

ELDER'S DIGEST

A Quarterly Resource for Local Church Elders Vol. 10 No. 2

Consecrate *yourself* to **GOD** in the morning;

make this your very first work.

**Let your prayer be, "Take me,
Oh Lord, as wholly Thine.**

I lay all my plans at Thy feet.

Use me today in Thy service.

**Abide in me, and let all my
work be wrought in Thee."**

E. G. White

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3** Cast not away your confidence
Joel Sarli
- 4** The ideal leader in the church
Jonas Arrais de Matos
- 6** Preaching with an objective
Aroldo F. de Andrade
- 10** Do Adventists need to be concerned about the charismatic movement?
Gerhard F. Hasel
- 14** The management of life
Mel Rees
- 16** What is preaching?
H. M. S. Richards
- 18** Evangelism in the local church—entry events
Dr. Earl P. W. Cameron
- 21** Bible - Illustrations
- 24** The Scriptures a sufficient guide
Ellen G. White
- 29** Questions and Answers
Francis D. Nichol
- 30** Nothing but the blood
James A. Cress

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“Cast not away your confidence”

Joel Sarli



About 1,950 years ago the apostle Paul counseled the members of the Church of his time to “cast not away, therefore, your confidence.” And I believe this is the very need of our church today.

Some years ago I was called to be the pastor of the Portuguese Church in Canada. Some time before, a very peculiar situation developed between two of the elders who had lost confidence in each other. For a long time they had scarcely spoken to each other. They kept a tirade of criticism against one another. It was a terrible thing. It split the church members. The attitude of the feuding brethren was reflected in the factions that developed in the congregation. Untold harm to the cause resulted. I was thankful for what the Spirit of God did for these two estranged members one morning.

One day, after a revival preaching on Sabbath, with tears streaming down their cheeks they put their arms around each other, and the old barriers fell like Berlin’s Wall. What a blessed experience

it brought to the whole church when confidence was restored.

The English word *confidence* comes from a Latin infinitive, *confidere*, “to trust.” Confidence is synonymous with trust and faith. If we trust a person’s good offices, if we have faith in his sincerity, though we may not always agree with his views and the way he does things, we may still retain confidence in him.



Confidence does not make a person a rubber stamp. It does make him charitable. It creates trust and faith in the sincerity and the motives of the brethren.

Ellen G. White counsels the members of the church in these words: “The success of our work depends upon our love to God and our love to our fellow men. When there is harmonious action among the individual members of the church, when there is love and confidence manifested by brother to brother, there will be proportionate force and power in our work.” — *Testimonies to Ministers*, p.188.

“Love and confidence manifested by brother to brother” will bring success and power in our work.

Because Satan is not happy with the success of God’s cause he tries by all means to destroy the spirit of confidence among our leaders. He sets people among our members to start a work of destruction of reputation and confidence. “Satan knows that if he can set brother to watch brother in the church and in the ministry some will be as disheartened and discouraged as to leave their post of duty.” — *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 189.

How sad when men have their hearts broken and their spirit crushed by unkindness and lack of confidence to the extent that it drives them out of the work and sometimes out of the church. How much we need confidence among the brethren in our churches today.

We are living in times of tension and trouble. Suspicion torments the minds of the world leaders. Anything one side proposes it is certain the other side will oppose. Sinister intent is imputed by both sides. Stress and strain tests our world in many areas.

(Continued on page 17)

Jonas Arrais de Matos

The ideal leader in the church



During a camp meeting of the Rio de Janeiro South Association, in Grassaí, the northern seaboard of the State of Rio de Janeiro, next to the mouth of the river Paraíba do Sul, in Brazil, six members from different churches gave their opinion on how local leaders could improve in discharging their responsibilities.

The following individuals were interviewed:

Luiz Vieira Alves da Silva, 60 years old, from the Belclima church;

Náddia da Cruz Marreiros, 39 years old, from the College church;

Clélia Schulz, 48 years old, from the Barra Mansa church; and

Davi Roberto França, 24 years old, from the Meier church.

Anildo Agostini and **Lindoia Marinho Baptista**, both active church members in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, gave their opinion later on.

Question: Which are the three most important qualities you would like to see in the leaders of your congregation?

Clélia: Commitment to God's work, friendship with the congregation, and sincere friendship.

Davi: Genuine conversation, humility and knowledge of his complete dependence on God in exercising his tasks.

Anildo: Dedication and communication, to know how to listen to those who are being led.

Lindoia: Kindness, fidelity and self-control.

Question: In your opinion, what should be the main responsibility of the elder?

Luiz: To promote integration among the members, from the children to the older members.

Náddia: Lead the church to a more real experience with Christ.

Clélia: Promote the church's program, bring good speakers and involve the departments in the work of the church.

Davi: Support the pastor in the spiritual and administrative leadership of the church.

Anildo: Help the members in their spiritual needs and work for the unity of the church lending support to all departments.

Lindoia: To be a real junior pastor, taking care and saving lambs.

Question: What type of sermons would you like to listen to more often?

Luiz: Sermons that talk about God as our Redeemer, Judge and compassionate Father. Topics that will help the Christian understand the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, and how it is possible to be triumphal.

Náddia: Sermons that will uphold Christ as our Savior and Lord. Messages that are adequate to the needs of the individuals.

Clélia: Sermons that will counsel our youth in dealing with how to educate the children. Many parents need help in this area.

Davi: Spiritual sermons that will lead the members to recognize their mistakes and need of repentance.

Anildo: Sermons that will reach the sinner and show how it is possible to remain in Jesus' company. Sermons that will help the church live out the principles and doctrines of our faith.

Lindoia: Christ-centered sermons that bring hope and show Jesus' love for the sinners.

Question: What is the greatest need of leadership in the church today?

Luiz: Unity.

Náddia: Communion with God.

Clélia: The need to train leaders who can perform their work better. Many times we lack leaders who will promote our growth.

Davi: Prayer.

Anildo: Greater knowledge of our doctrines and for the leader to be well balanced on his decisions concerning the different issues pertaining to the church.

Lindoia: More communion with Jesus.

Question: What counsel would you give a leader so that his church may grow?

Luiz: To promote different ministries within his own church allowing a greater number of members to participate.

Náddia: Do not lose sight of Jesus who came to this world to fulfill a mission: to save that which was lost.

Clélia: To listen to the member as a person who is in need of help, and don't look only at his mistakes. The members of the church need to be considered by their spiritual leaders with a little more love and compassion.

Davi: Develop among the departments work in which the new convert can participate and thus feel a part of the new family of which they are.

Anildo: I would repeat the words of Paul in 1 Tim. 4:16: "Watch your life and doctrine closely.

Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."

Lindoia: More understanding, love, and responsibility in redeeming souls. **E**

Translated by Antonio A. Ríos.

The Great Gospel of Grace

Hyveth Williams had a very personal "Damascus Road" experience in 1978 that completely changed her life. She attributes her contributions and accomplishments since then to "the miracle, measure and marvel of God's grace."

"I've found that there is only one way to spell grace—LOVE," says Pastor Williams.

Dr Williams is the senior pastor of the Campus Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church in Loma Linda, California.

Hyveth Williams

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PREACHING with an objective

When the preacher has a Christ-centered objective, the Spirit will guide him during the preparation and presentation of the message, thus blessing the congregation.

Aroldo F. de Andrade

Many years ago, a sports program on television presented an interesting account in connection with dog racing. When the animals were released from their cages, an electronic machine was ahead of them carrying an artificial rabbit. That kept the dogs running at full speed trying to catch it. The speed at which the electronic machine was traveling dictated the rhythm of the race. At that time, evidently, the person in charge of keeping up with the speed wasn't watching and one of the dogs caught up with the fake rabbit. The animal must have been greatly frustrated when he bit into the decoy and tasted nothing but cloth and grease. Dejected he abandoned the race, and was quickly followed by the others thus ending the contest.

Is it possible that some preachers are also preparing and delivering their sermons, and in the meantime searching for false objectives? Is it possible that some are running in vain and beating the air, without definite objectives? Why do some preachers, at the end of the worship service, feel that their preaching didn't reach the people? Why do some experience during their sermon a feeling of emptiness and uselessness? In order for the preaching to reach the listeners, it is necessary for the preacher to fulfill three needs: the need to know, to prepare and to apply.

Knowledge

The preacher must have a general knowledge of the human being and his basic needs: isolation, financial difficulties, family problems as well as health problems. Uncertainty of the present, guilt for the past, and fear for the future are modern man's worries.

The preacher must also know the needs of his congregation. In each meeting there are those who come with a multitude of problems and are searching for a balm to soothe their wounds. Visitation programs and counseling are other means whereby the preacher can know the members and their personal problems, thus identifying points that should be discussed during the presentation of the message.

Another method that could be applied very efficiently is the inquiry in every congregation of the doctrinal points in which the members have difficulty understanding. Through an anonymous survey, quarterly or yearly, the pastor can evaluate his congregation and thus find out if the spiritual food offered each week is producing the desired results.

If the preacher doesn't know the needs of his listeners, in all probability his sermons are bullets from a shotgun, where the lead is spread everywhere, without knowing where it's going to land or if it's going to hit somebody.

Preparation

The need to prepare involves three aspects: preparation of the preacher, the message and additional resources.

Personal preparation

The way in which the messenger presents himself before the public will enhance or reduce the efficiency of his message. The personal preparation of the man whom God will use as His instrument includes communion with Him and His word, and also a good reputation before the congregation as well as the community. That means for him to live

what he preaches and practice what he teaches. It's been a long time since people were respected because of their knowledge and eloquence. Family life, interrelationship and the way in which business is conducted destroy or validate a sermon. Sermons, apart from life as an example, have been the downfall of many talented men of the Word. People perceive when the preacher is not sincere.

Another aspect of personal preparation includes reading. The preacher needs to be well informed. Much reading is needed especially of current topics. We can make another application of the apostle Paul's recommendation: "Test everything. Hold on to the good" 1 Thess. 5:21. If that is essential for a Christian, so much more for a preacher.

What about the personal appearance before the congregation? Adequate dress for the environment, and also to the climate, must be observed. Sometimes ill-fitted or mismatched clothing can produce great harm. An exaggerated gesticulation, a loud voice or a shriek spoils the presentation. Such things attract the attention of the listeners, and they are so distracted that the entire message is lost.

We must not overlook oratory. We only learn by doing. A great public speaker was not born an orator, but becomes one through personal effort and practice.

Preparation of the message

The illustration of a cook preparing a meal to be enjoyed is an appropriate one in the preparation of a sermon. The way in which the cook selects the ingredients, is also the way the preacher prepares his message. He should read good books for orientation as he prepares his sermons; choose the type of sermon he wishes to present; know the type that best suits his personal style; put forth every effort to obtain his goal: that of feeding his flock, and put his shoulder to the task.

The topic of the sermon must be chosen with a prayerful spirit and a desire to satisfy the needs identified among the listeners. The outline is the sermon that, after complimented with other information, will become a powerful instrument to reach souls. Each part of the sermon deserves attention: the introduction, the body with its division, and the conclusion with the call. From the tools for research such as biblical commentaries, dictionaries and concordances, the preacher must look for answers to understand the chosen text. It is also of interest to

be familiar with other versions of the Bible.

A presentation without a biblical foundation is not a sermon. It may be given any other name except a sermon. Many preachers are taking many strange ideas to the pulpit and the strangest thing is that they are called sermons.

The excessive use of any type of material must be avoided. If a source must be quoted more than any other, it should be the Bible. In the past, the church suffered considerably with too many quotations from Ellen G. White. Some preachers did so in such an exaggerated form that, many times, the Bible was not opened during the entire sermon, nor quoted. It seems that today we have gone to the other extreme. The writings considered inspired have been set aside and, for some preachers, it is as if they did not exist or were a source without any reference value. These tools must be used in order to discover what the biblical writer intended to communicate to the primary audience, and then they must help us understand what that text means for us today. If we don't find the objective of the Bible text, it should not be used in the sermon.

On the duration of the sermon, it is generally believed that it is not the clock that should determine its length. The lengthy sermon is what appears to be long, and concerning the short one, it's the one that ends when people want to listen. However, 30 minutes is a relatively good length.

Preparation of additional material

It is true that the first preachers used their body gestures and their voices as aids. Very few elements were incorporated into the sermon, basically only some music.

But today, there is a solid technological structure available to the preacher. He, as well as the churches, must be aware of the changes. The way in which society reacts to such changes also requires our attention. The slide projector, which had great success years ago, today has been overtaken even in the most rural areas. Videocassettes and computers are the tools of this generation, increasing the reach and effect of the message.

Music, as an element which contributes to make decisions, has not been used wisely as it should have been. The preacher may, with the help of the music leader, join the spoken and sung messages in such a way that the results may be more meaningful.

A method utilized by Jesus with great benefit for the listeners was the use of illustrations.

Appropriate to the environment and pertinent to the topic, illustrations are the window through which the light enters thus helping the listener to understand the message. There are many books of illustrations that can be carefully used. None of these illustrations should be used, as if they were original, since someone may have used it previously and that can destroy the confidence of the listeners. The best illustrations for a sermon are those that can be obtained from the daily life or from the preacher's personal experience.

The use of illustrations must be done judiciously. A building with only windows may fall for lack of reinforcement. The anecdotes only told with the purpose of making the congregation laugh must be avoided, since the reason for the sermon is not to amuse people. It is also necessary to avoid the use of illustrations that portray some member's peculiarities that were confided to the preacher. Before creating constraining situations, the preacher must obtain from the members their approval to make public or not such experiences.

Application

After the preparation of the messenger and the message has taken place, there is another factor that must be considered so that the sermon may be efficient. How to apply the message to the congregation? Some people listen to beautiful biblical passages, but later ask themselves: What does that old story have to do with me and my problems?

The challenge faced by the preacher is to reach the congregation. "A sermon is a sermon only when it has accomplished its mission. Some anonymous definitions can help find that objective." A sermon must comfort those in trouble and trouble those who are comfortable. Or, "a sermon is not a piece of art to be admired, but a piece of bread to be eaten." The classical definition of Pattison stands out among others by its brevity and symmetry. "Preaching is a verbal communication of divine truth aiming to persuade the listener."

Here are the three elements of the sermon: the theme or the material to be preached (the truth), the method (verbal communication) and the goal or objective to be reached (persuasion). If the congregation didn't feel satisfied, or was not chal-

lenged to surmount the obstacles, their time was stolen and their hopes destroyed. In order to reach the objectives of the sermon three things are necessary: obtain the attention of the listeners, apply the biblical message in a current context, and lead them to a decision.

Obtaining their attention

It is not an easy task to obtain the attention of a congregation for 30 minutes, even for the most experienced preacher. After the sermon, as it's common any Sabbath, after an hour and a half of previous programming, the task is almost impossible to accomplish. Therefore, the preacher needs to use all the resources previously mentioned, in order to be heard and understood.

It is not possible to catch the attention of a child when threatened with punishment but promising him a reward. Can it be that the adults are different? The attention is natural when the theme is relevant and presented in an interesting way. Besides, the listeners need to have a feeling of cost-benefit. Will I derive any benefit by listening to this sermon? What benefits can I receive by listening to this pastor for 30 or 40 minutes? Nobody withstands listening to a boring sermon or to a preacher speaking with a monotonous voice.

Applying the message

The next challenge before the preacher is how to make the sermon current. So with the sermon that has been presented several times, it ought to be and must be revamped. The best change that can be introduced in a sermon is a sense of updating and usefulness. The preachers are the only ones to think that when people come to church it's because they are anxious to discover details of ancient stories. Very few are interested in those topics that many people need to hear. Many preach to fill an empty space in the agenda of the church.

The preacher must keep the people in mind. Unless he thinks about the people, he will never find divine solutions for human problems. Each person listening to the sermon is facing some type of problem, and the preacher has the opportunity to make the biblical message real to the listener. People are interested in hearing about their needs. But they also need to hear that which God needs to tell them. This is the double task of the preacher: to

speaking what God wants men to hear, and, at the same time, fulfill human needs.

Leading to a decision

Finally, how do you guide the listeners to make a positive decision for the truth that was preached? It would be a frustrating experience to come to the end of the sermon and not know what to do. All sermons must end with an appeal to the listeners, but it is necessary to be aware of their reaction in order to apply the proper call. The preacher who uses the same type of appeal can end up tiring his audience. When the people are not keeping up with the theme, or when they are tired of listening, they can be tempted to respond to the appeal in order to put an end to the sermon and feel free from undue punishment.

The appeal must not be an obligated portion at the end of the sermon. It must be felt throughout the entire sermon leading the listener to think reflexively on each part of the message: "Before the facts presented, what must I do?" We must remember: some of the listeners may be listening to the last sermon of their life. What kind of sermon would you preach if you knew that in the audience there is a person who will not have the opportunity to listen to another sermon?

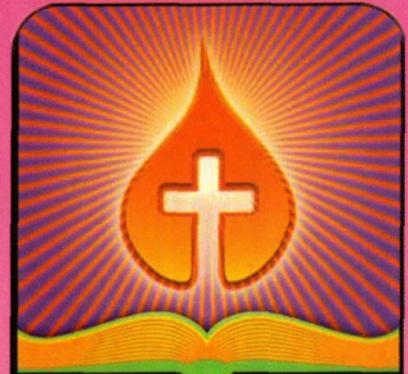
Christ, the center

As a general rule, when people go to church they want to be taught. When a preacher is invited to deliver a message, at an appointed day or hour, he needs to surmount all obstacles in order to comply with the charge. All preachers, whether beginner or experienced, can learn to reach the objectives of his preaching.

Christ must be the center of every sermon. If the main concern of the preacher is to present Christ, certainly the listeners will be served and the goals reached. It is impossible to preach hoping to reach a goal without having previously made adequate preparation. Without Christ's presence no sermon will have positive results. ■

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Translated by Antonio A. Rios.*

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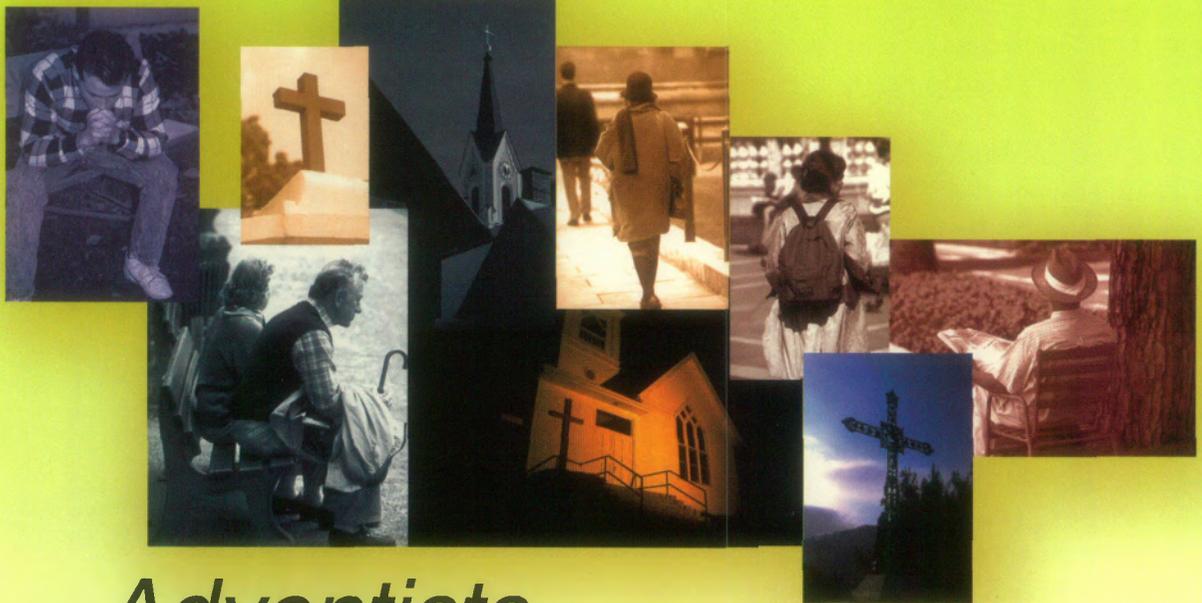
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Do *Adventists* need to be **CONCERNED** about the **charismatic movement?**

Gerhard F. Hasel

The charismatic movement has had profound impact on Christianity in the twentieth century. It began its Pentecostal stage on January 1, 1901 at a newly-founded Bible college in Topeka, Kansas, and at the famous Azusa Street meeting in Los Angeles in April, 1906, with the African-American pastor William J. Seymour. The most prominent characteristic of the charismatic movement in its Pentecostal stage is "speaking in tongues" (glossolalia), which its adherents identify with the baptism of the Holy Spirit.¹

Today, it is claimed that between 100 and 372 million Christians belong to the various forms of the charismatic movement around the world.² These are impressive figures.

Three waves of the charismatic movement

As early as 1983, C. Peter Wagner, professor of Church Growth at the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary in California, spoke of the "third wave" of the outpouring of the Holy

Spirit. His identification of three waves of the Holy Spirit's manifestation in the twentieth century has attracted much attention.

First wave. The "first wave" refers to the Pentecostal movement to which the typical "tongue-speaking" denominations belong and which began in 1901. Wagner says, "The first wave of this outpouring was the initiation and development of the Pentecostal movement [with glossolalia] in the very beginning of this century. The second wave was: the charismatic movement, which started around 1960. Both of these waves have seen, and I believe will continue to see, explosive church growth. The hand of God is upon them in an extraordinary way."³

Second wave. The "second wave," then, is the "charismatic renewal movement," also called neo-Pentecostalism, by which tongue-speaking entered into many of the non-Pentecostal churches and became the key charismatic phenomenon in these denominations. This wave began in the 1960s when Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian,

Anglican/Episcopal, Mennonite, Church of Christ, United Church of Christ, and other traditional churches, were penetrated by tongue-speaking, or glossolalia.

In 1967 tongue-speaking charismatic appeared in the Catholic church and found subsequent support from many priests, nuns, bishops, and even the Pope.⁴

Around 1970 some Adventists, particularly young people witnessing for their faith on the California beaches, began meeting these Pentecostal charismatic. A fair number of the Adventists had hands laid on them, and they began to "speak in tongues." Concerned, the General Conference created a commission which met in Georgia and rendered a report that called for caution regarding the phenomenon of glossolalia. As a result, the second wave with its glossolalia did not become a part of Adventism as such. The charismatic renewal movement of this stage left no significant mark on the Adventist church.

We have noted that the major doctrinal distinctive of the second wave and its unique distinguishing mark is the experience of the "baptism with the Holy Spirit,"⁵ that is, glossolalia. But something new developed.

New development

Wagner notes the new development of the second wave, observing that "in the 1970s a new and extremely important phenomenon began to develop [as part of the second wave], namely the appearance of free-standing, independent charismatic congregations and clusters of fellowships of congregations, which function as mini denominations."⁶ This is a tacit admission that the charismatic renewal movement, the "second wave", sometimes threatened denominational unity, developing mini denominations which took on a shape of their own. Adventists were not affected at that time.

Third wave. Now we live in the period of the "third wave" of the charismatic movement as Wagner sees it. This wave began in the early 1980s. David Barrett, the charismatic Anglican editor of the World Christian Encyclopedia, believes that in 1987 there were 27 million "third-wavers" worldwide.⁷

The third wave has certain characteristics of doctrine, church practice and experience. As for doc-

trine, Wagner points out that "the two principal sources of data [for theology and doctrine] are the Bible and Christian experience."⁸

Significant "And"

Here is a significant "and"! It says much about the theological methods at work in the third wave. This "and" demonstrates that the Bible is not the only source for doctrine and church life. The third wave does not differ in this regard from the first and second wave of the charismatic movement. Similarly, Catholics have "the Bible and tradition." Karl Barth called this "and" in Catholicism "the damned Catholic 'and',"⁹ because tradition was the dominant shaper of theology. Likewise, we may know what the dominant shaper of the charismatic movement is.

Can Adventists buy into this charismatic "and"? Christian experience is a source of pragmatism, which tends to outdo the Scriptures as the primary source in both the Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal movements. Should Adventists follow the charismatic lead? From the point of view of methodology, theology, doctrine, and practice, Adventists have remained true to their heritage of the Bible and nothing but the Bible. For everything we believe, everywhere and on every subject, we have to remain grounded on our one authority: "God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms."¹⁰

Doctrinally the third wave differs from the first two waves in not claiming that every person touched by the Holy Spirit has to be a tongue-speaker engaging in glossolalia, to prove that the Holy Spirit is at work. He may or may not speak in tongues. More important is the "filling" with the Holy Spirit.¹¹ Speaking in tongues, the unique identifying mark of Pentecostals and charismatic of the first and second waves, is still recognized as a spiritual gift, but in the third wave "you will not find tongues highlighted above any other gift."¹²

Third wave emphasis

So then, we need to know: Is there a special spiritual gift that is highlighted in the "third wave" of charismatic renewal? Is there a unique empha-

sis? Wagner, a major spokesperson for the "third wave," affirms that "one can be filled with the Holy Spirit and minister through spiritual gifts in power and be a channel for healing the sick and casting out demons, all without speaking in tongues."¹³ The new emphasis is power prayer.

Wagner's reference to ministering "in power" needs further attention, because of its links to the "power evangelism" approach pioneered and championed by John Wimber.¹⁴ Wimber joined Professor Wagner in co-teaching the famous course "MC510: Signs, Wonders and Church Growth" at Fuller's School of World Mission in early 1982.¹⁵ At the time, Wagner had suffered for years from high blood pressure, for which he was receiving medical treatment. In that course, John Wimber laid hands on Professor Wagner for healing.

Wagner was healed and became a participant. He reports, "I started laying hands on the sick, and learning how to minister to them in the name of Jesus. . . . Soon praying for the sick was a permanent part of my Christian life, even though at the time I did not yet have the gift of healing."¹⁶ He explains that in 1984, "two years after my paradigm shift [from a spectator to a participant]¹⁷ had taken place, God gave me the gift of healing."¹⁸ Wagner now teaches that "all Christians have the role of laying hands on the sick and being open to see God use them as channels for healing."¹⁹

Wagner lays hands on his students for them to receive the Holy Spirit. Some Seventh-day Adventist pastors are said to have been thus prayed for with laying on of hands by Professor Wagner. Wagner believes that "every Christian person should be active in a ministry of laying hands on the sick and praying for their recovery." "I do not think," he writes, "that this should be restricted to clergy, elders or other church leaders or even to those with the gift of healing."²⁰ Wagner agrees with John Wimber on the so-called five steps for praying for the sick²¹ used by third wave charismatic in their churches. Praying for the sick as practiced by third-wavers can be accompanied by the use of salt, oil, holy water, the emblems of Holy Communion, or by nothing at all. Wagner recommends that the eyes be kept open so that one can see what is happening during the prayer.²²

The third wave and the Adventist renewal

Perhaps enough has been said to provide a background for understanding some new customs in certain churches, where praying with laying on of hands is used today. In James 5:13-16, the New Testament outlines a clear ministry of prayer for the sick. The New Testament counsel for this kind of prayer differs from third-wave practice. The New Testament says that:

- 1) The sick one is to call for the "elders" to pray, not just any church member, deacon, or other person.
- 2) Oil is to be used for anointing not salt, holy water, or something else.
- 3) Confession is to take place and the person receives forgiveness of sins.
- 4) Prayer is to be offered in terms of a petition not as a "command,"²³ as in power evangelism. The New Testament's prayer for the sick and the third-wavers' power prayer are not the same. In general, John Wimber is very much in line with Wagner. However, he differs in seeing the third wave as "not so much another wave as the next stage of development in the charismatic renewal."²⁴ It is an extension of or another stage of the second wave.

Three areas of change

Wimber describes this "next stage" (Wagner's third wave) as one in which the "charismatic movement has taken root, burrowing into congregational structures, liturgy, and theology."²⁵ In these three areas, congregational structure, liturgy, and theology, the charismatic renewal movement seems to have had an impact on some Seventh-day Adventist churches.

Congregational structure. As the charismatic renewal movement has witnessed the emergence of free-standing charismatic congregations independent of their denominational roots, so some Adventist congregations downplay their connection to the Seventh-day Adventist church.

At least some have chosen a name that shows little or no identity with Seventh-day Adventism. Other indications of a more congregational, independent stance may be seen in some (not all) of these churches in such things as minimal use of the denominational hymnal, tolerating or even encouraging lifestyle practices of their members

which are out of harmony with the Adventist body at large, and a neglect of preaching the distinctive message of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Have some churches developed into or function as mini denominations within the Adventist church?

Liturgy. Wimber notes how the "next stage" has affected church life in liturgy. "First, the charismatic renewal [of the 'next stage'] has introduced new forms of worship by using dance, theater, innovative hymnody, and (in some instances) singing in tongues. Alive, joyful music is one of the most significant contributions the charismatic movement has made in the church."²⁶ Have these things made inroads among the Adventist churches? We might look at the kind of instruments used and the type of music played and sung. Whether the "swinging" in certain services that accompanies singing is what Wimber means by "dance" is not entirely clear. Is "theater" the use of various forms of skits and the like? The historic Sabbath school has been transformed and the church service adjusted.

Theology. Theologically, the emphasis is placed on love, forgiveness, and acceptance. This triad of theological themes has biblical foundation, but the Bible has more foundations than these for genuine faith. These churches typically take a soft stance on lifestyle to woo yuppies and fringe Adventists. Strong theology demands strong ethics; soft theology nurtures soft ethics.

Bright outlook based on Scripture

The central point is that there is a larger contemporary religious movement to which some Adventist churches seem to belong. If we are not mistaken, in the "third wave" (Wagner) or the "next stage" (Wimber) the charismatic movement has scored a major impact for the first time on the Seventh-day Adventist church. Are the kinds of celebration congregations the right solution for much of the malaise in first world Adventism? What sources are contemporary style churches drinking from? What "fire" are they playing with? What spirit is at work? Where else does the movement lead? These are serious, gnawing questions.

What we believe. We believe in the work of the Holy Spirit. We believe in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter days, the time of the end. We believe in renewal of the believer's life. We believe in warm and friendly churches. We believe

in worldwide evangelism, the proclamation of the "eternal gospel" of the Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14. We believe that God has called the Advent movement to be a special movement. But if we are not mistaken, and I think we are not, it is not a charismatic movement. It is a movement in which the Holy Spirit will enable us to proclaim the truth of the Second Coming and the necessary preparation for it in power and with conviction. Such proclamation in the Spirit's power will change the lives of converts and members. We believe in Biblical proclamation evangelism. We believe that many spiritual people feel a hunger for an experience with the Lord which they are not receiving in the church today. We believe that the church is in need of revival and reformation. We believe that we are a lukewarm Laodicea in need of letting the One who stands at the door come into our church and into our hearts individually, to transform our goals, motivations and all else. We believe that, unfortunately, there are thousands of Adventists no longer going to church; we need to love them back into the fold of our Shepherd. But what is the way to do this?

Best approach? Is the "third wave/next stage" of the charismatic movement the way to go? What else will the "third wave" of the charismatic bring us? Will it be prayer for the sick as practiced, preached and taught by Wagner in disharmony with the plain teaching of Scripture? Will it be glossolalia, the so-called "baptism of the Holy Spirit," of which there are sporadic Adventist manifestations already?²⁷ What else will it bring, charismatic ecumenism and a loss of our distinctiveness?

A better and wiser approach would be to study anew the Word of God sincerely with prayer, and again the writings of the Messenger to the Remnant, as the lesser light assisting us to appreciate so much more the greater light of Scripture. Long ago a prophet asked the leader of God's people (who also were deeply in need of revival), "Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?" "Is it because there is no God in Israel to inquire of His word?" (2 Kings 1:3, 16). The question is no less valid for us. In our spiritual hunger, in our longing for revival and power from on high, let us seek our direction from God's Word. In Scripture we will find renewed strength and divine power to

(Continued on page 22)

The management of life

Mel Rees



The word steward, as it applies to every created being, is not generally understood, and the term stewardship is usually misunderstood. This fact was illustrated by a theological student who frankly observed, "When the professor said we were going to have four class periods on the subject of stewardship, I thought he was really scraping the bottom of the barrel!"

This attitude is not limited to a few people or a particular location. Most churchgoers associate stewardship with the giving of money, and the parting with one's money in most instances appears to be a painful experience; therefore, the word does not have a pleasant meaning to them. Absenteeism from the worship hour can rise markedly if the sermon subject is announced in advance.

A false concept

This false concept of stewardship is one reason why many people realize no real satisfaction from their lives. In the desire for worldly things, their perspective is limited; their entire lives are confined to an existence that has a beginning and an ending. People working solely for these things are going down a dead-end street with no lasting reward for all their labor. Solomon asked, "What profit hath he that hath

labored for the wind?" (Eccl. 5:16).

It is unfortunate that this subject should create an adverse reaction in the minds of many people. But this could be due to the fact that the bulk of the preaching, teaching, and writing on the subject are usually in connection with finance. This gives it a wrong connotation. The giving of money might be an evidence of good stewardship in the handling of entrusted means, but stewardship is not a synonym for money. When it was divinely ordained, there wasn't any money or any churches, schools, or mission programs. Neither can stewardship be considered a program, a canvass, or a procedure.

It seems strange that in church usage the term should generally be thought of in connection with finance, when in everyday parlance it is always used in association with its real meaning. The word steward (with some exceptions) is not as common as the words foreman, superintendent, or supervisor. Possibly the term manager is better understood and more often used as a synonym for steward. Many times the individuals holding these positions are not responsible for money at all. There are times when finance is their sole responsibility; at other times it is only part of their trust. In each case, however, these persons are responsible for the goods of another person and accountable for its wise and honest management. These persons are stewards, or managers, and their responsibility is stewardship, or management.

The degree of accountability varies with the size and extent of the trust. The fact that they have been entrusted with the possessions belonging to another person proves that this is a position of dignity.

It is essential that each person clearly understands his relation to God, and the lofty plans that God has for him. If he does not accept this concept, then he is little better off than an ant that goes through life rearing its young and trying to store up enough food during the summer months to last through a hard winter. If all there is to living is a day-to-day existence with no life beyond this world, the wonder is that there are so few suicides.

Stewardship defined

What is a steward? What is stewardship? The

dictionary defines a steward as "one who manages the property of another." Stewardship is "the position, duties, and responsibilities of a steward." Stewardship, then, is management. A steward is a manager.

To the Christian manager, this responsibility should be even more relevant, for he is managing the possessions of the Owner of the universe. Only in the framework of this concept does his life have any meaning or direction. An acceptance of this responsibility will permit him to follow a divinely planned blueprint. It will allow him to expand every talent, every capacity. Think of the magnitude of this role!

"A steward identifies himself with his master. His master's interests become his. He has accepted the responsibilities of a steward and he must act in the master's stead, doing as the master would do if he were presiding over his own goods. The position is one of dignity, in that his master trusts him. . . . Every Christian is a steward of God, entrusted with His goods." — *That I May Know Him*, p. 220.

It is possible that the average professing Christian does not really understand the meaning of life management according to God's plan because he considers himself an owner rather than a manager. One factor contributing to this attitude may be that most of the appeals made for church financial support approach the member not as a manager but as an owner. The usual request is for his time, his talents, his means, rather than presenting these needs as an opportunity to use that with which he has been entrusted. Often he is praised for his service, his liberality.

This owner attitude is unfortunate, because every person becomes one of God's managers at birth and remains one as long as he lives. He may be a good manager or a bad one, but he is always a manager, never an owner. Even his life is not his own; it belongs to God, first by creation, and then by redemption. A person who makes no profession is just as much a manager of God's goods as are those who do, for he has also been entrusted with time, talent, and means for which he is responsible and will be held accountable. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12).

Why talk about money?

In its truest sense Christian management refers to the relationship that exists between a person and God. Why, then, are money and the material

things of life stressed when considering this subject? Are money and material things more important? Jesus said they were not. He taught that one could not serve God and mammon. But He also taught that one could serve God with mammon.

In relationship to importance, the management of time is more important than any other talent. "Of no talent He has given will He require a more strict account than of our time." — *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 342.

Why, then, do the people who devote their lives to teaching this vital subject spend so much time with the material aspects of life?

It is because the world has become so money-oriented. Success, failure, happiness, and discontent are usually associated with the possession or lack of money and material possessions. However, there are three primary reasons why a frank discussion of the material aspects of life is considered important when discussing a person's responsibility and accountability to God.

Focal point of selfishness

Money appears to be the focal point of nearly all selfishness. Possibly this is because it is associated with the gratification of selfish desires. It also represents security, and this becomes the life goal of nearly everyone just as soon as he is old enough to recognize that food, clothing, and shelter are essential to life. But Jesus cautioned His followers not to fall into error by seeking these things: "For after all these things do the Gentiles seek" (Matt. 6:32).

Selfishness is at the root of every other sin. The most logical point to begin its eradication would appear to be at its source. Every Christian must be led to see that self-seeking is contrary to Christian principles. He must realize that money is of no lasting value except as it is used to further spiritual ends. He must understand that security can never be found in the perishable things of this world, no matter how essential they may appear to be. These are all subject to sudden and unpredictable loss. The only true security lies in a simple, childlike trust and dependence upon God. Therefore, the relationship that material things bear to Christianity must be clearly delineated.

Money represents life

Money is a visible representation of the actual expenditure of life itself. Someone has said that money is life done up in a convenient package for

True preaching must have a true man behind it.

True preaching always involves personality and truth.

So the truth always must be scriptural truth.



What is PREACHING

H . M

In Mark 1:14 we find these words: "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God." That's our introduction to Him. Our Savior's first appearance in this world after He began His public ministry was as a preacher. He came preaching. The word for "preaching" in this passage means "to proclaim," "to herald;" in fact, the word used for herald in its other form is to "cry aloud." The very heart of Jesus' message as given here in this passage is: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

Prophetic preaching. The first fact that we have to notice about the preaching of Jesus is that His preaching was based upon the fulfillment of prophecy, upon the inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. It was a call to repentance and a call to faith. These four things are clearly discerned in that text. The time prophecy of Daniel 9, the great 70-week prophecy that we all know, had met its fulfillment in the anointing of Jesus by the Holy Ghost at the Jordan River.

In Acts 10:38 we read that Jesus was anointed by the Holy Ghost and went about healing the sick and all who were oppressed of the devil, "for God was with Him." He was anointed at the Jordan by the Holy Ghost and immediately He began to preach, "The time is fulfilled: repent ye, and believe the gospel." He came preaching that message. As He began His short but mighty ministry His first preaching was an announcement of the fulfillment of

prophecy. It was an official proclamation to the world that the prophecy was fulfilled and was being fulfilled, and that He was here to fulfill it.

Definite preaching. The second fact we find in the preaching of Jesus is that it was definite, very definite. Just look at that text again: "The time is fulfilled." It is definite, and it is scriptural.

Biblical preaching. Jesus based His whole preaching on the Scriptures of the Old Testament; and it was prophetic. Now I believe that these three points, if we could remember them and follow them in our preaching, would be enough to help us all in our preaching. Christ's preaching was definite, scriptural and prophetic. It wasn't based on some fine-spun theory or philosophical argument. It was based upon fact, the fact of His presence. "I am here. Here I am. Repent therefore. Believe this message. The prophecy is fulfilled. I am here in fulfillment of the prophecy." His preaching was based on the fact of His presence, the fact of the prophecy that had been made long ago, and the fact that it was time for great things to take place. It was effective. True preaching is always effective. There is either an outward effect or an inward change.

Proclamation. The preaching of Jesus was a proclamation of fact; we cannot emphasize that too much. It was also an appeal for action. "Repent," He demanded. "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." It was also a command from God. For "God commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts

17:30). Sometimes in our preaching we plead with people to repent, and that's right. We ask them to repent. We suggest that they repent. We try to induce them to repent. We do everything but command them to repent. God commands all men everywhere to repent. Remember that. We must have in our preaching a note of command from God, a note of authority, a command to repent.

ING?

S. Richards

Personal. There is a second point to be considered. The preaching of Jesus was from personality to personality; it was from man to men. It is this communication of truth from man to men that Phillips Brooks speaks of in his Yale Lectures on Preaching, which many people think is the greatest volume so far in the Yale series. Preaching, per se, is the communication of truth by man to men. It involves both truth and personality. God might have written His message in letters of fire upon the sky, but that wouldn't have been preaching. Man had to come and speak words to other men.

There are speakers today who interest people, who dazzle people with their oratorical fireworks; there are those who philosophize and propound speculations. But that is not preaching, because it is not a presentation of the truth. It's merely the twisting and turnings and effervescence of the human mind. True preaching must have a true man behind it. True preaching always involves personality and truth. So the truth always must be scriptural truth. So dear friends, true preaching must be definite, personal, truthful, and scriptural. **E**

H. M. S. Richards presented a lecture on preaching at Columbia Union College, in Takoma Park, Maryland, in 1957. This article is taken from that presentation.

(Continued from page 3)

"Cast not away your confidence"

It is a nerve-racking and terrible thing when such lack of confidence exists among leaders of the world. How much more to be lamented it is when such feelings creep in among members in the cause of God. The Advent movement is an international movement. Likewise it brings together varied races and all types of personalities and dispositions from among the peoples represented. How important for us to ever bear in mind that regardless of what flag or race we represent we are first Adventists. As followers of the Lord Jesus Christ there must be confidence among us.

Living as we do in the most crucial period of the history of the world and of the church, when strife, tensions, and suspicions of all sort are rampant and have been thrown away by all means of communications, by individuals from outside and inside of the church, somehow I believe God's message for each of us leaders is: "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence." We must not permit the mistrust or suspicion of the world about us to insinuate themselves into our congregation. There must be no mistrust, no probing or impugning of motives, no lack of faith among pastors and elders who bear the vessel of the Lord in such solemn time as those in which we live.

"Let us cherish a spirit of confidence in . . . our brethren." — Ibid., p. 500. **E**

Evangelism

in the local church-entry events



The Entry Events involve trying to reach the community through various social programs. This event is based on theological principles seen in the New Testament. For example, the mission of Jesus spoken of in Luke 4:18 seems to support this event. In this passage, Jesus speaks about preaching the gospel to the poor, healing the brokenhearted, and ministering to the blind. An analysis of this passage shows the wholistic approach of Jesus' ministry. Ministering to the emotional, social, and physical needs of people opened the door for spiritual ministry.

Having targeted an audience, it is time for the evangelistic team to organize and introduce felt-needs seminars and programs. This event should be introduced at least six months prior to the start of the crusade. This perhaps is the best approach to arrest the attention of people in a community, especially those who are secular in their thinking.

The Christian church today is meeting felt-needs in various parts of the world community. Various agencies like "The Salvation Army," "World Vision," and "ADRA—Adventist Development and Relief Agency," are reaching out in times of crisis and disaster. Many hospitals and clinics are also established in some parts of the world. This is good, but not enough. More congregations need to be more involved in felt-needs ministry, but this must not be done out of coercion or by manipulating people into joining a church. Through acts of kindness, many will be drawn to a church. Ministering to physical and social needs and the presentation of the gospel must be kept together.

Some years ago, I was sent into a town of approximately 200,000 inhabitants to conduct a series of evangelistic meetings. There was a church in that town with a book membership of 60 and with an actual attendance of about 35. The church stagnated and seemed to have been dying. There were virtually no young families in that church. There was little or no evangelistic program conducted for a number of years.

As I analyzed the profile of the church, it appeared as if I was asked to do the impossible. Added to my dilemma was the fact that I am a Black preacher being asked to evangelize a community that was ninety-nine percent White. I was apprehensive about that assignment. After much prayer, I decided to accept the challenge to conduct four weeks of evangelistic meetings.

I met with the pastor and the church board to plan our strategy for the meetings. Firstly, we thought about the pre-campaign work and those things that could be done to create an awareness and that would cultivate interests for the upcoming series.

One of the avenues the church decided to take was to provide food baskets

to some needy families in the community. Provision was made and thirty families were supplied with food. Not only was food given, but relationships were developed. It was the opinion of some members that this was one of the most positive things the church had ever done in that community. The spin off from this public relations activity was tremendous. It was instrumental in motivating a number of people to attend the crusade that was held later. The Spirit of God moved mightily in those meetings and the church experienced a 35% membership growth in which some of those baptized were people contacted through the food basket program.

Seminars

During the entry events, seminars geared to reach a wide cross-section of people should be organized and conducted. The practical nature of these seminars and programs may help to break down prejudice and encourage more openness among those who comprise the audience. This will eventually allow people more freedom to attend religious services.

It must be understood that the suggested seminars are only recommendations. Every evangelistic team must be free to employ the programs that are best suited to the needs of the community. There might even be the need to employ other programs that are not mentioned in the strategy, but will accomplish the same goal. The following are some of the programs and seminars that would gain the attention of some individuals in today's secular society.

Weight control seminar

Weight is an area of interest among many people as some are becoming more and more conscious about taking care of their bodies. People are spending large amounts of money to go to weight-watchers clinics, to buy expensive machines, and aerobics tapes. Some of these individuals would be delighted to attend seminars that could offer them assistance in weight control.

Cooking and nutrition seminar

People are becoming more concerned about the food they are putting into their bodies. Today, more than ever before, a great number of people are changing their eating habits in order to preserve their health. As a result, vegetarian cooking schools and seminars are of great interest to people

who have a desire to know how to eat healthy and prepare simple yet nutritious meals without animal flesh. This certainly opens the door to the receptivity of the gospel.

Through the delivery of nutritious home-baked bread to homes in his community, one man was able to attract an entire family to Christ.

"What does your church teach in regards to healthful living?" The customer asked the delivery man as he made his delivery.

He responded, "My church teaches that the foods we eat are important to our health so that we must be careful about those things we put into our bodies."

"I really would like to know more about your church," she said with excitement in her voice. "You see," she continued, "coming from a Jewish background, I believe in being selective in the things I eat."

"Well," said the delivery man, "if you want to know more about the teachings of my church, I would be happy to arrange for you to receive a Bible study."

"Could you please?" the customer responded.

"I will," said the delivery man.

In short, Bible studies were conducted with the customer and three other members of her family. Approximately six months later, a crusade was held in that community at which time all four members of that family committed their lives to Christ and became members of the church.

Stop smoking program

Stop smoking programs are popular in North America and usually attract quite a large number of people, especially the unchurched. The ban on smoking in some public places and the restriction on cigarette advertisements make us aware of the danger of tobacco to our health. This reality expresses the need for education on how to quit smoking.

Churches that have been active in stop smoking programs found out that, over the years, this program has been a very good entering wedge that opens the door to communicate the gospel. Many have been led to know Jesus as their own personal Savior because of the positive impact of this program on their minds.

Stress control seminar

Stress control seminars are definitely needed today when science reveals that a large number of

illnesses are caused by stress. Seminars of this nature can be very relevant in helping people cope with the pressures of life in a high stress society. It has been observed that people within the middle class to upper class, with high-profile, high-risk jobs, are very responsive to these seminars.

It is advisable that in these seminars religious discussions should be avoided. The objective of these seminars is not to Christianize anyone, but to acquaint them with the church and to develop friendships. Again, this is an entering wedge to open the door for the preaching of the gospel.

Family life seminar

Today, when many families are falling apart, family life seminars have become a relevant emphasis. Many people want to preserve their families, and are willing to attend seminars and workshops that address issues regarding the family. The family is one of the most fertile grounds for evangelism. Therefore, time spent building relationships with families through seminars will pay great dividends.

Dinner talk

Dinner talk outreach ministry has been used by some congregations to help break down the wall between community folks and the church. This is an intentional hospitality ministry where the church provides a dinner and invites a certain number of community people. On this occasion, a professional can be invited to speak on a particular issue that is of interest to the community. Some churches have been successful in developing friendships with secular, unchurched people through this ministry.

The Ottawa Seventh-day Adventist church was engaged in this activity for approximately three consecutive years and found it to be very helpful as a bridge between the church and the community. Pastor Eddy Johnson, who led out in this activity, described the experience by saying that each of these get-togethers was conducted in a banquet style and in each meeting a subject of common interest to the community was discussed. During the three years of this activity, 40 to 100 non-members attended on and off. Ten months into this program, religious questions were entertained. A Bible class was organized with 30 non-members and ten of those individuals were baptized. The pastor expressed joy for the result but was disappointed that many church members did not know how to make friends with the non-members who attended.

Free gift Bible and study guide

In every community, there are people who do not go to church but will avail themselves of the opportunity to study the Bible at home. The gift Bible and study guide are designed to reach these people.

In order to obtain interest for Bible studies, each church group will choose a way that is most suited for the targeted community. Some groups just go out and knock on doors with good success, while others mail a specially designed card. Those interested will make a request by returning a portion of that card, giving the information that is necessary to receive the gift Bible and study guide.

Past experience shows that one may not receive an overwhelming number of requests for Bible studies, but most certainly some will be received. Individuals who do not own Bibles are encouraged to acquire one for themselves and to commit themselves to studying the Word.

Four months prior to the start of a crusade which was conducted in Hamilton, Ontario, six thousand fliers offering Bibles and study guides were distributed in the community by thirty students of the local church school. The result was that fifteen Bible studies were requested. This was instrumental in drawing some of these people to the crusade.

Community services

A church that has a strong ministry through community services will make a good impact on that community. Most people will be willing to listen to a church that not only preaches salvation by grace, but is actively identified with the social needs and concerns of humanity.

The model for community involvement can be clearly seen in the ministry of Jesus. It seems to me that a church that is immersed in community activities will hardly have difficulty in attracting people to hear the gospel. "The urban church that mobilizes a significant number of its members in community-oriented, service-type outreach can expect a good growth rate. Congregations that respond in meaningful and authentically Christian ways to those needs will attract new members."

In order to be effective, a church should seek to know the needs of its community and organize its ministry to suit these needs. In some North American cities, for example, New York, Calgary and Toronto, some Seventh-day Adventist churches have positively impacted individuals living in these urban centers through the operation of van ministries.

Bible

The word of GOD

[1] What is Your Bible?

In your home you have a small object that is:

more precious than gold;
more powerful than dynamite;
filled with more blessing than a million good
luck charms or medals.

It's your Bible. It has:

changed lives,
altered the destiny of nations,
guided people in all ages,
given healing to those in pain and
strength to those who felt weak.

Its pages of power give us:

*God's assurance that He will fulfill His promises
if we trust in Him and that our highest
hopes can be realized.*

[2] The light for our way

The Bible is sometimes compared to a lamp to light our way. It reminds me of an heirloom, a lovely, old oil lamp.

The owners told me that they had found it tucked away in an attic, shoved aside with useless things that were to be thrown away. They cleaned the old lamp, had it rewired for electricity, and placed it in a prominent spot in their living room, where visitors always exclaim over it.

It is a very old lamp, but it gives very up-to-date light.

Similarly, some people think of the Bible as an old-fashioned light like a smelly, flickering kerosene lantern, suitable only to be hidden in the attic, too dim for this age of neon lights and laser beams.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. Like the light from the sun, moon, and stars, the light from the Bible is ageless.

[3] Getting out of the Bible into everything else

There's an old story about a man who wanted to learn to read and write. Finally a visiting missionary offered to teach him, using the Bible as a textbook. The man learned rapidly and joyfully spelled out the words.

The missionary had to continue on his journey,

but some time later he returned to the community and looked up his former student. "How's the reading going?" he asked. "Still on the gospel of John?"

"Ah, no," was the reply. "I'm out of that long ago. Now I read the sports pages of the newspaper." Isn't that typical of our generation?

We got out of the Bible long ago and into everything else.

[4] "What shall I read?"

When Sir Walter Scott was near death, he asked one of his servants to read to him.

"What shall I read?" the man asked.

"Need you ask?" Scott responded.

"There is only one book."

His library was stacked from floor to ceiling with thousands of volumes, yet he thought of only one book, the Bible.

Scott added, speaking to the servant, "Be a good man, be strong in faith. Nothing else will give you comfort when you lie here."

[5] "God's stories always come out all right"

A Bible school teacher was dramatically telling the story of Abraham and Isaac and making it exciting. As she described the wood being stacked on the altar and Isaac being placed atop the pyre, one little girl nervously began to cry. "I don't want to hear any more," she said.

But the girl next to her nudged her and said, "Don't get worried. This is one of God's stories, and God's stories always come out all right."

[6] The Word of God

An old lady at her fruit stand on a city street was reading a book as she waited for customers. One man came along and asked, "What book are you reading?"

"The Word of God," she answered.

"The Word of God? Who told you that?"

"God told me himself," the woman answered.

"How did he do that?" the man persisted.

Confused, she changed the subject. "Mister, can

you prove to me that there is a sun shining?" she asked.

"Prove it," he exclaimed. "It proves itself. It warms me, and I see its light."

The woman smiled. "Just so, you are right. God tells me this book is His Word. I read it; it warms me and gives me light."

[7] Man doesn't live by power alone

If man could live by power alone, the hydrogen bomb would save the world. If we could live by bread alone, the productive wheat fields of the Western Hemisphere would be our salvation. If money were all, the mounds of gold stacked at Saint Peter's church in the Vatican would be sufficient.

But humanity does not live by power, bread, or gold alone.

Our resources for living must meet spiritual needs, light in darkness, hope in despair, direction in times of confusion, faith in days of doubt.

Such needs are met only by the Bible.

[8] Archaeology and the Bible

Archaeology has in recent years verified many facts in the Bible, but other proofs pop up in unexpected ways. During World War I the British General Edmund Allenby conducted an expedition through Palestine and made one very successful maneuver simply because a staff sergeant was a Bible reader.

The sergeant discovered that in ancient times the Israelites had captured one town by a certain roundabout approach. He reported this to the general, and the British army repeated the Israelite strategy with great success. **E**



(Continued from page 13)

Do Adventists need to be . . .

discover and rediscover the will of God for His people in the end-time. Adventists are a people of the Book; and the Spirit who speaks through that Book will renew us.

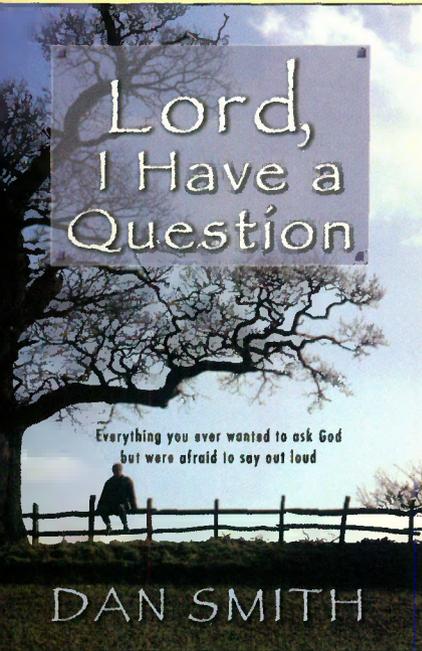
Notes

1. See Watson E. Mills, ed., *Speaking in Tongues. A Guide to Research on Glossolalia* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1986).
2. *Christianity Today*, September 16, 1991 p. 52, reports that of the 1.8 billion Christians in the world "about 372 million identify themselves as charismatic/Pentecostal." Other estimates are much more modest.
3. C. Peter Wagner, *How to Have a Healing Ministry Without Making Your Church Sick* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1988), p. 16.
4. See E. D. O'Connor, C.S.C., "The Literature of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal 1967-1974," *Perspectives on Charismatic Renewal*, ed. E. D. O'Connor (Notre Dame/London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), pp. 145-184.
5. Larry Christenson, "Baptism with the Holy Spirit," *Focus Newsletter*, Fellowship of Charismatic Christians in the United Church of Christ (June 1985), pp. 1-3.
6. Wagner, *How to Have a Healing Ministry*, p. 21.
7. David Barrett as cited by Wagner, *How to Have a Healing Ministry*, p. 17.
8. Wagner, *How to Have a Healing Ministry*, p. 24.
9. Cited by H. Küng, *Theologie im Aujbruch* (Munich/Zurich: Piper, 1987), p. 68.
10. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 595.
11. John Wimber with Kevin Springer, *Power Evangelism* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), pp. 148-151.
12. Wagner, *How to Have a Healing Ministry*, p. 26.
13. *Ibid.*
14. John Wimber with Kevin Springer, *Power Evangelism*.
15. See *Signs & Wonders Today*, compiled by the editors of *Christian Life Magazine* (Wheaton, Ill.: Christian Life Missions, 1983).
16. Wagner, *How to Have a Healing Ministry*, p. 50.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 212.
21. John Wimber, *Power Healing* (San Francisco; Harper & Row, 1987).
22. Wagner, *How to Have a Healing Ministry*, p. 228.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 227, where commanding is a definite form of prayer that is recommended.
24. Wimber, *Power Evangelism*, p. 122.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
27. It is reported that in an Adventist celebration church in Sydney, Australia, glossolalia has manifested itself. Recently the major church in what was East Berlin, though not a celebration church, has been split over the issue of glossolalia with the glossolalists finally leaving the Adventist church. In some Adventist churches in Italy and France, glossolalia is also a problem. **E**

Gerhard F. Hasel wrote this article when he was Professor of Old Testament at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University.

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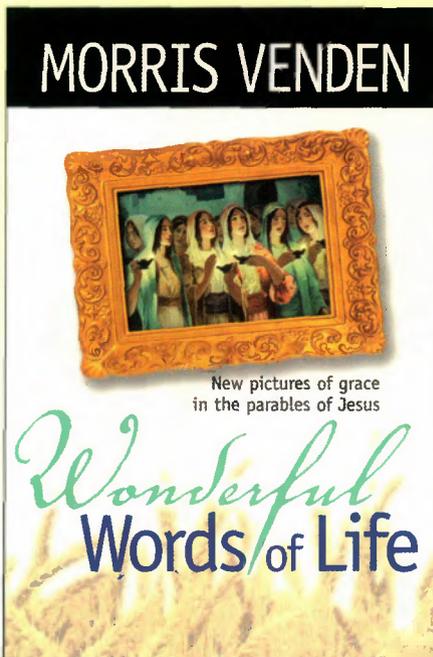
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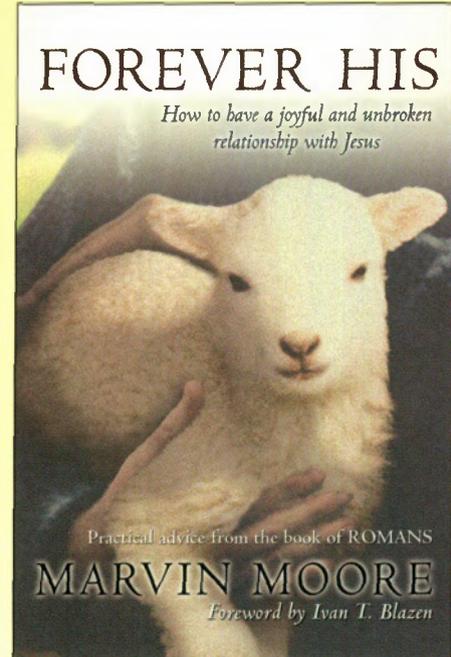
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(Week of Prayer Reading for Sabbath, December 15, 1888)



Scriptures

The Scriptures a sufficient guide

We are impressed that this will be an important time among us as a people. It should be a period of earnestly seeking the Lord and humbling your hearts before Him. I hope you will regard this as a most precious opportunity to pray and counsel together; and if the injunction of the apostle to esteem others better than ourselves is carefully heeded, you can in humility of mind, with the spirit of Christ, search the Scriptures carefully to see what is truth. The truth can lose nothing by close investigation. Let the word of God speak for itself; let it be its own interpreter, and the truth will shine like precious gems amid the rubbish.

It has been shown me that there are many of our people who take things for granted, and know not for themselves, by close, critical study of the Scriptures, whether they are believing truth or error. If our people depended much less upon preaching, and spent far more time on their knees before God, pleading for Him to open their understanding to the truth of His word, that they might have a knowledge for themselves that their feet were standing on solid rock, angels of God would be around about them, to help them in their endeavors.

Laziness

There is a most wonderful laziness indulged in by a large class of our people, who are willing for

others to search the Scriptures for them; and they take the truth from the lips of these as a positive fact, but they do not know it to be Bible truth, through their own individual research, and by the deep convictions of the Spirit of God upon their hearts and minds. Let every soul now be divested of envy, of jealousy, of evil surmising, and bring his heart into close connection with God. If all do this, they will have that love burning upon the altar of their hearts which Christ evinced for them. All parties will have Christian kindness and Christian tenderness. There will be no strife, for the servants of God must not strive. There will be no party [partisan] spirit; there will be no selfish ambition.

Our people individually must understand Bible truth more thoroughly, for they certainly will be called before councils; they will be criticized by keen and critical minds. It is one thing to give assent to the truth, and another thing, through close examination as Bible students, to know what truth is. We have been apprised of our dangers, of the trials and temptations just before us; and now is the time to take special pains to prepare ourselves to meet the temptations and emergencies which are just before us.

If souls neglect to bring the truth into their lives, and be sanctified through the truth, that they may

be able to give a reason of the hope that is within them, with meekness and fear, they will be swept away by some of the manifold errors and heresies, and will lose their souls. I beg of you, my brethren, for Christ's sake, to have no selfish ambitions.

Study with prayer

As you shall assemble together at these general meetings for prayer, I beseech of you to make personal efforts to cleanse soul and spirit from every defiling influence which would separate you from God. Many, many will be lost because they have not studied their Bibles upon their knees, with earnest prayer to God that the entrance of the word of God might give light to their understanding. All selfish ambition should be laid aside, and you should plead with God for His Spirit to descend upon you as it came upon the disciples who were assembled together upon the day of Pentecost. "They were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Let every heart be subdued before God. Let there be a taking hold by living faith for victory over ourselves, victory over Satan.

If all who claim to believe the Bible did believe it as the oracles of God, as actually a divine communication teaching every soul what to do in order to be saved, what a different effect would follow their labors. It is because so many who handled the word of God in opening the Scriptures to others are not diligent students of the Scriptures or doers of the word themselves, that they make so little advancement in growth of grace and in coming to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. They take largely the interpretation of the Scriptures from others' lips, but do not put their minds to the task of searching the evidences for themselves, to know what is truth.

Encourage unity

All misunderstandings and controversies may be happily and successfully adjusted by the living testimonies of the word of God. One of the greatest hindrances to our spiritual success is the great want of

love and respect evidenced for one another. We should seek most earnestly, by every word and action, to answer the prayer of Christ, and to encourage that unity which is expressed in the prayer of Christ, that we may be one as He is one with the Father. Every feeling of indifference for one another should be strenuously overcome, and everything that would tend to variance with brethren should be put away from us. The love of Jesus Christ existing in the heart will consume these little things, or greater things, which tend to divide hearts.

Satan sees that in unity there is strength; that in variance and disunion there is weakness. Heaven's enlightenment is what is needed, so that when we look upon the faces of our brethren, we may consider: "These are they that have been purchased by the price of the blood of Christ. They are precious in His sight. I must love them as Christ has loved me. These are my fellow-laborers in the harvest field. I must be perfectly united with them; I must speak only words that will tend to encourage and advance them in their forward movement."

My brethren, you are Christ's soldiers, making aggressive warfare against Satan and his host; but it is grievous to the Spirit of God for you to be surmising evil of one another, and letting the imagination of your hearts be controlled by the power of the great accuser, whose business it is to accuse them before God day and night. Satan has his soldiers trained for the special work of breaking up the union which Christ made so great a sacrifice to establish between brethren.

No party spirit

We are to be bound to one another in sacred bonds of holy union. But it is the work of the enemy to create a party [partisan] spirit, and to have party feelings, and some feel that they are doing the work of God in strengthening prejudices and jealousies among brethren. God would have a sacred order to exist among his co-workers, that they may be bound together by Christ in the Lord God of Israel. We are to be faithful, frank, and true to the interests of each other. We are constantly to be listening for orders from our Captain, but not be guilty of listening to reports against our brethren, or imagining evil of our brethren. Our interests must be bound up with our brethren's, and it is decidedly nothing but the work of the Devil to create sus-

picion and jealousies between each other. We are working for the same cause and under the same Master. It is one work—the preparation of the people of God in these last days.

Guard reputation

The prosperity and reputation of our brethren are to be zealously guarded, as we would have our own honor and reputation preserved. Everything like evil-speaking, every word that savors of sarcasm, every influence that would demerit our brethren or any branch of the work of God, are all working away from the prayer of Christ. Satan is at work in this matter, that the prayer of Christ may not be answered, and he has helpers in the very men who claim to be doing the work of God. Everything that is said to create suspicion, or to cast a slur, or to demerit those engaged in appointed agencies, is working on Satan's side of the question. It brings only weakness to our own souls, and is a great hindrance to the advancement of the work of God.

For years it has been shown me that everything of this character was grievous to the Spirit of God, and was giving the enemies of our faith great advantage to take misconceptions of the truth that God's laborers were seeking to advance. Some who think that they are really doing the Lord's work are traitors in the cause. Envy is more common than we imagine, and prejudice is encouraged, and becomes strong by indulgence, in the hearts of those who should discern its baleful influence and spurn it from the soul-temple. Jealousy is as cruel as the grave, but Satan makes this a masterly temptation, not only to estrange friends, but brethren.

Examine feelings

It is high time that every soul trusted with responsibilities should examine his own heart diligently by the lighted candle of God's word, to see whether he is indeed in the faith and in the love of the truth. The spirit of love for one another, as Christ has evidenced for us, will lead us to examine closely every impulse, every sentiment and feeling indulged, in the light of the law of God, that the heart may be opened to conviction whether or not we are keeping the principles of that holy law. It is a positive duty, which God enjoins upon souls, to bring our will and spirit under the control of the divine influence of the Spirit of God. When we do this, we shall rise above all these cheap and unconsecrated feelings, and every victory

that is gained by our brethren we shall be just as glad to see as if it were gained by ourselves.

Brethren, when we are doers of the word and not hearers only, we shall think much less of self, and esteem others better than ourselves. The greatest curse among our people today is seeking for the highest place. Full of self-importance and self-esteem, we do not feel our need of the constant grace of Christ to work with all our efforts. Whatever you are in character, in purity, in persevering energy, in devoted piety, will give you position and will make others appreciate you.

Study honestly

We should now closely examine the oracles of God. The garments of self-righteousness are to be laid aside. Let the word of God which you take in your hands be studied with simplicity. Cherish reverence for it, and study it with honesty of purpose. We are not to set our stakes, and then to interpret everything to reach this set point. Here is where some of our great reformers have failed, and this is the reason that men who today might be mighty champions for God and the truth are warring against the truth. Let every thought, every word, and the deportment savor of that courtesy and Christian politeness toward each other which the Scriptures enjoin. God designs we should be learners, first, from the living oracles, and secondly, from our fellow-men. This is God's order.

Study reverently

The word of God is the great detector of error; to it we believe everything must be brought. The Bible must be our standard for every doctrine. We must study it reverentially. We are to receive no one's opinion without comparing it with the Scriptures. Here is divine authority which is supreme in matters of faith. It is the word of the living God that is to decide all controversies. It is when men mingle their own human smartness with God's words of truth in giving sharp thrusts to those who are in controversy with them, that they show that they have not a sacred reverence for God's inspired word. They mix the human with the divine, the common with the sacred, and they belittle God's word. We must in searching the Scriptures be filled with wisdom and power that is above the human, which will so soften and subdue our hard hearts that we will search the Scriptures

as diligent students, and will receive the in grafted word, that we may know the truth, that we may teach it to others as it is in Jesus.

Live the truth

The correct interpretation of the Scriptures is not all that God requires. He enjoins upon us that we should not only know the truth, but that we should practice the truth as it is in Jesus. We are to bring into our practice, into our association with our fellow-men, the Spirit of Him who gave us the truth. We must not only search for the truth as for hidden treasure, but it is a positive necessity, if we are laborers together with God, that we comply with the conditions laid down in His word, and bring the Spirit of Christ into our hearts, that our understanding may be strengthened, and we become apt teachers to make known to others the truth as it is revealed to us in His word. All frivolity, all jesting and joking, all commonness and cheapness of spirit, must be put away by the people of God. All pride, all envy, all evil surmising and jealousies must be overcome by the grace of Christ; and sobriety, humility, purity, and godliness must be encouraged and revealed in the life and character.

One with Christ

We must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God. This is in doing His word, in weaving into our lives and characters the spirit and works of Christ. Then we are one with Christ as Christ was one with the Father. Then we are partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. There is no assurance that our doctrine is right, and free from all chaff and error, unless we are daily doing the will of God. If we do His will, we shall know of the doctrine. We shall see the truth in its sacred beauty. We shall accept it with reverence and godly fear, and then we can present that which we know is truth to others. There should be no feeling of superiority or self-exaltation in this solemn work. The soul that is in love with God and His work will be as candid as the day. *1888 Materials*, pp. 196-201. **E**

Ellen G. White, co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and messenger of the Lord.

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The early American author and naturalist Henry David Thoreau observed that people do not ride on the trains, the trains ride on them! To his amazed and somewhat skeptical neighbors he explained that the ties and rails on which the train moves represent a portion of the lives of the men who laid them. Therefore, the train actually travels on the lives of these men.

This also applies to the Christian. When he gives a gift of money to God, he is really giving a portion of his very life, that portion he used in making the money. In this way a person who may never have had the opportunity to go as a missionary can, through his gifts, send a portion of his life to some foreign field.

Call to reform

God, through the prophet Malachi, called for a reform among His people. "Return unto me, and I will return unto you" (Mal. 3:7). When the people inquired wherein they should return, God referred to a specific point on which they were deficient. They had been robbing Him by withholding their tithes and offerings. God pointed to this as the diseased root to all their problems, for it was a clear evidence of the selfishness in their hearts. This selfishness was infecting every part of their lives.

In the church today, when unfaithfulness in tithing is so evident and when offerings show an alarming percentage of income decline, surely the message that God sent to the church prior to Christ's first coming must be the message to His church waiting for His return.

For these reasons, money and material possessions are considered of sufficient importance to discuss specifically when considering the broad subject of mankind's manager relationship to God. Frankly, this is regrettable, for it would be far more pleasant to spend this time studying more deeply into the beautiful plans God has for those who recognize this intimate partnership.

Unquestionably, Jesus would rather have spent more time talking about His Father's love and of the wonderful place He was going to prepare, but somehow, in His day as in ours, money always seemed to get in the way.

The need for reform

"There is need for a genuine reform in the church today. The last warning message, which should be going forward with jet speed, is in many areas slowed to a walk because of the selfishness of God's people. There must be a heart reformation. God cannot pour out His spirit when selfishness and self-indulgence are so manifest." — *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 52.

The results of reform

From these and a host of other messages that have been sent to the remnant church, it can be seen how vital it is that every professing Christian thoroughly understands and puts into practice the true principles of life management. Compliance with these will prepare the way for the Lord's soon return. The evidence will be seen in many ways:

First, God will be able to pour out His Spirit without measure and the gospel can go to every corner of the earth. The Holy Spirit will open hearts to receive divine rays of light. It will make the truth impressive and convince souls of the need of a Savior, and will supply the power essential to conversion.

"When all are faithful in giving back to God His own in tithes and offerings, the way will be opened for the world to hear the message for this time." — *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 450.

Second, unselfishness will permit the church to move forward in unity, marching as an army with banners, armed with God's Spirit, impelled and aided by divine power. The world will then witness a force not seen since apostolic times.

Third, an acceptance of the owner-manager principle will be seen in the unselfish use of time, talent, and means in carrying the gospel message. With the debris of selfishness cleared from the channel, God can pour all the resources of heaven into a final thrust that will culminate in the total eradication of sin. Once more peace will reign over all of God's universe, and His faithful managers of perishable things will become the managers of eternal riches. All the universe is waiting for this union of dedicated human effort and divine power. **E**

Mel Rees writes from Andrews University.

1. Modern spiritualism

Q. Had Ellen G. White made a mistake when she identified the "mysterious rappings" at the Fox sisters' house as the beginning of modern spiritualism?

A. The famous "mysterious rappings" were first noticed at the house of John D. Fox, in Hydesville, New York, at the end of March 1848 and, later, in 1848, the sisters Kate, Margaret, and Leah alleged hearing mysterious rappings from a spirit who identified himself as Mr. Splitfoot, who had died in that house, and with whom they communicated.

In August 1850, Ellen G. White had a vision in which she was shown that those mysterious rappings were part of Satan's work to deceive people in the last days. The contents of that vision were published in 1851 in Ellen G. White's first book entitled "*A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White*" (pp. 47-48), and published again in the book *Early Writings* (pp. 59-60) and *Life and Teachings* (pp. 168-170).

But in 1855, Kate and Margaret Fox admitted that they had been the authors of those mysterious rappings, without any supernatural involvement in the matter. This situation convinced some of Ellen G. White's critics that she had made a mistake identifying such rappings as of satanic origin. Later on, however, the Fox sisters clarified that the mysterious rappings were of supernatural origin, and that they had denied it in public due to the popular pressure they were facing. But that clearing up did not completely achieve the notion that the mysterious rappings were nothing but a mere farce.

Even if there had been doubts concerning the contradictory testimonies of the Fox sisters, we could never ignore the importance that the spirits attributed to supernatural manifestations. . . . In 1948 the National Association of Spiritualism of the United States published the centennial *Book of Modern Spiritualism* accepting the experience at the house of the Fox family as the ushering in of modern spiritualism.

In June 1992, I personally visited the place where the house of the Fox family was built in Hydesville, New York, where there is a stone with the following inscription: "Place of birth and sanctuary of modern spiritualism. Built with the most generous contribu-

tions of the mediums and their friends around the world, to honor each spiritual medium from the days of the Fox sisters, in 1848, until our spiritual mediums for the present and the future. This stone was bought and placed by the Ministry of Spiritual and Divine Science and their friends, on the 4th of July 1855."

This means that the later testimony of the Fox sisters as well as the acknowledgment of the modern mediums themselves confirm the supernatural origin of the mysterious rappings, interpreted by Ellen G. White as of satanic origin.

2. Repentance of Satan

Q. How long did Satan have to repent?

A. Some believe that the time of grace for Satan ended at the cross (John 19:30), since the days of Job he participated with the "sons of God" in a meeting "before the Lord" (Job 1:6-8). But the description of that episode doesn't suggest that the meeting took place in heavenly courts, and much less that Satan, after being expelled from heaven (Rev. 12:7-9), would have any access to salvation.

Ellen G. White clarifies that the time of grace for Satan and his angels finished with his expulsion from heaven. She states that "God, in His great mercy, bore long with Lucifer" and "again and again he was offered pardon, on condition of repentance and submission" but he never accepted the appeals of divine mercy (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 495, 496). Having lost his place in the heavenly courts, Satan requested once more to be reinstated in heaven, but Christ said that it was impossible. The same Satan left the presence of Christ "fully convinced that there was no possibility of being reinstated to God's favor" (*The Story of Redemption*, p. 27).

According to Mrs. White, after the fallen angels had abandoned heaven, there was no possibility or hope of redemption for those who had witnessed and shared the inexpressible heavenly glory, having seen God's terrible majesty and, before all this glory, they still rebelled against Him. There would not be any more new and marvelous exhibitions of God's exalted power that should impress so deeply as those they had already witnessed. **E**



James A. Cress



Nothing but the blood

Across my desk last week came an amazingly harsh criticism of Mel Gibson's new movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, which depicts the final hours leading up to Jesus' death. I am not attempting critique of a film I have not viewed. I am critiquing an unfair critique which asserts that the movie is too full of blood; much more than is recounted by the gospel writers.

This critic elaborates that Protestants must reject such copious amounts of blood and suffering based on his assumption that the biblical record minimizes Christ's sufferings. In fact, if you were to follow his specious reasoning to its conclusion, the crucifixion of Jesus would have been nothing more than a surgical procedure which got a little rough. Ridiculous!

The theme of redemption centers on Jesus' death as our substitute. I deserve to die. Jesus took my place. Nothing could be more important than to validate and appreciate the suffering of Jesus on our behalf, the shedding of His blood for the remission of our sins, and the promise of His return and restoration commemorated by the communion cup's representation of the New Testament in His blood.

When such critics reject what they term "slaughterhouse religion," because they don't like the language of beating, breaking, and bleeding, their argument must be with God. For blood is the language of both the Old and New Testament.

From the first lamb sacrificed after Adam's fall through the passing over of the homes protected by blood on the doorposts, to the death of Jesus, Himself the Great Passover, to the promise that He awaits His opportunity to share the juice of the vine with His redeemed in His kingdom, to the assurance that He, our High Priest, ministers His own atoning sacrifice in heaven for us, Scripture is filled—type and antitype—with the blood sacrifice of our Savior.

Both by shadow and reality, the Bible declares, "not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption . . . How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your consciences from dead works to serve the living God . . . without shedding of blood, there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:11-14, 22). The Old Testament describes the shedding of vast quantities of animal blood while the New Testament affirms the vast quality of Christ's shed blood.

Do you see the emphasis? By His own blood! The gospel focuses on Jesus, Himself the Priest; Himself the sacrifice. Once for all. When Jesus poured out His own blood, I see Him pouring out His life for me.

The singularity of Jesus' own offering stands in contrast to the daily offering of sacrificial lambs. Once! Never before! Never again! Christ offered His own blood as an act of God's eternal love. No price was too much! Jesus paid the maximum. Never can there be any doubt about the sufficiency of payment. Jesus paid it all!

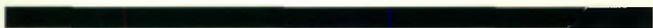
I carry a clipping in my Bible that well describes the all-sufficient gift of Jesus' own blood: "No mere human savior could have paid such a price and purchased redemption. Not in the least! Why? The demands of a broken law were too exacting. That law had been broken by finite beings incapable of again rendering complete obedience, but the law demand that a perfect obedience be rendered. Man could not do it. It required a God-man. Only Jesus, the incarnate in human flesh, could do it. And when He did it, He did a completed work. He did not purchase a half pardon; He did not provide a partial blotting out of sin. His was a perfect atonement for us. He set us free. We no longer need to

pay the penalty for our transgressions. We are absolutely free of all condemnation and guilt." How? By His own blood appropriated by faith!

Understand the symbol and understand the reality: "Now the blood shall be a sign (a token) for you" (Exod. 12:13). The wages of sin is death. We each have sinned. We have corporately experienced it and we have individually chosen it. We deserve the wages of sin. We deserve only justice, only condemnation, only death.

But God's love and grace has provided an escape. The Lord, Himself, has provided a sacrifice. The Lord has provided Himself the sacrifice. The blood of Jesus Christ becomes the surety of our salvation. The blood of Jesus Christ becomes the sustenance of our lives. The blood of Jesus Christ becomes the title to our heavenly home. Right now Jesus pleads His own blood for me and you.

Reject a Hollywood depiction if you will. Never reject the soul-saving, sinner-redeeming, mind-transforming, sin-atoning, copiously-sacrificed, life-saving blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world! **E**



(Continued from page 20)

Evangelism

In 1975, this ministry started in New York with one van equipped for blood pressure testing. Soon after there were four such vehicles providing this service. Since 1975, more than one million individuals have been touched by this ministry.

In Calgary, Alberta, the Pineridge Seventh-day Adventist Church has started a ministry of "meals on wheels." A van has been secured for the purpose of distributing cooked meals to those who are in need. The need is so great that other churches have joined to help in this ministry. Every Sunday, one of three churches is responsible for providing meals to feed 150 to 200 persons. The van containing the meals is usually parked somewhere in the downtown area from which distribution takes place.

Community service programs of this nature are undoubtedly relevant for today in helping to reach many people in urban areas with the gospel. This is in essence evangelism in working clothes. As those engaged in this outreach ministry strive to combine preaching and teaching of the word,

some are indeed giving a listening ear that otherwise would not.

Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School has great potential for building relationships with the unchurched people within the church community. It is observed that many people are willing to send their children to Vacation Bible School. This is a very important opportunity the church has for ministry. If the children are happy and the parents are impressed with what they were taught, the door will be opened for them to attend other church functions. There are times when some of these children will be accompanied to church functions by their parents.

Sometime ago, two Vacation Bible School programs were conducted by Seventh-day Adventists in Iraq. One was conducted in Baghdad, but only 130 enrolled because of limited facilities. At the closing activities, all parents were invited and more than 300 attended the program. After the meeting, many expressed their appreciation to the staff and church members for conducting the program.

The second Vacation Bible School program was conducted in an area where the Adventist minister lives. Fifty children attended the VBS program which was conducted by the local pastor along with his wife and volunteers from the Baghdad church. Following the VBS program, the pastor visited the families of the children who attended. As a result, 17 parents attended church in one week. The pastor organized a systematic visitation program to follow-up the interests that the VBS program developed. Through this program, workers in Iraq and other Arab countries are making progress in reaching people who might not have been reached.

In many churches, when the Vacation Bible School is finished, nothing else is done to encourage a continued friendship and relationship among the children, their parents, and the church.

Care should be taken to allow those children and their parents to feel a part of the church family. Invite them to other activities of the church; by so doing, a strong relationship will be developed. Properly planned and executed, this can be an outstanding evangelistic tool within the community. **E**

Dr. Earl P. W. Cameron, evangelist and pastor, writes from Mississauga, Canada.

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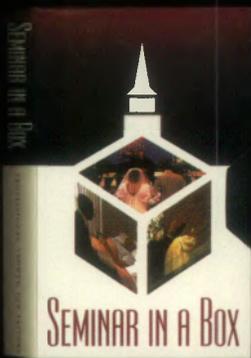
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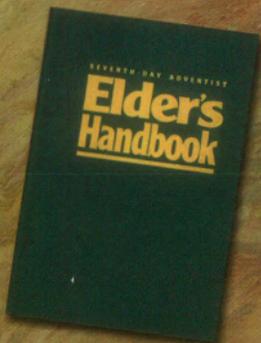
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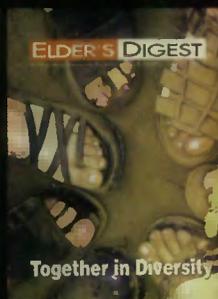
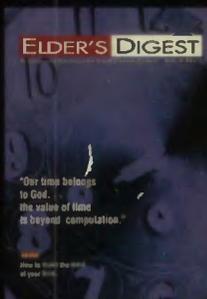
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