it has been my practice to:

1. Congratulate the couple. Share with them the importance of marriage.

2. Inform them of my role as pastor to perform marriages only after six weeks of premarriage counseling sessions.

3. Make them aware of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's teaching, drawn from the Bible, that its members are to marry within the church.

4. Tell them that I am happy to hear the non-church member is willing to be baptized, but as a church, we baptize only in accordance with Matthew 28:19, 20. Before the candidate can be taken into church membership via baptism, he/she must be fully instructed in the distinctive teachings of the church.

Even though it would take much time on my part, I would attempt to schedule premarriage counseling sessions with the couple and weekly Bible instructions with the nonbeliever. Very firmly, but with gentleness and understanding and without being offensive, I would attempt to open their eyes to the dangers of marriage following so close on the heels of baptism. All too often, the in-love nonbeliever shows a willingness to become a member of the church to get his/her way in love. Examples of this are many, and only God knows the soul damage that has occurred as a result of such marriages.

If they persist in the fact that they have only six weeks, I want to know why the hurry. In these circumstances I ask: Are you running away from something? Are you pregnant? and so forth. The Word of God indicates that love is, among other things, patient (1 Cor. 13:4).

I do not fail to point out that marriage is difficult even when two longtime Christians are joining together in holy wedlock. The number of breakups among Christian couples proves that too many marriages are not made in heaven—that is why they have so little heaven about them. These ill-assorted unions do not lead so much to Paradise as to misery and the divorce courts.—Richard E. Barron, Silver Spring, Maryland.

Questions and alternatives

In my answer, I am assuming that there are no other serious objections to the marriage.

By current Adventist evangelistic practice in America, six weeks is long enough to indoctrinate and baptize a new member, particularly if the individual already has some form of Adventist background. For instance, has this person had a close relationship with an Adventist relative? Has the prospective candidate been attending church? Has he or she attended a series of evangelistic meetings or taken Bible studies? A dedicated Adventist fiancé(e) would almost certainly have done a lot of explaining already. Is this person an active, well-informed member of another conservative Protestant denomination, thus having an understanding of the basic issues already?

The more yes answers to these questions, the more willing I would be to give a series of intensive Bible studies and proceed with a baptism in time for the wedding. If the individual were not already a Christian, had no previous exposure to Adventism, and had not been attending church, I would urge the couple to postpone their plans. If they chose to proceed, I would refuse to be rushed into a baptism unless I had the plainest evidence that the prospective candidate was sincerely searching for truth.

A refusal to baptize someone who claims to want it immediately is a delicate matter. I explain to such a person that I want him or her to be the best possible member, and one way we provide for this in the Adventist Church is by instructing people prior to baptism so that they will have no surprises after. I would thank the couple for the confidence they showed in wanting me to marry them and I would explain why I could not, making it clear that my refusal was not in itself an objection to their desire to be married. If they continued with their plans, I would offer to help them with premarital counseling according to the plan prepared by the General Conference Home and Family Service. I would also offer to help them find a minister of another denomination who could marry them, and I would attend the wedding and bring a gift. I would, of course, offer to begin Bible studies at their earliest convenience, before or after the wedding.—Marvin Moore, Waco, Texas.

Time needed


I really feel it necessary to spend time with a couple before marriage for their benefit—especially a younger couple. And since one is not an Adventist (and the question seems to indicate that the pastor is not well-enough acquainted to really know his/her spiritual condition) and the other is a member of my church and they have made an apparently firm decision, I would also feel almost obligated to work with them.

At this vantage point I would find it necessary to inform them that the spiritual goals, the spiritual concerns, of a couple to a great degree determine their future unity or lack of it, as the case may be. As we spend time together in the next couple of weeks in premarital counseling, that would be one of the main areas on which I would want to work with them—to help them to see if their goals and their spiritual concepts are the same. And I think I would be honest with them, telling them that within a couple of weeks, if I really felt that their spiritual goals and level of understanding of basic things were too different, I would not want to be the one to tie the knot.—Lester Merklin, Fall River, Wisconsin.

Who is my pastor?

As a pastor, I have a responsibility for my congregation. When any member of my congregation needs spiritual guidance, he will generally come to me or call me up for counsel. However, when I need spiritual counsel myself, I have no pastor to whom I can go. I regard my union and conference officers as my "pastors"—but to what extent can I confide my spiritual problems to these brethren without betraying myself?

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On being Mrs. Pastor

Being a pastor's wife can be hard on your humanness, but could it be that the capacity to relate to people in a very human way is the one gift that can do the most to make life rewarding?

How did you become the wife of a minister? Did you fall in love with a ministerial student while attending college? Did your husband surprise you after being married a number of years by announcing he was going back to college, as he felt the Lord calling him to the ministry? Or did you marry a man who was already in the ministry?

It doesn't really matter how it happened, but today you find yourself in this role. How do you feel about it? Do you feel God's leading as you happily fill your place in God's great plan of winning souls for His kingdom? Or are you overwhelmed by the role expectations, maybe even chafing at the things you are learning ministers' wives must cope with?

If either of the latter are true of you, take courage, dear heart; you are not alone! Others share your feelings and find it is not always easy to be a minister's wife!

While Muriel Phillips discusses three areas she finds particularly difficult, she shares a secret that has helped in making her relationships with those in the parish meaningful and rewarding.—Marie Spangler.

My partner in marriage has been a minister for nine years. Perhaps you would think that I would have come to terms with the occupation by now. But being the wife of a minister does not come easily for me. I make a distinction here between the pleasure of being Reg's wife and my discomfort in being the "minister's wife."

It gives me great satisfaction to know that my partner is engaged in a meaningful profession. A "people job" is personally rewarding, and ministry has it on that score. I am proud that Reg can be of

help to people in those areas of life that are ultimately important. I do not resent the time he spends on the job because he skillfully manages his time to include family priorities. I am gratified that his job gives him the latitude to decide which areas of ministry he is best suited for. But some things do bother me.

The three problems that trouble me most about the ministry are *loneliness*, *moving*, and *criticism*. I guess I feel that if I put my thoughts on paper, it may help other ministers' spouses out there to feel less lonely. Maybe by sharing we can help keep these feelings from growing out of proportion.

Loneliness. Many spouses find intimate friends within the congregation. For me, this has almost never worked. When the minister's spouse becomes friendly on a personal basis with a church member, there is great risk of misunderstanding due to the pastor's position of authority and leadership. This is especially true

when the minister must make a decision that the friend disagrees with. It is sort of like having your spouse as president of a company and relating to all of the company's employees as friends. When there is a "labor dispute" (church board), "policy disagreement" (theological difference), or "strike" (large-scale criticism), the friendships can become quite uncomfortable. I have found friends outside the congregation, but it would be lovely to have just one church member who would be mature enough to understand my needs for friendship without regard for her own feelings about my husband's style of ministry. That is asking a lot—to ask someone to see you as a person, not a stereotype. To overlook gossip, to be there just for you. I would like to think of this as a contribution to personal ministry—a gift from one person to another.

Moving. While some may look on this activity as a grand adventure, I do not

Prayers from the parsonage

I've just spent the afternoon with recent converts to our church. Coming from different religious backgrounds, they had been led step by step to the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. As they shared experiences, I felt a wonderful joy. These were not simple-minded folk deluded by religious propaganda. Neither were they unbalanced people seeking emotional crutches. Vibrant, attractive individuals, they rejoiced in finding a personal relationship with Christ and a deeper understanding of the Bible.

In contrast, I have no dramatic

conversion story. My testimony is of parents, teachers, and friends who nurtured me in the Christian life until I was old enough to decide on my own which way I would follow. The doctrines and programs of this church are part of me. Though I have been blessed by growing up in a Christian home, I easily take it for granted.

Thank You, Lord, for this contact with people who have experienced something so worthwhile that they've made impressive changes to be part of that faith. They are an exuberant witness to relatives and colleagues in a far wider circle than mine. They've also witnessed to me. Because of their perspective, I view my religious heritage—so familiar, so dear—with a special pride.

Cherry B. Habenicht

Muriel Phillips is the wife of the minister of the Seventh-day Adventist churches of Norwich and New London, Connecticut, and the choir director/organist of the United Congregational church of Norwich, Connecticut.

find it enjoyable. In some circles, moving has been regarded as a "way out," or a "way up." I feel that there is personal, professional, and denominational strength to be gained by longer pastorates. I am glad to see trends moving in that direction.

Criticism. Harry Truman once said, "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen." But a woman whose husband is a minister can't just pick up and leave. Sure I know criticism comes with the territory! I know people have a right to disagree (I didn't say an obligation); I know the church is supposedly a democracy; I know there will never be a congregation that totally supports its pastor. Yes, I know these things in my

Many spouses find intimate friends within the congregation. For me this has almost never worked.

head, but my heart doesn't pay attention to facts. My heart knows that I love the pastor—that precludes objectivity. My heart knows that I can't stand to see him hurt and sleepless. My heart knows that he has more training and experience than his critics. Trust takes time. Trust takes knowing. I wonder if they will give him that time. The anger that results from criticism is tough to deal with for a woman whose husband is a minister. I don't feel that it is appropriate for me to

become involved in defending him, but the feelings have to go somewhere. Where?

Most of us, ministers and parishioners alike, are about the same. It is our fear of sharing that sameness that keeps us apart. The best gift any of us can give is simply to be ourselves. This is especially true of the minister and his spouse. Pretense and affectations get in the way of meaningful and rewarding relationships.

The preacher's weekly dilemma

From page 9

otherwise select, helps ensure that I will include the basic doctrines of the Christian faith, and reminds me that we are part of a wide Christian fellowship sharing similar concerns.

When I have selected the sermon topics and Scripture passages, I put them on a sheet of paper divided into weekly sections and transfer this information directly to the monthly preaching sheets. Special worship days such as Communion, holidays, church board retreats, hymn festivals, choir anthem service, family celebration Sabbath, Reformation Sabbath, et cetera, have already been placed on these monthly pages. The subjects for each week are fitted around these occasions. Old and New Testament readings are chosen for each topic so that a list for worship reading may be given to each elder and the music personnel.

After the church year calendar is complete, I schedule a meeting with the church organist and choir director. I give a copy of the schedule to each and present a brief summary of each week to aid them in music selection for the next year. At an elders' meeting, each elder receives a copy so he will know well in advance what the Scripture readings and sermon topics will be.

Are there drawbacks to planning

sermons a year at a time? Yes. But they are relatively few and easily managed. The sermonic year obviously inhibits flexibility. Sometimes situations will necessitate schedule changes. An unusual circumstance may develop in the church dictating that the scheduled topic is not appropriate or that there is an urgent need for a sermon not currently scheduled. When this happens, I omit the subject for that week or exchange one week for another or prepare a sermon for the situation. It is stated on the schedule that the calendar is subject to revision, and I can easily change direction. I have had no complaints when substitutions have been made.

The benefits, I believe, far outweigh the disadvantages. Among the benefits I have found are these:

1. The sermonic year plan has enabled me to have an overview of what I am trying to accomplish for that year.
2. It is relatively easy to look back and review how well I have succeeded in accomplishing what I set out to do.
3. Chances for subject and text duplication are lessened. (As an interesting exercise sometime, list all the subjects you have preached during a two- or three-year period. Hobbyhorses come hobbling along with amazing frequency.)
4. Knowing a year at a time what I am planning to preach helps me keep an eye out for information pertinent to the sermon topics. When ideas or articles come to mind, I note them and file them by date for later retrieval.
5. That old panic feeling is absent. I

know that all I have to do Monday morning is to open my top right drawer, and there rests the sermon subject and texts for next Sabbath.

6. Texts and sermon titles can easily be published in the church calendar, letting church members know that the pastor has at least one situation somewhat under control. Working from a sermonic year plan is personally satisfying. I feel on top of the situation, and approach each week with confidence about one area of my life at least: I know what I will preach about next week. Sometimes it seems that is the only thing I have that day to be confident about, and I give thanks for that one.

7. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, some sage once said. So it is in preparing the sermonic year. I believe that this approach enhances the worship service. The elders, the musicians, and the pastor know the themes that will be developed during the next year and can plan accordingly. The prayers, hymns, scripture, anthems, and sermon, when all is going well, relate to that theme. When this is repeatedly the pattern, the congregation begins to notice that, amazingly, the various parts of the service fit together, and that it is no accident! Indeed, one major purpose for the sermonic year is to develop intentionality in the preaching ministry.

For me, the sermonic year has answered the question: What shall I preach next week? I'm still losing my hair, but not from pulling it out on Friday night trying to come up with something for the saints on Sabbath morning!

The Septuagint still speaks!

This ancient translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek was the Bible of early Christianity. It offers today's pastors a greater understanding of both the Old and the New Testaments.

The firstborn child has held preeminence in the family and hence in society from time immemorial. Likewise, as the firstborn among many translations of the Old Testament, the Septuagint holds a special place. Born in Alexandria, Egypt, of Jewish parents, it was like the child of an aged couple giving birth for the first time so that the family name may continue in an alien and hostile country. The problem was that the Hebrew mother tongue was no longer used by the majority of the Alexandrian Jews, surrounded as they were by the powerful Hellenistic influences. They now spoke the popular Greek language imported by Alexander the Great when he founded the colony that quickly blossomed into a mighty center of learning. The Septuagint's exact birthdate is unknown, although it must have been about the middle of the third century B.C.

The factors that shaped the newborn included not merely its parentage but also the cultural environment. The Septuagint translated ideas as well as words. Thus it had prime importance as an interpretation in addition to being a translation. No language has ever had the luxury of *one word for one idea*, so any given phrase, sentence, or idea has several shades of meaning. The word(s) chosen by the translator depend(s) on such things as his background, presuppositions, perceptions, culture, and biases.

Beyond the fact of its Jewish parentage, we know little more about the Septuagint's origins. Traditionally our source of information has been the Letter of Aristeas, dated from 200 B.C. to A.D. 33 and purporting to be a letter written by Aristeas to his friend Philocrates about the time of the Septuagint translation. Aristeas recounts the miraculous

events that, for him, signal divine blessing. He tells of seventy-two elders (six from each tribe) who, though kept in isolation while they worked, all came up with an identically worded translation in seventy-two days! Understandably, the letter is afforded little credibility beyond the fact that the early work on the Septuagint was done in Egypt as a translation of the Pentateuch. However, the legend has lent the name Septuagint, or Seventy (the number usually being rounded and abbreviated to LXX), not only to the Pentateuch but to the entire Greek Old Testament translated from the Hebrew over the next century or so.

To many, the connotations of an Egyptian origin have been sufficient to keep them from seeing any use for the LXX, especially as it was born during the intertestamental "dark ages" when the voice of prophecy was silent. But this unnecessarily harsh view overlooks some positive values of the LXX. First, it is the earliest written commentary on the Old Testament. True, it does not conform to the pattern of modern commentaries that spell out in many words the possible nuances of the text. But the careful student can glean from this Greek translation insights into the original Hebrew. Second, the LXX was the Bible of the Christian church. Although Jesus was able to stand in the synagogue and read the Scripture lesson from the Hebrew, and Paul underwent rabbinic training in Hebrew, for many of the people in Palestine Aramaic was their mother tongue and Greek their second language. In the Diaspora Greek (and later Latin) predominated. If there was a need in third century B.C. Alexandria for the Old Testament in Greek, how much more was this the case in the early centuries A.D. Thus the LXX had a profound effect in a number of ways.

Its most obvious use today is for the study of the history of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. Unfortunately, in the past an overenthusiastic scholarship

made unreasonable demands of the LXX and used it to suggest emendations of the Hebrew text at almost every turn (although such suggestions were relegated to the footnotes of the Hebrew Bibles and were never used to alter the text of the Bible itself). Today's more sober scholar, whether Jew or Christian, approaches the Hebrew Scriptures in the light of the Qumran and Dead Sea scrolls. He has a high regard for their amazingly successful preservation. This does not obviate the need for the Greek text, which plays a quiet but helpful role in restoring a lost or damaged word or passage here and there as in the portion of the story of Saul and Jonathan recorded in 1 Samuel 14:41. The following is the R.S.V. translation (the portion derived from the LXX is in brackets): "Therefore Saul said, 'O Lord God of Israel, [why hast thou not answered thy servant this day? If this guilt is in me or in Jonathan my son, O Lord, God of Israel, give Urim; but if this guilt is in thy people Israel,] give Thummim.'"

Because the theological vocabulary of the New Testament was drawn from the LXX, it is helpful and even necessary to view the New Testament usage in the light of the LXX background. However, this is not an end in itself. The LXX must in turn be seen in the light of the Hebrew Scriptures. When classical Greek words were chosen to express the ideas of the Old Testament they were of necessity given a meaning as different from their original as the lofty concepts of the Old Testament were beyond the pagan ideas. One example is the sometimes-heated discussion of *hilastērion* in Romans 3:25. Does it mean *propitiate* or *expiate*? Is the New Testament meaning colored by the pagan concept of "appeasing the wrath of an angry god"?

Sometimes the meanings of the Greek words were radically different from their Hebrew counterparts. Just how different can be seen from the fact that it was not

Bernard A. Taylor is a doctoral student at Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio, and his dissertation deals with the Septuagint of I Samuel.

until Martin Luther studied the Hebrew Scriptures themselves that he came to understand righteousness by faith. In classical Greek *dikaïosunē* (NT: "righteousness") is one of the four cardinal virtues that an individual is free to develop in himself. Because this word was used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew, it was difficult for the native Greek reader to understand such a concept as "the righteousness of God" apart from the idea of infused virtue. When Luther understood the original Hebrew term in the light of the Old Testament covenant relation as something outside of himself, he was led to the foot of the cross in penitence.

It can also be instructive to determine when New Testament quotes have been taken from the LXX. In many instances they quote the LXX word for word, and in others they parallel the Greek more closely than the Hebrew. The whole discussion of *virgin* versus *young woman* in Isaiah 7:14 centers upon the LXX translation of the Hebrew word as *virgin*. Also, consider the quotation by Peter on the day of Pentecost from Joel 2:28-32 as literally translated by the K.J.V., "I will pour out . . . of my Spirit" (Acts 2:18). As a boy, I grew up with the interpretation that this experience was partitive—"of my Spirit" meant "a portion of my Spirit" and hence not the full experience as wonderful as it was. Recently out of curiosity I looked it up in the LXX, and found that the New Testament quotes the Greek Bible of the day. Hence, on the basis of the LXX usage, I am no longer convinced that Pentecost was only partial. Further, all the Old Testament quotations in the book of Hebrews are from the Greek—to the extent that the proof text of Christ's divinity quoted in Hebrews 1:6 is not in the Hebrew Bible as we have it (although I understand that a Hebrew fragment containing it was found at Qumran), but it is from the LXX. It seems reasonable then that when the young Timothy, Greek speaker that he was, read the statement from the apostle that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16), he thought of his Greek Bible. Certainly later church fathers such as Origen so regarded Paul's words.

For many years the LXX fell into neglect as an aid to Bible study because it was felt that the original Hebrew was more than adequate. A resurgence of interest in the LXX has followed in the wake of the discovery of the Dead Sea

Scrolls in 1947. While the picture is still being clarified, it is correct to say that some of the manuscripts found there bear a striking relation to a differing Hebrew text, one that underlies the LXX translation. In other words, the translators of the LXX may not have just added words; they may have been following a somewhat different Hebrew text from the Masoretic Text now available to us. An example that never ceases to fascinate me is the small Hebrew fragment (about the size of the palm of the hand) found in Cave Four that contains parts of the first few verses of Exodus 1. Among other things, the number of souls that went down to Egypt with Jacob is said to be 75 in contrast to the seventy of the Hebrew text (Ex. 1:5). After so many centuries the LXX, which also has 75, now has some company! But the interest does not stop there. When the gentile Stephen, in his defense as quoted in Acts 7, speaks of the descent of Jacob and his kindred into Egypt he also gives the number as 75 (Acts 7:14).

To put things in perspective, I must admit that you can have a very effective ministry without ever having had recourse to the LXX. If, on the other hand, you are in control of New Testament Greek, then you will find much of the material to be refreshing reading while at the same time helping you further understand the Scriptures. Only once have I preached directly from the LXX (a baptismal sermon from the story of Naaman who "baptized" himself in the Jordan). Though I rarely mention the Septuagint to the congregation in divine service (in contradistinction to study groups, where I consider it appropriate if done judiciously), I constantly go to it for background in my sermon preparation. I have found that an effective preacher needs to know much more of his subject than he hopes to share (ideally by a factor of ten or more) or he will not have an adequate perspective. The Septuagint can be an additional resource. But there is one caveat. You should read the Greek text for yourself. Even the best available English translation falls victim in places to what might be called the "K.J.V. syndrome," a tendency to conform to the accepted translation of the Hebrew. You need to be adventuresome and make your own translations. If you feed your own soul with fresh insights from the Bible of the Greek world, then in turn you will bless others in your ministry.

Women of mission

From page 19

books. Richard Leshar explained how theology is developed in the Adventist Church. The process begins with scriptural analysis, proceeds through vigorous discussion, and finally arrives at consensus. Gordon Hyde stated, "The church should have the opportunity to read the discussions of Biblical, theological, and historical studies and then react. It's a shame to react out of ignorance." Women would like the church to pursue these study and discussion stages.

2. They would like to have greater consideration for positions of leadership in the church that do not require ordination (e.g., treasurers, departmental directors, members on controlling boards, editors, school administrators). They would like the denomination to keep a "skills bank" listing the qualifications of male and female potential workers so that openings can be filled by the most qualified candidates.

3. They would like the church to provide more education in family management skills.

4. They would like a support system—a channel by which women throughout the church could encourage each other and affirm one another in the gifts and ministries to which God has called each one.

At the Sabbath worship service Madelyn Haldeman proclaimed that according to the New Testament, spiritual gifts were distributed as the Spirit willed, without distinction based on physical characteristics. All must account for the gifts they have received. To fulfill their responsibility, women must employ their gifts or be in danger of becoming unprofitable servants.

Ruth Murdock succinctly summed up the conference theme. "The mission of Adventist women," she offered, "is to glorify God by living the character of Christ." How do they do this? By showing love, understanding, and concern for all they meet. By affirming the possibilities and potentialities of every human. A worthy mission for all of us—women and men!



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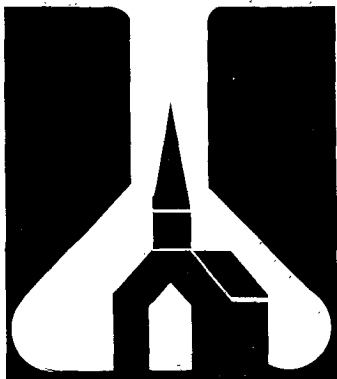


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Dr. Tim Berry, who has a doctorate in church growth studies from Fuller Theological Seminary, heads up the team, which charges fees commensurate with the size of the congregation. Write to Comprehensive Ministry Associates, P.O. Box 266, South Lancaster, Massachusetts 01561, or phone (617) 365-4561, ext. 274.

Health evangelism

Pastors of congregations large and small will be interested in a new church growth plan, the Abundant Living Health Series, prepared by the Loma Linda University School of Health and distributed by the General Conference Health and

Temperance Department. The heart of the program is eleven colorful and attractive notebooks covering weight, diet and food preparation, stress management, exercise, reducing cancer risks, and family health. Unlike many earlier health education plans, this series incorporates newly discovered church growth concepts. Concentrating on developing local community contacts, it then moves into those adult health education classes that have proved most successful. After demonstrating that the Bible is a trusted health guide and a surprisingly accurate and current source of health information, the plan concludes with a full evangelistic series.

The material in the Abundant Living Health Series is new. Each health education segment has been built from the ground up by a person having specific expertise in that area, reviewed by a panel of experts, and tested in the field. Likewise, the doctrinal and church growth materials have been prepared by a pastor who for years has been developing an effective soul-winning approach closely linked to the health message. And the program is simple to use even if you don't have a health professional in your congregation.

One of the best features of the Abundant Living Health Series is its affordability. Each volume costs only \$14.95 plus 20 percent for postage and handling. That means the entire program can be purchased for under \$200! And this price

includes masters for overhead visuals that can be reproduced locally at a relatively low cost.

For a free brochure explaining the plan in detail, or to order, write: Abundant Living Health Series, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Health and Temperance Department, 6840 Eastern Ave., NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

Advertise your church

Michael A. Jones and Associates is now offering complete integrated advertising packages to Seventh-day Adventist churches. The packages, which can include television and radio spots, newspaper ads, and tabloids, can be targeted to former Adventists, specific age groups, or to the general public.

The goal for all of the ads is to create a positive awareness of the local church and a desire to attend. For information contact: Michael A. Jones and Associates, 14232 Dallas Parkway, Suite 1805, Dallas, Texas 75240. Phone: (214) 233-1723.

For your non-church school students

Are you concerned about children of your members who are not attending Adventist schools? Are these young people receiving the spiritual guidance they need? How can you help them get the most essential part of their education?

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garten-through-college correspondence school, has just announced a sustained drive to reach students attending non-Adventist schools.

Home Study International offers Bible courses on all levels, at a reasonable price, using the same materials and covering the same Bible subjects found in Adventist classrooms throughout the continent. Students study the Old and New Testaments, Bible characters, Biblical history, church history, church doctrines, Christian living, et cetera. HSI even offers college-level courses for the precocious high school student. (Any of these courses may be transferred to a denominational school for credit.)

Home Study International's correspondence Bible courses allow the Adventist school system to reach into the home, helping to mold susceptible minds, ensuring that the values inherent in our faith are passed on to the next generation.

How can you help? First, inform your congregation of this opportunity. Announce it from the pulpit. Write about it in your church bulletin (include HSI's address). Recommend it as you visit these students and their parents. Second, send the names and addresses of local church members who might benefit from this service to HSI. Home Study International will then contact them and provide them with more information. Write: Home Study International, 6940 Carroll Avenue, Takoma Park, Maryland 20912.

Recommended reading

Money and the Christian

Mel Rees, *Color Press, College Place, Washington, 1984, 148 pages, \$6.00, paper. Reviewed by Don E. Crane, Special Contributor to MINISTRY.*

Mel Rees, one of the most prolific writers on the subject of Christian stewardship in North America today, has produced an excellent manual on money management for the Christian. He has a firm grasp of the spiritual principles undergirding Christian money management, and this book merits a place in the library of Christian workers of all denominations.

Understanding and practicing true principles of money management is inextricably entwined with everything a person thinks and does. But stewardship should be considered only when the individual willingly accepts God as owner of all.

Knowing what ingredients make up successful money management can assist the pastor as he ministers to the needs of his congregation. Successful money management contributes to the peace and tranquillity of the individual, the home, and the church. The mismanagement or abuse of money can contribute to a lack of spirituality, frustration, discord, and finally to separation and divorce.

A special supplement at the end of the book called "Christina's Corner of Family Finance" is packed full of commonsense suggestions on how to manage the family budget. The "Money Card" and the "Child's Money Record" are but a few of the many unique and valuable suggestions to make family budgeting practical and easy for children as well as parents. This book can be ordered directly from the author for \$6.00. The address is Mel Rees, Hayes Route, Box 14-F, Woodland, Washington 98674.

Recently published

Thank God for New Churches! *James H. Lehman, Brethren Press, Elgin, Illinois, 1984, 108 pages, \$6.95, paper.* The author traveled extensively, visiting newly formed Brethren congrega-

tions, interviewing members and seeking to discover the secrets of successful church planting. The stories and insights he gained are related in four chapters, "Starting Spontaneously," "A Pivotal Time," "Gaining Momentum," and "The New Brethren."

Speaking the Gospel Through the Ages and Speaking the Gospel Today. *Milton L. Rudnick, Robert Kolb, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1984, 232 pages, 223 pages, \$24.95 for both volumes.* These two volumes comprise a history and a theology of evangelism. The first volume (by Rudnick) touches on methods of evangelism from the apostolic age right up to the present, touching on many interesting methods, even including the Inquisition. In discussing the theology of evangelism, the second volume (by Kolb) seeks the "why" of Christian outreach.

Youth Baptismal Celebration Guide. *J. H. Harris, Pacific Press, 1984, 27 study guides, \$5.95.* Each of the study guides makes use of illustrations, texts, and a "Discussion and Reaction" section to help prepare youth for baptism. Packaged in an attractive folder that includes a "Spiritual Need Evaluation" survey.

Blessings and Consecrations. *Section on Worship of the Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church, Abingdon Press, 1984, 64 pages.* This small book provides readings and suggested orders of service for special occasions ranging from "An Order for the Breaking of Ground for a Church Building" to "An Order for the Dedication of a Church Building," with many other special consecrations for children, church workers, musicians, and even musical instruments. While it is designed specifically for United Methodist congregations, it could prove useful in any church.

Money Problems and Pastoral Care. *Paul G. Schurman, Fortress Press, Phila-*

delphia, 1982, 96 pages, \$3.95, paper. Deals with money management for clergy, plus suggestions for counseling those with financial problems.

Have I Told You Lately . . . ? *Joe A. Harding, Church Growth Press, Pasadena, California, 1982, 141 pages, paper.* Presents an inspirational vision of what preaching can and should be in a growth-oriented church. Dr. Harding is pastor of the rapidly growing Central United Protestant church in Richland, Washington.

Pastoral Preaching. *Gary D. Stratman, Abingdon, Nashville, 1983, 112 pages, \$6.95, paper.* The author's concern is that by "preaching to problems" we may miss out on the wider counsel of God's Word. He suggests ways to make Biblical preaching more applicable to felt needs within the congregation.

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