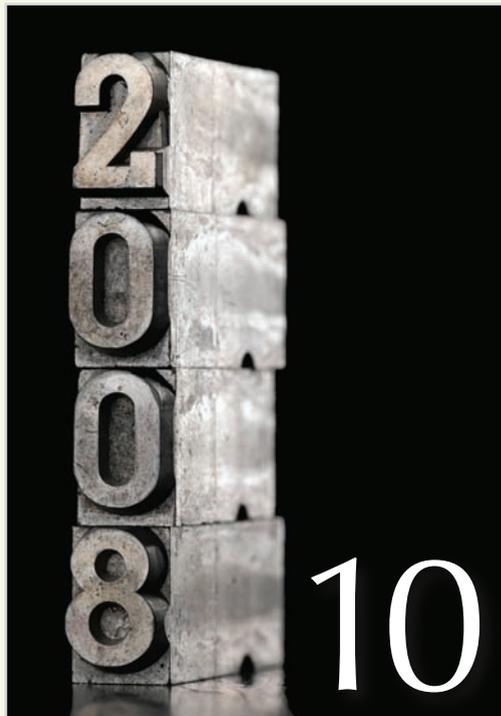


quarterly resource for local church elders † october/december 2007

ELDER'S DIGEST

Worship
Sacred and Secular

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OCTOBER/DECEMBER 2007

VOL. 13 NO. #4

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There is bread in the “house of bread”

“There was a famine in the land, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for while in the country of Moab.” Ruth 1:1

You know what this story talks about. Bethlehem was known by the “land of bread.” When Elimelech’s family faced the famine and recognized there was no bread in the “land of bread,” they left that place and moved to another.

Today the same can occur in our church. The church is recognized not only as a house of prayer, but also as a “house of bread”. When members see that there is no bread in the “house of bread,” members can also be tempted to leave the church in order to find bread in other places.

As spiritual leaders, we need to be sure that preaching has high priority in the church worship service. We need to be aware that as preachers we are preparing and providing the best bread for the church member.

Jack Hyles in the book, *“Teaching on Preaching”* writes that several years ago a poll was taken among preachers concerning the different duties of the ministry: (1) administration, (2) teaching, (3) preaching, (4) pastoring, (5) priestly work, and (6) church business. The question was asked to hundreds of

preachers, “What do you think is the most important of these ministries?”

Overwhelmingly the response was, “Preaching.”

The second question was asked: “Which occupies most of your time?” To that question the answer was overwhelmingly, “Administration,” and preaching was last on the list.

How tragic! That which we feel is most important is what we do the least.

Preaching is teaching

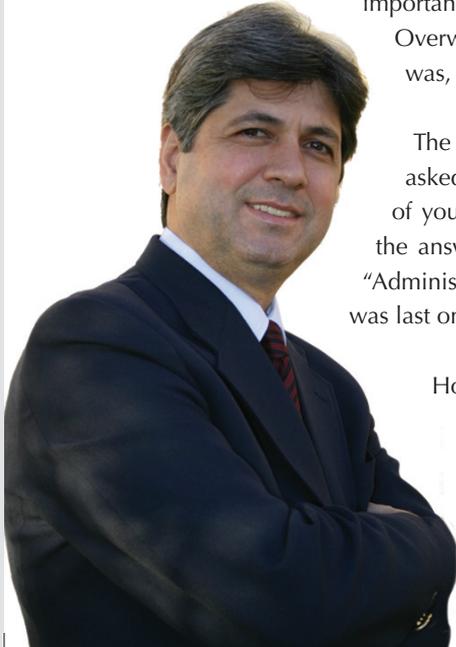
with a tear in the eye. Preaching is truth on fire. Preaching is the Word of God in the hand, the fire of God in the heart and the zeal of God in the soul. Preaching is the gift of God wrapped in an excited voice. Preaching is the moral conscience of a nation. Preaching is the soul of the church.

Let nothing take its place. Let no concert be given at preaching time. Let no cantata be given at preaching time. Let no movie, play or dramatical presentation substitute for the preaching of the Gospel. Let no vespers take the place of preaching.

Preaching is the power of God unto salvation. Preaching is revival’s forerunner. Preaching is the church’s heart. Preaching is doctrine clothed in excitement. Preaching is love’s smile. Preaching is sin’s greatest adversary. Preaching is doubt’s demise. Preaching is fear’s failure. Preaching is depression’s death. Preaching is disappointment’s decline. Preaching is faith’s food.

Preaching is profundity delivered in simplicity. Preaching is the mender of broken relationships. Preaching is the healer of broken hearts. Preaching is the revival of broken dreams. Preaching is Hell’s greatest enemy. Preaching is the sinner’s best friend. Preaching is the saint’s dinner. Preaching is genius with a halo. Preaching is fire in the pulpit that melts the ice in the pew.

Think about that! 



Jonas Arrais

General Conference Associate Ministerial Secretary

Five Ps OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY



Recently the West-Central Africa Ministerial Advisory was held in Accra, Ghana.

Pastor Luka Daniel, Division president, was unable to attend the meetings, but he sent a powerful message that can motivate all who are involved in God's work. It is a pleasure to share his message with you.

As you gather here in Accra for the Advisory of the Ministerial Association of West-Central Africa Division, I welcome you to an occasion where you have the opportunity to learn from the various speakers who will be addressing you and from your interactions with each other. I entreat you to add to your strategies the following five Ps of effective ministry.

Pray honestly for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit! The Spirit can give us the power and wisdom we need to face the challenges of the ministry. That is why prayer should come first in everything we undertake. Some of our ministers care for 20 or more congregations, and some run one or more churches, in addition

to being administrators and/or directors. We must pray the prayer Christ Himself suggests in Luke 10:2: "Then He said to them: 'The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest'" (NKJV).

Plan your ministry and do not leave anything to chance! It is rightly said that he who fails to plan plans to fail. There should be no room for failure in our ministry. As a Division, we have planned, among other things, to challenge every member to be a witness, winning at least one soul per member in five years. Hence, we have introduced the popular slogan "Win One, Each One! Each One, Tell the World!" If we succeed in this approach, all soul-winning and church-planting objectives and goals will be reached easily to the glory of God, the true Soul-Winner. We know that for this to happen, we must plan with Him, realizing the invaluable reminder in Proverbs 19:21: "Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will be established" (RSV).

Proclaim the Word of God, rather than human theories! The world is full of many teachings that may be popular, probably because they are full of words

and phrases that are politically correct; they may also be popular because they focus on "prosperity gospel." But the Master did not mince words, neither was He vague when He gave the Gospel Commission: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:19, 20, NKJV).

The Gospel proclamation is not merely a matter of passing on information about salvation. It includes a call to discipleship, a call to repentance and reconciliation with God and humankind. It also includes a call to call others. Like Paul of old, we should endeavor to win others by all means—any means that is legitimately effective. However, we especially recommend the small-group approach. Easy to adopt and adapt, it is known to be very effective in minimizing membership loss.

Preserve the souls that are won! We usually do all we can to win new members, but then we quickly leave them to seek more souls. The new converts are left to figure out how to grow in grace,

and, lacking spiritual nurture, they stray from the fold. Thus, we gain many members but few converts. But member retention is also a part of the Gospel Commission. Spiritual nurture should include moral and material assistance in getting decent church buildings. Let us teach that in building a house of worship, we invite God's presence as He dwelt with Israel of old.

Looking to the future, the Messiah left us an invaluable message in His series of questions to the Apostle Peter: "He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved when He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep'" (John 21:17, NKJV).

I believe, as ministers, we should spend quality time "feeding" our spiritual sheep, especially the "lambs," the new members, by the spoken Word of God and Christ-like lifestyle. If we feed our sheep properly, we will minimize the numbers that secularism or post-modernism persuade to join the swelling ranks of the so-called "unchurched." If we feed our sheep properly, they will be less attracted by the powerful appeals of Pentecostalism. If we feed our sheep properly, they will not be intimidated by the return of witchcraft. The devil will not find it comfortable to go to church or visit them at home or trick them to keep a date with him in dark rooms or in some obscure hideout. Let our members know that a witch is controlled by the spirit of a fallen angel, but a loyal child of God is guided and guarded by the Spirit of God Himself.

Prepare yourselves for the great event—the return of Christ! It is easy for us to get so bogged down with the Lord's "business," including preparing members for the kingdom, that we forget to prepare ourselves for that great event. Paul's advice to young Timothy might be helpful: "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you" (1 Tim. 4:16, NKJV).

With these words, I wish you a fruitful advisory. And when you return to the place where you are serving, determine to make a positive difference. ^{ED}

Luka T. Daniel

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SHOULD ADVENTIST ELDERS TALK WITH OTHER RELIGIOUS

A number of Adventist elders and pastors will be surprised by such a question. For some the answer is: No! But for others, talking with and meeting leaders of other faiths and religions is part of their ministry. In this article, I would like to show you how meeting other religious leaders in your community is important for your church.

1. Why are religious leaders so important?

- They are community leaders.
- They influence people and civil authorities in the community.
- They are opinion and moral leaders.
- They speak regularly to a number of people who believe in them.
- They represent the religious world and are a source of information for the community leaders.

The local church has not been called to be an isolated island in the community, but to be light and salt. Its purpose is to build

bridges with others and develop an efficient network of relations with officials. Most of us are aware that we must build relations with officials, but we neglect to develop relations with religious leaders from other faiths. This is a mistake. Religious leaders are part of the community. We cannot build an efficient network of relations by ignoring or neglecting religious authorities. It is important that they know us, not through rumors or prejudiced opinions, but through personal kindly contact.

2. Why are relationships with religious leaders important for us?

- We are a very small minority in most cities.
- We are often victims of prejudice because people don't know us well.
- We need to protect our name and our institutions.

Our mission is to preach the good news, not only by words, but through our presence in the community. People will want to know if there is an advantage to having an Adventist Church



LEADERS?



in their city. It is almost impossible to accomplish our mission if we are unknown or marginalized.

3. What is the official position of the church regarding inter-religious relations?

As elders, you must remember that you are part of a world church. There are three official statements which will guide you in this area:

- *Relationships with Other Christian Churches and Religious Organizations*, General Conference Working Policy, O 100, paragraph 1, written in 1926.
- *Ecumenical Movement*, June 1988.
- *How Adventists View Roman Catholicism*, General Conference Administrative Committee, April 15, 1997.

What do we learn from these statements?

- We should avoid creating misunderstanding or friction.
- We should recognize the mission of other Christian churches.
- We should express a spirit of Christian courtesy toward other Christians.
- We should promote the principle of religious freedom.
- We should recognize the moral value of other churches.

4. Would Ellen G. White agree?

Those who favor strict isolation will try to

find support for their position in the writings of Ellen G. White. But Mrs. White did not isolate herself from others. She spoke in non-Adventist churches when she was invited. When she went to Switzerland, she preached in the little Adventist Church of Tramelaw in the morning and gave a lecture on temperance in the Baptist Church in the afternoon. She wrote, "Our ministers should seek to come near to the ministers of other denominations. Pray for and with these men, for whom Christ is interceding. A solemn responsibility is theirs. As Christ's messengers, we should manifest a deep, earnest interest in these shepherds of the flock"—*Testimonies*, Vol. 6, p. 78.

The local pastor needs someone to represent him, someone who will consistently build bridges. This mission, which is the responsibility of the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Director, should be given to an elder. Among the board of elders, one should be responsible for external relations or inter-religious relations. A church without this function is like a government without a Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

5. What results can we expect?

- Our church will be more visible in the community.
- Our local leadership will have a better image.
- Our church will be less subject to prejudice.
- Our church will have a public voice in the community.

- Our church will appear more attractive.
- The community will better understand our beliefs and our testimony will become more relevant.

6. Be wise and do not provoke division. Meeting other religious leaders is an important part of our public ministry, but it can be a very sensitive issue. It must be done with wisdom. Most of our members will be proud to see your picture in the newspaper with the mayor or the governor. But a picture of you with the Bishop may create problems in some churches. Take time to explain, and don't take the risk of dividing the church because too many members don't understand. Of course, this ministry should not be avoided if only a small number disagree. In any case, you will likely have opposition. Remember that not all church members are called to this ministry, but those who are chosen must be well chosen. They will represent the church in the community. Remember Jesus' admonition that we are to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Our ministry begins in our community through our local church. ^{ED}

John Graz, General Conference
Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Director

THE ART OF SPEECH



ALEXANDRA SAMPAIO

Has it ever occurred to you that many people who go to church are there to hear a voice that resembles Jesus' voice?

To be a good speaker not only requires a good message that is well-prepared. It is also important to consider how the sound of your voice may impact the listener. Here are several helpful pointers to keep in mind.

- *Avoid reading the sermon:* When you read, you lower your head, and your voice is usually monotonous and tiring. Look at the congregation when speaking.
- *Be natural:* When we talk about something that is important to us, our enthusiasm is apparent, and our speech tends to be more fluent and spontaneous. Speaking from your heart can transform your sermon into a message that is pleasing to the ear.
- *Don't scream:* A soft and melodious voice is pleasing and adequate. Screaming makes the listener uncomfortable and tires the speaker's vocal chords. "Some destroy the solemn impression they may have made upon the people, by raising their voices to a very high pitch, and hallooing and screaming out the truth. When presented in this manner, truth loses much of its sweetness, its force and solemnity. But if the voice is toned right, if it has solemnity, and is so modulated as to be even pathetic, it will produce a much better impression. This was the tone in which Christ taught His disciples. He impressed them with solemnity; He spoke in a pathetic manner" (Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 666).

- *Be a positive influence with your voice:* Whether we are aware of it or not, we influence people with our voices. When you say, "Happy Sabbath!" in a happy tone, you will surely brighten someone's day. Different messages require different intonations:

- Express happiness with a *cheerful* tone.
- Proclaim Christ's return with a *convincing* tone.
- Say "God loves you" with a *loving* tone.
- Make an announcement with a *jovial* tone.
- When reproofing, use a *transparent* and *sincere* voice.

Work to overcome unpleasant tones such as those that are shaky, timid, rude, or fearful. Listen to yourself carefully to remove irritation, yelling, fussiness, shrillness, or an artificial, threatening or agitated tone from your tone of voice.

Ellen White says, "The more expression you can put into words of truth, the more effective these words will be on those who hear. A proper presentation of the Lord's truth is worthy of our highest efforts" (ibid.).^{ED}

Alexandra Sampaio is a speech therapist in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

Question:

How many tithes does the Bible mention?

Answer:

The Bible mentions three tithes: the Levite priest's tithe (Num. 18:21-28; Lev. 27:30, 31); the family tithe for charity and religious activities (Deut. 12:6-17; 14:22-28; 26:12), and the king's tithe (I Sam. 8:15-17).

Question:

Aren't these the same tithe used for different purposes?

Answer:

Not at all. To find out, just read the Bible texts on the subject. The Jewish Encyclopedia, in the entry "tithe", makes a distinction between the first two tithes, and the Spirit of Prophecy does as well. The following are some of the reasons:

- A. The tithe given to the Levite priest was to maintain the religious services in Israel. It was given totally and only to him, and stored in the temple (Nehemiah 12:44-47). It was not used by the worshiper. In the case of cereals or animals, it should not be exchanged, for that would result in a fine of a fifth, 20 percent of its value, neither should it be sold. It should be immediately taken to the Temple. The Levite himself, after receiving it, would tithe it. Its origin was pre-Mosaic, therefore, not related to the ceremonial services of the temple. Thus, besides other reasons, it had a permanent character.
- B. The family tithe, as shown in the Bible texts mentioned above, was not given to the Levite, for he was only a guest with the poor and foreigner participating in the feast and banquet promoted by the worshiper. It was not stored in the temple either, but used by the worshiper. As opposed to the Levite tithe, it could be sold or exchanged without any fine, and the Levite would not tithe it, since he wouldn't have received it. This tithe was established in the Mosaic system, after Israel had been organized as a people and after the Exodus. Thus, it had a temporary character, once it was not related to the temple and its services.
- C. The king's tithe was a tax which was collected by the royal treasury department without any religious link. It had merely a civil character. It was dependent upon Israel's monarchic system, where it was originated and where it would end.

Therefore, we find that these three tithes, with character and practical use totally different one from the other, cannot honestly be mixed up. (For further clarification, read *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 51).

Question:

Is there in the Bible any example of tithe being used for religious expenses, such as building of the temple or its maintenance and remodeling, or purchase of materials for worship?

Answer:

No. There is not a single passage that mentions the tithe being used for the building, remodeling, or restoration of the temple, nor acquisition of materials indispensable for worship. In no instance does the Bible teach or give an example of the tithe being deviated for other purposes, but it teaches about its correct use: the sustenance of those who minister in the temple and teach the people. All we have to do is to read all the main biblical references on the building and remodeling of the desert tabernacle during Moses days where, by God's guidance, a specific offering was established for the construction services (see Exodus 25:1-9). For its maintenance, a fixed offering was set up for people over 20 years of age (Exodus 30:11-16; II Chron. 24:4-6). During the building of the temple in Solomon's day, only King David's savings (I Chron. 29:2), offerings from the princes and the people (I Chron. 29:5, 8, 10-14), and taxes (I Kings 9:15) were used. No tithe was used at all. In Joash's days (II Chron. 24:1-14) no tithe was used either. At the restoration done by King Hezekiah (II Chron. 31:2-21) and King Josiah, no tithes were used (II Kings 22:1-7; II Chron. 24:8-10 and 31:14). ^{ED}

Contributed by Doutrina Adventista <www.doutrinaadventista.com.br> to GC Ministerial Association.

Dear Elder:

Submit your questions on eldership and administration to: eldersdigest@gc.adventist.org

Those which are published will be answered by the staff of the General Conference Ministerial Association.

NEW YEAR

Colossians 2:1-3



We are at the end of another year and before a new year. How can we end the year and start the New Year? The recipes are many. How are you looking back and looking forward? What are our regrets regarding the year that ended? Are our major concerns regarding the future? In our Bible text, the apostle Paul opens his heart and shows what his concerns and his goals are.

1 STRUGGLE?

The apostle Paul is looking back as well as forward. He remembers the congregations that he has founded and the congregations the other apostles founded. He thanks God for the blessings received. He thanks the congregations that were founded. He is thankful for the Word of God that reached so many hearts.

What reasons do we have to praise God and thank Him at the end of this year?

We have two kinds of reasons: material and spiritual blessings. Just open the newspapers, listen to the news, and look around. So much misery and agony, so many wars, rebellions, disasters, etc. In a certain way, we have been kept from these evils.

But, the spiritual blessings are much bigger. God gave us His pure and clear Word. God guided us and kept us in faith in Jesus. What a blessing! Have we taken advantage and used this blessing wisely? We need to repent and ask for His forgiveness for the love of Christ.

When the apostle Paul looks forward, he sees the dangers that surround the Christian congregations. The Greek philosophy, the great knowledge that flourished at that time ridiculed the Christian faith. Besides that, the Jewish people who would say: We are not only saved by grace, but by faith and works, stealing the true consolation, and also the many temptations to lascivious passions that attracted specially the young people. Today is not different. The intensity of these problems is even more accentuated. How many young people deviate from their faith during their college years? The many temptations provided through different means of communication and through society. That is the reason for our concern.

② THE REACTION

The apostle reacts. He fights. How? He preaches; he writes letters; he prays. In this fight he clearly stated his objective.

That their hearts may be encouraged. How? Some people believe that it is easy to do that today in an era of technology and sciences of the mind. All that is needed is good planning, good strategies, marketing, etc. There is no doubt that we can use these tools, but the strength is not in them. The apostle Paul affirms:

That their hearts may be encouraged. He is talking about the people who are struggling, who are afflicted, and who know the dangers and their own weaknesses. The apostle wants them to be encouraged that is, consoled, stimulated, and comforted in their struggle, their mission and their pilgrimage. That their hearts may be encouraged. How? Through what?

May they be knit together in love. At first, it seems the apostle Paul is simply talking about love for one another. That is also implied, but we need to examine the text deeper. Reading the context, we see that he struggles and prays so that they are knit together in Christ's love, "which is the bond of perfectness" Col. 3:14. That is, firm in Christ's love. This happens when they are firm in all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ. This is the base of Christian faith. The apostle struggles so that they are firm, rooted, bonded in this base, in the knowledge and in the faith of Christ's love. This happens through the study of God's Word, through which the Holy Spirit calls, illuminates, and sanctifies.

God gave us these riches, this understanding of His Word, this knowledge, through our fathers. We have the catechisms: Minor and Major, the Confession of Augsburg, the Formula of Concord, our Hymnals, with its hymns and prayers, the Summary of the Christian Doctrine, etc. What a treasure! When the apostle wrote: "...For the Lord will give you understanding in everything" 2 Tim. 2:7, God, the Holy Spirit operates this understanding in us, through the correct understanding of His Word, law and gospel, that we are saved only by Christ's grace. When we are firm in these doctrines, we will not be deceived by sermons that affirm: It is by faith and works. No! It is by faith only. It is the understanding of spiritual things. From this faith, sprouts the fruits of love. This word is firm in the "conviction", which is a barrier against all false religions and worldly temptations. And the apostle insists:

In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. What is this treasure and knowledge? We are not dealing with simple knowledge of science. God put the laws of science in

nature and ordered: Subdue it. True knowledge, which involves the knowledge of God, man, eternity, relationship with God, faith, Christian life, and Christian hope, cannot be found in any other place except in Christ, who revealed it in His Word, through which the Holy Spirit works powerfully. In His Word we find orientation regarding what is right and wrong, comfort of forgiveness, peace with God, and hope of eternal life. Thus, we need to deepen our studies in His Word. We need to read and read, meditate and meditate, listen and study, with prayer.

Unfortunately, we find many afflicted Christians, seeking comfort and orientation in so many other books and places, to the point prophet Jeremiah laments: "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns, That can hold no water." Jer. 2:13. All knowledge for faith and life, for our pilgrimage towards the celestial home, for the struggle for subsistence in our professional life, for the education of our family, for the relationships with our brethren, for the mission, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ. All of this, each doctrine of faith, each point to the Christian life is hidden in Christ.

Hidden, because we will only know it, accept it as the truth and trust in it by the gracious action and illumination of the Holy Spirit.

And when we are rooted in Christ's love, this love unites us with the brethren. It unites our hearts. So this fraternal love has the true form, firm in the Word, in the doctrine of the Scriptures, in Christ. He is the true love, not just a simple social love, but firm in the Christian doctrines, rooted in the Word of God. The apostle Peter affirms: "Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." 2 Peter 1:3, 4.

CONCLUSION

May our firm resolution today be: Next year, I want to read, listen and meditate much more in the Word of God. For it is the light unto my path and I want to do everything possible to make other people interested in its reading. I want to propagate the Word of God. ^{ED}

General Conference Ministerial Association

For Better or for Worse

Gordon E. Christo, Ph.D.

Ten Keys to a Happy Marriage

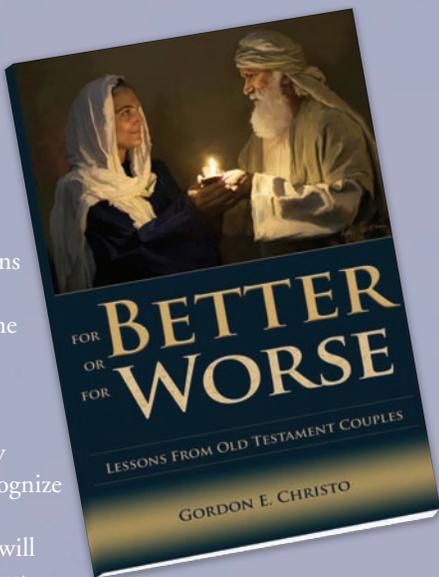
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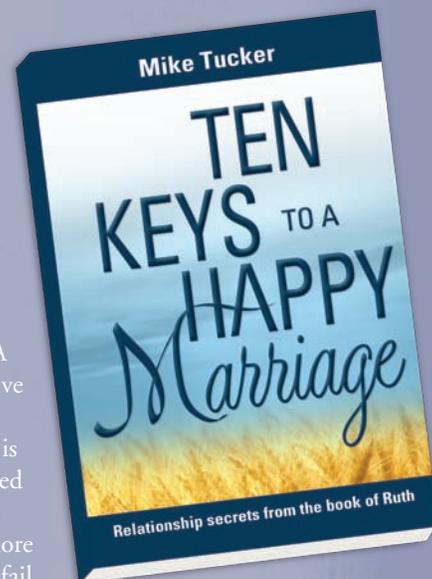
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I. Introduction

A. The book of Ecclesiastes has long fascinated many people.

1. Many think it is one of the most puzzling books in the Old Testament.
2. It is considered by some to be the most melancholy book of the Bible.

B. It is not a book Christians should ignore.

1. In our materialistic society, there is a great need to understand its basic message.
2. In our youth-oriented society, it is of special value as its message appears to be directed at the young.

C. As with all Old Testament scripture, it was written:

1. For our learning (Rom. 15:4)
2. For our admonition (1 Cor. 10:11)
3. For doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

II. An introduction to the book

A. Title

1. In the Hebrew Bible, the book is called “Qoheleth.”
 - a. This means “the words of the preacher” (cf. 1:1):
 - b. The term suggests one who speaks to an assembly, an ecclesiastic or preacher.
2. The translators of the Septuagint version called it “Ekklesiastes.”
 - a. This also means “preacher.”
 - b. This is derived from the word “ekklesia” (assembly).

B. Authorship

1. Jewish and early Christian traditions attribute the book to Solomon.
2. The author identifies himself only as “the son of David, king in Jerusalem” (1:1).
3. Internal references certainly point to Solomon, for example:
 - a. His wisdom (1:16; cf. 1 Kings 3:12)
 - b. His building activities (2:4-6; cf. 1 Kings 7:1-12).
 - c. His wealth (2:7-9; cf. 2 Chron. 9:13-28).

C. Date

1. It is assumed by many that Solomon is indeed the author.
2. That would place the date of the book around 945 B.C.

D. Message

1. The futility of life “under the sun” (cf. 1:2,14)
 - a. A key word is “vanity” which occurs 35 times in 29 verses and, which means “futility, uselessness, nothingness.”
 - b. A key phrase is “under the sun” which occurs 29 times in 27 verses and, which suggests “from an earthly point of view.”
 - c. The book illustrates the vanity of life when looked at solely from an earthly perspective.
2. The importance of serving God throughout life (cf. 11:9-12:1, 13-14).
 - a. The meaning of life is not found in experiencing the things of this world.
 - b. The meaning of life is found in serving the Creator of this world!

E. The book contains “goads” and “nails” (12:11).

1. Words of the wise, designed to “goad” or “prod” our thinking.
2. Words of the preachers (literally, “masters of the assemblies”), given to “nail” or “anchor” our lives.
3. In this book, we find statements that prod our thinking and exhortations that provide stability and direction for living.

III. The prologue to the book

A. Author identified (1:1)

1. “The Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.”
2. These are the words of Solomon.
 - a. A dramatic autobiography of his experiences and observations.
 - b. Perhaps some came from the time he was alienated from God! (1 Kings 11:1-13)
 - c. Some of the preliminary conclusions expressed throughout the book may have been drawn while he was still alienated and searching for meaning.
 - d. If written by Solomon and penned toward the end of his life, this would be evidence that Solomon repented before his death.

B. Theme stated (1:2)

1. “Vanity of vanities . . . vanity of vanities, all is vanity.”
2. All is futile, useless, and meaningless.
3. Of course, this vanity pertains to life “under the sun” (cf. 1:14).

4. All the effort one makes in life, as far as “this life” is concerned, is like “grasping for the wind.”

C. Question raised (1:3)

1. “What profit has a man from all his labor in which he toils under the sun?”
2. This is the question the “Preacher” sought to answer.
 - a. Is there any value or profit for all the things we do on this earth?
 - b. If our labor is meaningless as far as this life is concerned, what can we do?
3. In this book he will share:
 - a. What he learned from personal experience.
 - b. What he learned from personal observations.
 - c. Wise counsel based upon the wisdom and inspiration God gave him.

IV. Conclusion

A. Solomon begins to answer his own question in the next verse, which we will save for our next study.

B. It has been said that the Bible answers life’s most often-asked questions, such as:

1. Who am I?
2. Where did I come from?
3. Why am I here?
4. What am I to be doing?

C. The book of Ecclesiastes certainly addresses such questions; which is why:

1. It is worthy of our careful study.
2. It is of value to all, especially young people.
3. I pray, therefore, that we will hear what the “Preacher” will have to say to us.
4. There is another “Preacher,” also “the son of David,” who is “king in Jerusalem.” His name is Jesus, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3).
5. Have you heeded the words of that Preacher (cf. Matt. 7:21-23; Mark 16:15, 16)? **ED**

I. Introduction

A. Why am I here? What should I be doing?

1. These are questions that nearly everyone asks at some point in his or her life.
2. They are questions that the author of Ecclesiastes sought to address.

B. In our introductory lesson, we learned the following about the book of Ecclesiastes:

1. The author is identified (1:1) as the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem, meaning Solomon.
2. The theme is stated (1:2). All is vanity. Life from an earthly perspective ("under the sun") is futile and meaningless (1:14).
3. The question is raised (1:3), What profit is there for a man from all his labor under the sun? What benefit can one derive from all his efforts in this life?

C. In the first two chapters, Solomon demonstrates how he came to this conclusion:

1. From his observations regarding the cyclical nature of life and its apparent meaninglessness.
2. From his own experiences as he sought to find meaning through various avenues.

II. The futility observed in the cycles of life

A. Nothing seems to change (1:4-7).

1. The earth appears to abide forever, even as generations of men come and go.
2. The sun is constant with its rising and setting.
3. The winds continue their whirling cycle.
4. The water follows a cycle also, as rivers run into the sea, and then through evaporation and rain return to the rivers again.
5. Looking at nature, it seems as though nothing ever changes; it just goes in circles and remains the same.

B. Nothing seems to satisfy (1:8).

1. Despite all his labors, man is never truly satisfied.
2. Whatever satisfaction one may think he has is fleeting.
3. Given time, people soon desire something else.

C. Nothing is new under the sun (1:9-11).

1. What will be done is that which has been done.

2. If something is thought to be new, it is only because we have forgotten what occurred before.

- a. What about modern technological advances?
- b. What about the technology that created the pyramids, Stonehenge, etc.?
- c. Given time, future civilizations will forget what we are doing today and will only "re-discover" what has been learned again and again!

III. The futility of human wisdom

A. The preacher prefaces his search (1:12-15).

1. Solomon was king over Israel in Jerusalem. He had been given wisdom from God (1 Kings 3:9-12; 4:29-34).
2. He determined to use his wisdom to seek and search all that has been done "under heaven."

a. This was a task that he understood God had given to all men.

b. This was a task for which he knew he had been especially equipped.

3. He summarizes what he found, having seen all the works done "under the sun."

a. He concludes they are vanity and grasping for wind.

b. He feels there is little one can do to make significant changes.

B. The Preacher applied his God-given wisdom (1:16, 17a).

1. He acknowledged the greatness and wisdom he had attained.

a. In answer to his prayer, Solomon attained great wisdom (1 Kings 3:9-12; cf. James 1:5).

b. "God-given wisdom" is to be contrasted with "human wisdom."

2. He therefore sought to apply it to wisdom, madness, and folly.

a. The "wisdom" here most likely is "human wisdom" (philosophy).

b. For this is wisdom that he set his heart to know (learn).

C. The Preacher concludes that human wisdom is futile (1:17b-18):

1. He perceives that such wisdom is like grasping for wind; it does not provide the answer to his problem.

2. He also sees that such wisdom and knowl-

edge provide much grief and sorrow.

a. As we might say today, it provides "information overload."

b. People become burdened as they learn about many things in life, things they have no control over, yet things they often worry about.

IV. Conclusion

A. In the beginning of his search for meaning, the wise Preacher naturally began with wisdom.

1. Thus he set his heart to "know wisdom."

2. But he found such wisdom to be "grasping for the wind."

B. This does not mean we are to take his words as an indictment against all wisdom.

1. There is a "God-given wisdom" for which one should seek (Prov. 2:1-9; James 1:5).

2. This kind of wisdom can bless one's life (Prov. 3:13-18).

C. But it is an indictment against "human wisdom."

1. Human wisdom seeks to understand life but leaves God out of the picture.

2. Human wisdom that can only leave one "grasping for the wind."

In our next study, we shall continue with the Preacher's search for meaning and notice his observations regarding pleasure, madness, and folly.

In the meantime, remember what Paul wrote when contrasting human wisdom with God's wisdom: "But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God; and righteousness and sanctification and redemption; that, as it is written, 'He who glories, let him glory in the LORD'" (1 Cor. 1:30, 31).

Have you accepted and obeyed the true wisdom from God, Jesus Christ, who gives meaning and purpose for life? **EP**

**I. Introduction**

A. Our previous lesson noted how the Preacher began his search for meaning in life.

1. Observing the futility seen in the cycles of nature and life (Eccl. 1:4-11).
2. Beginning with human wisdom (1:12-18). Solomon had already been blessed with great wisdom from God, and he used it to search out the value of human wisdom.

B. What did he conclude concerning such wisdom?

1. Trying to find the answer in human wisdom was “grasping for the wind” (1:17).
2. Such wisdom was the source of much grief and sorrow (1:18).

C. So he began to look elsewhere, and in the second chapter we read:

1. Of his efforts to explore the value of mirth, pleasure, wine, and folly.
2. Of his search to find meaning in the acquisition of wealth and in great accomplishments.

Did he find the answer there? If not, what conclusions did he reach? In this lesson, we shall allow the Preacher to tell us for himself.

II. The Preacher tested life

A. He summarizes what he found.

1. Mirth and pleasure are vanity (2:1).
2. Laughter is madness; mirth accomplishes little, if anything (2:2).

B. He describes what he did.

1. He experimented with wine and folly (2:3). He used the wisdom he had, for he was seeking what was good for people to do “under heaven all the days of their lives.”
2. He made many things (2:4-6) such as houses, vineyards, gardens, orchards, and water pools (1 Kings 7:1-12; 9:15-19).
3. He acquired whatever he desired (2:5-8) such as servants, livestock, silver, gold, treasures, singers, and “the delights of the sons of men” (concubines? musical instruments?) (1 Kings 9:28; 10:10, 14, 21, 27; 11:1-3).
4. He became great and seemed happy (2:9, 10). He was greater than any before him, maintaining his wisdom and having all his eyes and heart desired, finding enjoyment in his labor.

C. His conclusion from what he did.

1. He reflected, looking back at what he did (2:11a).
2. He concluded that “all was vanity, and grasping for the wind” (2:11b). “There was no profit under the sun” (2:11c).

The conclusion drawn by the Preacher may seem strange, when he admitted that he found joy in his labor (2:10). But when we consider what he says next, we begin to understand his feelings after his great experiment.

III. The Preacher hated life

A. His conclusion after reflecting upon wisdom, madness, and folly:

1. Realizing his unique opportunity (who can do more than what he has done?), he considered the relative merits of wisdom, madness, and folly (2:12).
2. He saw that wisdom was better than folly (2:13-14a), just as light is better than darkness. At least the wise man can see where he is going.
3. But ultimately the advantage of human wisdom is vanity (2:14b-16), for both the wise man and the fool die, and after death, there is no more remembrance of the wise than of the fool.
4. Thus the Preacher hated life, because of his conclusion about all the work done “under the sun.” It was vanity and grasping for the wind (2:17).

B. Reflecting upon his wealth:

1. He came to hate his labor (2:18, 19).
2. He came to despair of all his labor “under the sun” (2:20-23). For a man with wisdom, knowledge, and skill must leave his heritage to one who has not labored for it. He did not feel this was right. (“This also is a vanity and a great evil.”)
 - a. In the end, what does he have for all his efforts? He had only sorrowful days, restless nights, grievous work, and vanity. Looking at life “under the sun,” trying to find meaning in this life for all of one’s labors, the Preacher came to hate and despair of all his great efforts. But, as he said, “*my wisdom remained with me*” (2:9). With that wisdom he shares for the first time what one should do in life. We can see his ideas develop further.

IV. The Preacher accepted life

A. Man should seek to enjoy the good in his labor.

1. He says there is nothing better; this is a conclusion he will draw six times (2:24a; cf. 3:12-13; 3:22; 5:18-19; 8:15; 9:7-9).
2. Note carefully: The Preacher is *not* promoting the fatalist view of “eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.” He is saying to enjoy what you do and what God has given you (1 Tim. 6:17).

B. The ability to enjoy one’s labor is a gift from God.

1. He saw that the ability to enjoy one’s labor is a gift from God (2:24b).
2. No one can truly enjoy life without God (2:25). Only God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy (2:26a). For the sinner, God gives the work of gathering and collecting (2:26b). The sinner gathers to give to the one who is good before God (cf. Prov. 28:8). For the sinner, his work therefore becomes (to him) vanity and grasping for the wind! (6:1-2). Yes, some are very successful in accumulating wealth, but for what end?

V. Conclusion

A. For the first time, the Preacher has introduced God into the picture.

B. Until now, he has looked at life “under the sun” without God.

1. He has sought for meaning through wisdom, folly, madness, pleasure, and wealth.
2. Even when one is successful, the realities of life and death can cause one to hate life. He could only conclude that “under the sun,” all is vanity and grasping for wind.

C. But now, with God giving wisdom and knowledge and joy to man, one can enjoy the good in his labor. A purpose and meaning for life is now possible. **ED**



I. Introduction

A. In Ecclesiastes, the question is asked: “What profit has a man from all his labor in which he toils under the sun?” (1:3). The key phrase is “under the sun.”

1. What profit is there in life when viewed from an earthly perspective?
2. What value is there in our labor when we fail to consider God’s will in our lives? We have seen the answer given by the Preacher: “All is vanity” (1:2, 14).

B. How did he reach this conclusion? It was based upon personal experience (1:1-2:26) and personal observation (3:1-6:12).

C. Our previous lessons examined the experiences of the Preacher. Now we begin to note his observations, in which he also shares his wisdom for living “under the sun.” His conclusion that life “under the sun” was vanity was partly reached by observing.

II. The inexplicable purpose of God

A. All things serve God’s divine purpose.

1. “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven” (3:1-8).
2. “He has made everything beautiful in its time” (3:11a).
3. “Whatever God does, it shall be forever” (3:14, 15).

B. Man is unable to discover God’s purpose.

1. God has put it in man to search out this purpose (3:9-11a).
2. But “no one can find out the work that God has done” (3:11b).

C. Why does God act this way?

1. “God does it, that men should fear before Him” (3:14c).
2. He wants man to reverence God and therefore seek to please Him (Acts 17:26, 27). God has made man an inquisitive creature. He has also made life such that we are always seeking something better or looking for a purpose. Hopefully, we will keep seeking until we find Him!

D. The Preacher’s conclusion.

1. There is nothing better than to “rejoice and

do good” (3:12) and “eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor” (3:13a).

2. Yet the ability to do so is “the gift of God” (3:13b). Therefore any effort to live without God can only be vanity, for we will find His purposes inexplicable.

III. The injustice and oppression of men

A. What the Preacher saw.

1. Wickedness in the place of justice (3:16)
2. Power on the side of the oppressor, with no comfort for the oppressed (4:1)
3. This prompted him to think the dead were better than the living; even better were those who had never lived (4:2, 3).

B. What the Preacher reasoned in his heart

1. God will judge the righteous and the wicked (3:17a).
2. God can use injustice and wickedness in carrying out His purpose (3:17b) (e.g., just as He used Assyria and Babylon to discipline Israel).
3. God allows injustice to test the sons of men (3:18-21).

C. What the Preacher concluded.

1. Once again, he understands the value of rejoicing in one’s own works (3:22a).
2. This is what God allots him, not what may happen on earth after he is gone (3:22b).

In the remaining part of this section (3:1-4:16), we find the Preacher making various comments, which may be summarized as follows:

IV. The vanity of skillful and selfish work

A. It can breed envy in others.

1. He saw how skillful work can cause one to be envied by one’s neighbor (4:4).
2. While it is foolish to fold one’s hands and do nothing, acquiring too much is not worth the effort, for it really does not satisfy (4:5, 6).
3. What is best is to have little with quietness and contentment (Prov. 15:16, 17).

B. If one is all alone:

1. The Preacher saw one with no companion, neither son nor brother (Eccl. 4:7, 8).
 - a. He was one who is never satisfied, indeed, he can’t be (5:10).

b. He doesn’t think for whom he is laboring (2:18, 19).

2. It is much better to have friends (4:9-12) who can help each other in their labor; who can help each other when they fall, who can help each other withstand forces of opposition.

C. Popularity is so fleeting.

1. It is better to be a poor and wise youth than an old foolish king (4:13).
2. Despite rising from poverty and prison to become king, he will find that the people will eventually prefer another much younger than him (4:14-16).

V. Conclusion

A. The Preacher’s observations about the vanity of life, along with wisdom for living “under the sun,” continue in succeeding chapters.

B. But we have seen in this study:

1. Why he reached his conclusions about the vanity of life
2. The inexplicable purposes of God
3. The injustice and oppression of men and the vanity of skillful and selfish toil
- d. What wisdom he offers for living “under the sun”

C. As Christians today, we may be perplexed at times concerning the workings of God.

1. But we have the assurance that all things work for good for them who love God and are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28).
2. We have the family of God to help us in our labor and in time of need (1 Thess. 5:11).

There is no greater friend than the One who is the ultimate end of all God’s purposes in this world: Jesus Christ! (cf. Eph. 1:9, 10). Through Him we can “obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb. 4:15-16).

Are you a friend of Jesus? Remember then what He said: “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (John 15:14).

Let Jesus be your friend by obeying His will (Matt. 28:19, 20). ^{ED}

General Conference Ministerial Association



I. Introduction

A. The Preacher has been explaining why he reached his conclusion that life “under the sun” is vanity. It was based upon his personal experience (1:1–2:26) and upon his personal observations (3:1–6:12).

B. In chapters 3 and 4, we saw where he discussed: the inexplicable purpose of God, the injustice and oppression of men and the vanity of skillful and selfish work.

C. Even so, he offered wisdom for living “under the sun.” It is best to rejoice, do good, and enjoy the good of one’s labor, realizing that such is a gift of God to those who please Him (3:12, 13).

In chapters 5 and 6, he continues to share his wisdom for living “under the sun.”

II. Counsel regarding worship

A. Why proper worship is important:

1. Remember, the ability to enjoy the good of one’s labor is a gift from God (2:24-26; 3:12-14; 6:19).

2. It is imperative that we please Him in our worship. We need to understand that there is “vain worship” (cf. Matt. 15:7-9). Therefore not all worship is acceptable to God.

B. How to worship God:

1. Walk prudently (5:1a). When people worship, they should think about what they will do, and they should be careful about what they do.

2. Draw near to hear (5:1b). We should be learning what God has revealed. Our attitude should be like that of young Samuel: “Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears” (1 Sam. 3:9, 10) and also the Bereans: “They received the word with all readiness” (Acts 17:11).

3. Do not offer the sacrifice of fools (5:1c). Again, not all worship is acceptable. There is that kind of worship that is an abomination to God (Prov. 28:9). Worship that the Lord will not accept (Luke 6:46).

4. Don’t be rash with your promises (5:2, 3). Be careful what you say. Remember Jephthah’s foolish vow (Judges 11:30-35) and Herod’s foolish promise (Mark 6:23-26). Give thought

to what you say in prayer and song. Do you consider the vows of commitment that are often made? Do you intend to keep them?

5. Keep the vows you make (5:4-7). God has no pleasure in fools such as those who make vows and do not fulfill them. Therefore it is better not to vow than to vow and not pay.

The key thought in proper worship is to “fear God,” that is, to approach Him with the deepest respect and reverence. Worship Him as He directs, not as you might wish. “Swift to hear, slow to speak” (James 1:19).

III. Comfort regarding oppression

A. Oppression does occur.

1. Observed in 3:16 and again in 4:1.

B. Yet the Preacher says, “Do not marvel.”

1. Even when there is oppression of the poor and perversion of justice (5:8a).

2. For even high officials answer to someone else (5:8b; Rom. 13:1). Often in this life, they are brought to justice. But even if not, there is the Day of Judgment!

3. The profit taken in oppression usually comes back to all (5:9). Of course, oppression of the poor and perversion of justice is often motivated by the desire to be rich.

IV. Caution regarding riches

A. Riches are vanity.

1. They are unable to truly satisfy (5:10-12). Lovers of silver and abundance will never be satisfied. As one’s gains increase, so the desire for more will increase.

2. Those obsessed with riches are hurt by them (5:13-17). Riches can hurt those who possess them. While a laboring man enjoys sweet sleep, the abundance of the rich provides too much turmoil for restful sleep! Through misfortune or eventually through death, one loses his riches. What value then are riches, if in the acquisition of them one must endure much sorrow, sickness, and anger (Prov. 15:16-17; 17:1)?

B. The Preacher’s observations on riches:

1. It is good to enjoy the good of one’s labor (5:18).

2. It is God who gives one the power to truly enjoy them (5:19, 20).

3. A sad situation is one in which God allows a person to acquire riches but not enjoy them (6:1, 2).

4. It matters little if one lives long and has 100 children. Unless one is able to be satisfied (a gift which God gives), he is worse off than a stillborn child (6:3-5), even if he lives to be 2,000 years old (6:6).

5. Riches in and of themselves cannot satisfy the soul (6:7-9). The body might be filled, but the soul can remain empty. It is better to be content with what you see than to wander after what you desire.

6. Riches really can’t change things (6:10, 11). He is still “man” and cannot contend with God. They are not the things that truly make man better; they only increase vanity.

7. The answers to life’s questions can’t be found in striving for riches (6:12).

V. Conclusion

A. The Preacher asks questions such as: “For who knows what is good for man in life, all the days of his vain life which he passes like a shadow?” (6:12a), and “Who can tell a man what will happen after him under the sun?” (6:12b).

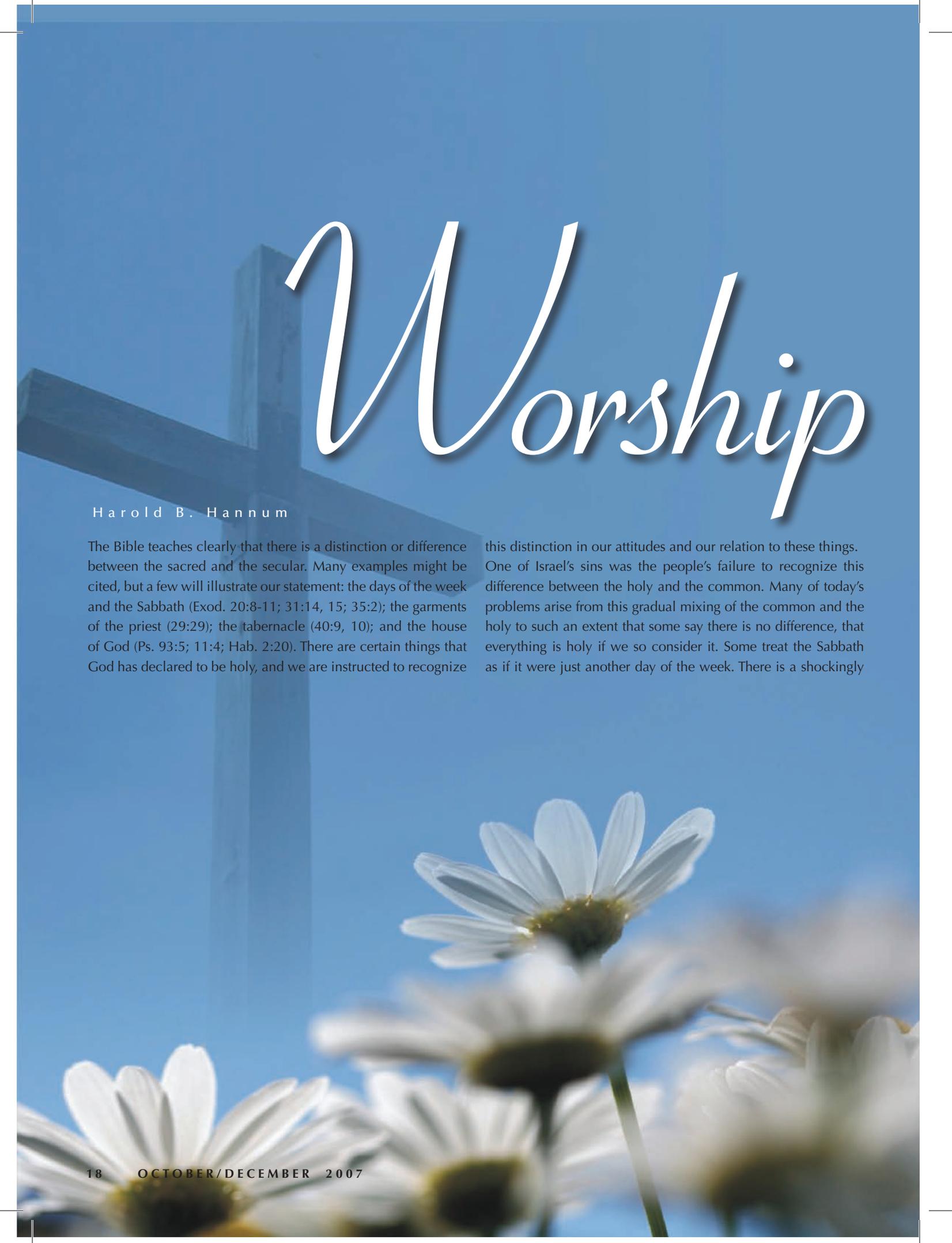
1. The Preacher illustrates the vanity of looking to riches for answers.

B. Indeed, the answers are to be found by turning to God, not riches; which is why one needs to be careful when worshiping God! We should draw near to hear what God has revealed through His Word!

It is particularly through “The Word” (Jesus, John 1:1) that we learn the ultimate answers to the questions that challenged the Preacher. For Jesus has “abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim. 1:10).

Ecclesiastes tells us that the answers to life are not found in the things of this life. Are we willing therefore to heed to Him who is the Creator of life and is the light of men (John 1:2-4)? ^{ED}

General Conference Ministerial Association



Worship

Harold B. Hannum

The Bible teaches clearly that there is a distinction or difference between the sacred and the secular. Many examples might be cited, but a few will illustrate our statement: the days of the week and the Sabbath (Exod. 20:8-11; 31:14, 15; 35:2); the garments of the priest (29:29); the tabernacle (40:9, 10); and the house of God (Ps. 93:5; 11:4; Hab. 2:20). There are certain things that God has declared to be holy, and we are instructed to recognize

this distinction in our attitudes and our relation to these things. One of Israel's sins was the people's failure to recognize this difference between the holy and the common. Many of today's problems arise from this gradual mixing of the common and the holy to such an extent that some say there is no difference, that everything is holy if we so consider it. Some treat the Sabbath as if it were just another day of the week. There is a shockingly

SACRED and SECULAR

common treatment today of many things that traditionally were considered sacred and holy: marriage, the house of worship, services of religion, tithing, and many other once-revered things have lost their significance for many. The dress and deportment of some who come to worship in the house of God indicates that they think lightly of the real meaning of holiness, reverence, and the sacred nature of God and our approach to God.

This secularization can be heard in some of the styles of music that have crept into the church. We do not maintain that music or the elements of music are intrinsically secular or sacred or that some instruments are secular and some holy. The Bible does not make any such claim. And there are many cultures in the world where altogether different music has been developed from that which we know in the European or Western cultures. This is not the point at issue. No matter what the culture or style, there should be a distinction between that which is considered sacred or religious and that which is common or secular. This is recognized in many cultures throughout the world.

In the music of the European tradition, there have developed certain techniques that characterize serious or “classical” music as distinguished from popular styles. The music of Beethoven, Brahms, Mendelssohn, Berlioz, Liszt, Mozart, Haydn, and composers in this tradition is played by symphony orchestras and musicians in a style that is clearly recognized by competent individuals as belonging to this music. The music of this group of composers is intended to be

performed within definite style characteristics. The same music performed by a jazz combo or a rock combo would be recognized by listeners as not in the tradition that is appropriate to this kind of music.

Some believe that any music that has religious words should be considered religious music.

There is another class of styles that is used by the entertainment industry. It goes by various names such as jazz, popular music, rock ‘n’ roll, boogie-woogie, ragtime, blues, and other titles. These various styles have one thing in common—they are popular expressions of different segments of the population, and many of them belong in the dance hall or in theatrical entertainment rather than in serious or “classical” music. One thing is true of these styles—they have all been considered secular in nature and therefore have not until recently been used for religious music in sacred services. There is a serious question among many whether or not these styles should be accepted for use as sacred music. These are the kinds of music to which we refer as secular styles. We will not enter into the question of whether any of this music is acceptable for our secular enjoyment. We will confine our discussion to the use of this music in religious services and in the cause of evangelism.

Some believe that any music that has religious words should be considered religious music. For individuals whose lifestyle has been with this type of music, and whose environment has been chiefly the music of jazz, rock n’ roll, and this type of music, it may be that this music with religious words might have a religious appeal. Some evangelistic groups seek to reach groups with the popular music of the day. But to those whose background has been the music of Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Bach, and Brahms, and this style of music, it seems difficult for them to have any religious associations with music that is used chiefly for theater, dance, night clubs, and secular entertainment, often of a questionable kind. An individual who has heard the symphonies of Beethoven, the piano music of Chopin and Schumann, the songs of Schubert, and the music of Brahms, Vaughan Williams, and others, will not be easily persuaded that the theatrical and popular idiom is appropriate for religious use.

This is not necessarily due to a reactionary conservatism or an unwillingness to accept new musical language. Some of the greatest religious music was written by composers such as Palestrina, Handel, Bach, Des Prez, and Byrd, to name a few. Simply because it is new does not make new or contemporary music surpass the great religious music of the past. On the other hand, we need excellent music for today in contemporary styles. But it is not necessary for new religious music to borrow contemporary secular styles. A clear distinction must be maintained.

One need not quibble over the fact that some secular music of the past has been arranged and adapted as religious music today. This music has lost its secular associations and now has the characteristics of religious music. One should be more concerned over the present associations of any music contemplated for religious use.

To be specific, let us point out some of the secular styles that we believe should not be used in our sacred music.

Technical devices that are borrowed from the theater. The kind of organ known as the theater organ produces tonal effects and qualities that do not belong to the church. The excessive tremolo, glissando or gliding effects, peculiar tone qualities, too-prominent rhythmic effects—these are natural effects on the theater organ.

Sentimentalism. Sentimentality is an emphasis on emotion for the sake of emotion. It is overdoing emotion. It is insincere expression. It is adding sweetness and luscious effects where they become overly emphasized. Certain types of melody and harmony will have this effect. The crooning of the popular singer is a good example.

The untrained vocal tone. This is borrowed from the popular way of singing folk songs. It shows a lack of good voice training. Sometimes it becomes unpleasantly raucous. Instead of depending on beautiful vocal tone, the singer depends on facial expressions, sometimes quite distorted.

Embellishments. Cheap, trivial types of embellishments and elaboration in piano and organ playing display a lack of good musical taste. Highly decorated piano playing with runs, scales, arpeggios, and other hackneyed devices do not appeal to good musical taste. There is a time and a place for proper embellishments, but it takes one with good artistic taste to know when and how much to use these devices.

Lack of simplicity, directness, and unadorned beauty of music. Great music is not adorned with needless effects and musical devices to make a showy impression. Excessive elaboration often hides a poverty of real musical value.

Characteristics that good religious music of today will have are:

1. Beauty of tone, both vocal and instrumental. Artists work for years to obtain a beautiful piano tone or a beautiful quality in the singing voice. The beauty of the violin tone of Heifetz was not obtained in a day, but was the result of years of careful and intelligent practice. We should expect no less in the beauty of tone for religious music.
2. The melodies should have originality, strength, and beauty, instead of sentimental, trite, and obvious emotionalism. A study of the melodies of Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, and others will show what beautiful melodies are like. Contemporary religious music should also have melodies of beauty and emotion.
3. Rhythm that is strong and intrinsic to the music, rather than a dominating and hypnotic force that is imposed on the music to make it appeal to the untrained ear. The rhythm should arise from the nature of the melody and the harmony. It should not be added simply for strong physical appeal. Rhythm is most elemental in physical appeal, and it is easily debased, making an appeal to the basest passions. The rhythm of sacred music will be refined in character.
4. Skillful technical performance should characterize all religious music. No slipshod, careless performance without adequate preparation should be allowed. Sacred music needs to be performed as carefully and beautifully as secular music. It should not depend upon religious emotion to

make it acceptable. Just because it pertains to sacred subjects does not in itself excuse it from meeting exacting technical standards.

The standards set forth in the philosophy of music presented at the 1972 Annual Council are an excellent guide and should be taken seriously by our churches.

We recognize the attack that Satan has made on the Sabbath and the significance of the Sabbath as a recognition of the true God. The attack of Satan in these last days is even more insidious and powerful in the realm of the emotions. He is using such words as love and peace to cover up a breaking down of principles that are as eternal as God Himself. By weakening the distinction between the sacred and the common in the field of music, which deals strongly with our emotional nature, Satan can eventually weaken our respect for other biblical truths. We should be aware of this and seek to make our musical offering as pure and above reproach as we are capable of doing.

It is not necessary to make our music either difficult or unattractive to attain this goal. But it may mean that we will have to give up some of our cherished physical delights in certain types of music in order to offer a more perfect offering of sacred music. Just as one must sometimes learn to like foods that at first are not so attractive to the taste, so in music one may have to learn to like the simple, the beautiful music that is not tainted with the world and the theater, but which with prove in the end to be more beautiful than anything the world has to offer. Let us not compromise with the world in our sacred music. **ED**

Harold B. Hannum, former professor of music at La Sierra University.

Where have ^{all} the Adventists gone?



Karen Pires

The evangelistic meetings had gone well. Usually there were more visitors than members attending. In the end, there were six wonderful baptisms and one happy profession of faith!

The pastor arranged follow-up meetings to meet three times each week. At the first meeting one member, one new member, and one non-member showed up to meet the pastor. At the next meeting, one member, one new member, and one non-member attended. After two or three meetings like this, the non-member asked, "Where have all the Adventists gone? On Sabbath I didn't see them in Sabbath School. Do they have another class in another room that they are attending?"

How would your church answer that question? Do you have more members or more non-members each week? Why? What can you do about it?

Pray

In preparing for evangelism, there are some basic things that a church can do to make the meetings more beneficial. First and most importantly, pray. Pray alone, pray in groups, pray at church, pray when you are alone in the car, pray when you are walking, and pray when you are working. The Bible says to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). Talk with Him as you would to your closest friend.

When you are alone, pray for your family, church members, friends, neighbors, and community leaders by name. Pray for specifics for each of them. Pray for your pastoral family that they will have the strength and firmness of character to be strong leaders for God.

Prayer walking

I enjoy walking in nature and praying. I feel closer to God without the earthly distractions that may be in the house. Early in the

morning, there is peace in being outside and hearing the birds. It is wonderful to look heavenward and think of the greatness of my Savior.

One prayer walk that I was involved with was done inside the church. As a group, we walk to different areas of the sanctuary, praying for the activities done there and the people that did them. The group leader would pray first and then others would pray before moving to the next area. Sabbath School areas need prayer for the students and teachers in each class. The church office is another place that needs prayer.

Your church may decide that this is a way to grow together. You can designate one or more Sabbath afternoons each month for a neighborhood prayer walk around your church neighborhood. As you walk, pray for the people in each house, the needs you feel they might have, and ask that they might grow spiritually and become closer to God.

Sometimes sentence prayers give everyone in the group a chance to pray. This can be meaningful to those who are shy and who feel uncomfortable praying a complete prayer in public.

Prayer meeting

Prayer meetings are wonderful times to begin evangelistic meetings. Invite church members and non-members. Make these meetings joyful, learning times for rejoicing in God and sharing His love with the world. Prayer meetings provide opportunities to pray together, study the Bible in depth, and learn how to put God's Word to work in our lives.

Start a children's prayer meeting. With the right leadership, you may be able to get the children and youth to lead out. One child could be the song leader, another have read a scripture verse. Someone could be the prayer leader and choose who



will be the leader for each of the prayer circles each month. One child could be responsible for bringing a prayer story to share. Children like and need to be involved. This is their place to learn. Make it exciting and enjoyable.

Sabbath School

Make Sabbath School an exciting time that members and non-members would enjoy attending. Use interesting, up-to-date materials. Vary the program. Try not to just get up and read something. Illustrate it. Tell it. Be excited about it! This will take some planning and thought, but it will be well worth the time.

The Children's Sabbath School should be age-appropriate. Use interesting, hands on, up-to-date materials. Make it lively! Choose a theme for the quarter and decorate your room in that theme. Have contests, continued stories, Bible drills, and rewards for learning memory verses or bringing friends. Let the children take turns reading Bible verses. They may be slow at first, but they are reading their Bibles and becoming future leaders in the church. And pray for each of them!

Outreach ministries

Plan activities that will include everyone: the lonely, depressed, poor, rich, new, old, popular, and unpopular. Organize your church for outreach ministries. Each ministry needs a leader. While not everyone will belong to the same ministry, each should have the opportunity to join as many as possible.

Singing bands

A young person may be able to organize a singing band for a local nursing home or hospital. He or she can learn to lead a group and plan the program: song service, Bible reading, special music, story, and

prayer. Then have the participants shake hands with the patients.

Another young person could organize members and youth to visit shut-ins, taking them the church bulletin and singing and praying with them. Keep these groups small.

Bible studies

Bible studies can be given by all ages. By the times I was six years old, I knew how to operate a projector and would take it and some Bible film strips to give Bible studies to our neighbors. Then I would give them a Bible study sheet to fill out for the next week. Today most children by age four could take a VHS tape or DVD to the neighbors, have prayer and put the tape or DVD into the player and watch it with them. Then they could give the neighbors a Bible study sheet to fill out. Most pastors would be glad to grade the sheets for a young person. A person of grade school or academy age and older can take lessons to a person's house and fill them out with the person.

Note writing

Call and write notes to members, non-members, and visitors. This can be done by anyone, but it may appeal to an older person who cannot get out or a young person who is still at home. The notes need to be encouraging in nature and may include a Bible verse. Birthday and anniversary notes also show that a person is cared for.

Community surveys

One way to get community interest is with surveys. The purpose is to get acquainted with people and possibly get them to take Bible studies. Some questions you might put on your survey:

Are you a Christian?

Does the Bible really mean what it says?

How many of the Ten Commandments are important?

What happens when you die?

If interest is shown, you can offer them some Bible lessons, invite them to a cooking school, or whatever outreach your church has coming planned in the near future.

Stop-smoking clinics

Many people today want to quit smoking but don't feel they have the courage or ability to do so alone. A well-led class can be a blessing to many people. Advertise it in newspapers, hospitals, and doctor's offices. Do follow-up on these people for several months. Call them, invite them to your home, and become their friend.

Cooking classes

Most women would welcome a chance to learn something new about cooking. Provide nutritional information as well as new recipes. Teach them how to cook balanced meals that look attractive. Provide an opportunity for them to make some of the dishes themselves and also to taste new dishes. Tie in some of the health benefits related to healthful living.

Food baskets

Many church youth collect cans of food and then pass them out as food baskets during Thanksgiving or Christmas. But why not make it happen year 'round? Put a nicely decorated basket in the foyer of the church and ask members to bring food each week to put in the basket. As soon as you get enough, find a family that can use it. If you need names of needy



families, contact the human services or police departments in your town.

Visibility

Make your church visible. Even if it is on an unused country road, people will still drive by it. Make sure that you have neat signs directing people to the church. These should include the times of your services.

Check your local paper, telephone book and hotels to see if they have an area for church advertising/information. I have been in some areas where I knew there was an SDA church, but it wasn't listed in the directory at the hotel where we were staying.

Space has been made available on the Web for each church to have its own Web site. Even if you don't know someone knowledgeable about the Web, check into it through your local conference or through AdventSource.

When you have an upcoming program of interest, try hand-delivering announcements to the local community. Many times a hand-delivered notice will be read sooner than a mailed one. Ask for permission to display notices in local store windows. Check out advertising on TV and radio.

Make sure your church is clean on the inside and outside. First impressions are very important! Paint, replace, or repair whatever needs attention. Spruce up the lawns and shrubbery. Show that you are proud of your church!

Work together

These plans will work best as the church learns to work together. Don't gossip or cast doubts on someone else's plans.

If your church has actively been involved in several of these ideas and made them a part of the church structure, you will be much more in tune with evangelistic

meetings being held in your area. You will already have a community that knows who you are and people who see you as friends. You will have someone to invite to the meetings.

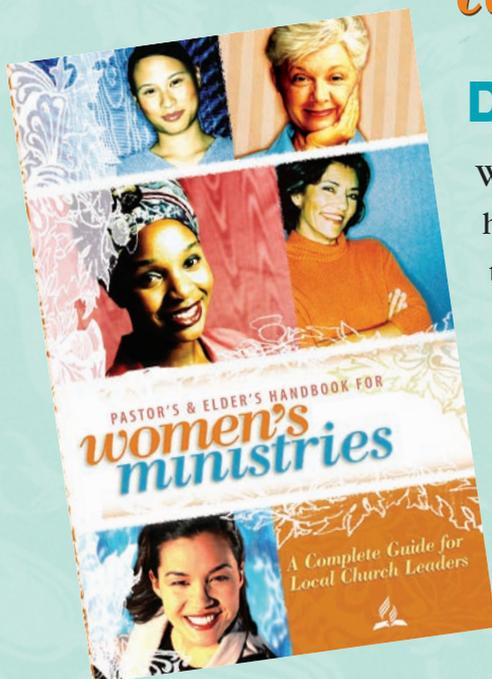
Plans

I would like to have been able to answer the non-member by saying that the Adventists were out in the community bringing friends in to Sabbath School and church. It would have been wonderful to have all the Adventists joining in the meetings and helping the new members and visitors feel comfortable and included in the family of God.

God has given us much to do. Let's let others see our love for Him by our actions. **ED**

Karen Pires and her husband are musicians and Bible workers who travel with evangelist John Earnhardt, holding meetings in the Southern Union. This article was inspired by a question Karen received during the last meetings.

*Nine out of every 10 women in the United States consider themselves Christians.**



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SUPPORTING THE

DOUG ROBERTSON

One of the most important periods of Christian development is the time spent by a new convert in preparation for baptism. Baptism is the symbol of entrance into the family of God's church. "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Rom. 6:4).

"Baptism is a most solemn renunciation of the world. Those who are baptized in the threefold name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit at the very entrance of their Christian life declare publicly that they have forsaken the service of Satan and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 91).

Right at the beginning of their Christian experience, those preparing for entrance into the church need careful attention and support. A person who has been well instructed in the baptismal class will have been given a good start toward living a happy and victorious Christian life.

Preparing candidates for baptism

Time of instruction. Time spent in preparation for baptism ought to be a time of instruction. Jesus urged his disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19, 20). Preparation for baptism is a time when the candidate is taught the truths of Scripture. The great themes of the Bible need to be clearly presented. Each should be taught in a simple manner so that the person finding his or her way to Christ can grasp their importance and accept them by faith (Acts 8:30-38).

1. The Fall and the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan
2. God's plan of salvation
3. The Incarnation
4. The sinless, serving life of Jesus
5. His all-forgiving death on Calvary
6. His resurrection and atoning ministry in heaven
7. The distinctive Bible doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Because of heavy pastoral responsibilities, the pastor is often prevented from studying the Bible with every new believer. Elders and other church leaders who have teaching abilities may assist the pastor in this work by meeting with these people and bringing them to an understanding of Bible truth and of Christ's demands on their lives.

Time of spiritual development. Early in their spiritual experience, new converts should be led through the steps of becoming children of God (Acts 2:37-41). The baptismal class will help new converts to understand and experience:

1. Repentance, confession, and forgiveness
2. How to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of their lives
3. How to overcome temptation
4. How to develop a strong devotional life
5. How to strengthen their faith in God to develop a strong, mature Christian lifestyle

Baptismal-class teachers often concentrate on doctrinal topics, excluding many essential truths. At the time of their baptism, most candidates have a good understanding of the distinctive doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Unfortunately, many people are baptized without a clear understanding of God's plan of salvation and how to live as Christians in non-

Help the new converts to discover what gifts the Holy Spirit has given them, and show them how to employ these talents in helping to build up the church and its witness.

Time of social change. When people make the decision to be baptized and to join the church, they are often subject to demanding social changes. Their decision is often misunderstood by relatives and friends who may show opposition to their being baptized. Sometimes their decision to follow Jesus will cause them to be rejected by their own family members and friends. To be shut out and excluded from their families or to be rejected by friends will place these new Christians under quite a bit of stress.

When people make the decision to become Seventh-day Adventist Christians, there will often be quite a dramatic change in their lifestyles. Some will be leaving membership in another church to join with your congregation. Others will have leave one form of employment and look for another job which does not require them to work on God's Sabbath. Some will have to turn their backs on certain social and cultural practices which are not compatible with a Christian lifestyle. As the person preparing them for baptism, you should be aware that changes such as these are not made easily.

BAPTISMAL CLASS

Christian surroundings. Therefore, many have little strength to resist temptations that come after their baptism. Those being prepared for baptism must be brought to Jesus and taught how to accept Him as the Lord of their lives. Jesus said, "When I am lifted up from the earth, [I] will draw all men to myself" (John 12:32). Hearts that have been melted by the love of Jesus will happily accept all other demands on their lives. Spiritual development grows from a relationship with Jesus.

Time of preparation. During the early days of the Christian experience, those preparing for baptism should be trained and prepared for the privileges and responsibilities of being a Christian in God's church. Topics to cover include:

1. Christian behavior
2. Church organization and procedures
3. Principles and practice of worship
4. Tithing
5. Sabbath-keeping
6. Christian stewardship
7. Sharing their faith

When people change their religious beliefs and their jobs and leave behind the support and security of friends and family, their lives come under considerable strain. Many are leaving much that has been familiar and reassuring to pursue a new lifestyle that holds many uncertainties. As you lead them toward accepting new beliefs and a new lifestyle and help them to make new acquaintances within the new church community, you will need to provide them with very special support to assist them through this process of change. Encourage your church members to be very accepting of these new people. Help them to feel that they belong and are welcome in your church. Encourage people in your congregation to make a special effort to befriend these new believers. Their social integration into your church family is vital to their long-term spiritual growth and security. (Luke 11:24-26.)

Methods of instruction

In most areas of the world, people are prepared for baptism through a series of Bible studies which are usually given in the homes or in a church baptismal class. Others are instructed through Bible correspondence courses, Bible classes, or through

individual study. Whichever method is used, the content of the lessons should include the major teachings and beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

However, it is important to remember that more is required for baptism than just a knowledge of church beliefs. During the course of instruction, there should be several occasions when you, as the instructor, have opportunity to get personally acquainted with each candidate. Study and pray with each candidate and assess his or her needs and spiritual condition. This individual study time will also give candidates opportunities to ask questions and share their joys or concerns with you. Make sure that the people you are instructing understand sufficiently their involvement in God's plan of salvation and the duties and responsibilities they will assume when they become members of His church.

"There is a need for more thorough preparation on the part of candidates for baptism. They are in need of more faithful instruction than has previously been given them. The principles of the Christian life should be made plain to those who have newly come to the truth. . . . It is the duty of the pastor to have special meetings with them. Read to them the teaching of the Bible in regard to conversion. Show what is the fruit of conversion, the evidence that they love God" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church*, Vol. 6, pp. 91, 95).

When are candidates ready?

To be ready for baptism, candidates must give evidence:

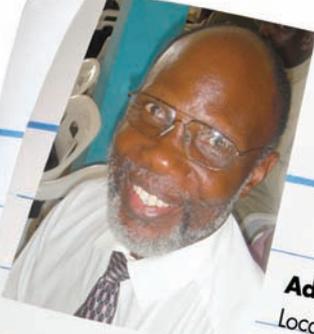
1. That Jesus is Lord of their lives (1 John 4:15; Rom. 10:9; Matt. 10:32).
2. That repentance and conversion have taken place (Acts 2:38; 3:19).
3. That they have an active belief and trust in Jesus (Mark 16:16).
4. That they have a daily, saving relationship with Jesus.

5. That they have completed a course of instruction in the teachings of Scripture and the distinctive biblical doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Matt. 28:20).
6. That they have been prepared for responsible membership in God's remnant church.
7. That they are involved in the worship and witness of the church.

Before baptism, there should have been visits by the elder or church pastor to confirm their readiness for baptism. And finally, they should have approval for baptism from the church board.

Baptism is an extremely important experience in the life of a new Christian. Careful preparation for baptism is vital to the future development of these new believers. Every lesson, every Bible study, and every visit the new Christian receives should be well presented so that the best possible opportunities are provided to strengthen them for their Christian walk. ^{ED}

Doug Robertson



Addison Moore
Local elder in Lambeau SDA church in Tobago. Born into an Adventist home. A man of faith and prayer who loved the Lord and the Spirit of Prophecy.

It is a great privilege to work or serve in the church as an elder. God has left us a great commission and it must be properly carried out. By my SDA upbringing and formal training and my own positive experience with the Lord I am well placed to contribute. Our people will work for the Lord but they need the organization and the opportunity to serve and I try to provide them with that. Serving as an elder increases my awareness of the need to live an exemplary life letting my life speak louder than my words. It is a great privilege to be a co-laborer together with God.



Emris Joseph Simon
She is local elder in the Signal Hill SDA church in Tobago.

I have been in the SDA church from birth over 50 years. Over the years I have worked in various offices in the church; as SS Superintendent, SS secretary, Adventist Youth Leader, Auditor Treasurer, Pathfinder leader, deaconess, women's ministry director. I believe in Christian education. I am married with two beautiful daughters. I am a trained teacher and have been working with children for thirty-four years, which I enjoy tremendously. I am a principal and an ordained elder.



Planning a

Good Church Election

The election of church officers at the close of the year is always a major undertaking. God's cause needs the most consecrated talent that can be found for leadership in the various churches. Sometimes in the process of electing the officers for the New Year, the charge is made that a clique is controlling the election. For several years, I have followed a special plan in the election of officers for our church, and church members have usually felt that the elections were fair and democratic.

In the last quarter of the year, members of the church board are called together to approve the plan. They are given a ballot for the election of the church nominating committee, which has on it the following information:

"Please, list your choice of two names to serve on the nominating Committee. It should be one man and one woman. I like the idea of having a well-balanced gender representation in the nominating committee.

1. _____
2. _____

"Also suggest to the newly-elected nominating committee the names of those who you feel would serve well in the following capacities (See also the *Church Manual*, page 155, for more function suggestions):

- ★ Church Elder
- ★ Deacons
- ★ Deaconess
- ★ Clerk
- ★ Treasurer
- ★ Sabbath School Superintendent
- ★ Children's Department
- ★ Youth Society Leader
- ★ Community Services Director
- ★ Women's Ministries Director

"Concerning the nominating committee election, it is understood that should two from the same family qualify for this important committee (such as husband and wife), only the one receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected."

These ballots are passed to the church members on Sabbath morning, and each member writes down the names of the persons of his or her choice. The secret

ballot provides complete freedom to vote, and this plan gives every member of the church an equal voice in the voting. Later the ballots are tabulated, and the seven members receiving the highest number of votes are elected to serve on the nominating committee. The size of the committee has been predetermined, of course.

The ballot lists the various church offices, and after tabulating this poll, the nominating committee has some guiding suggestions as to the church's choice for these various offices. The committee, of course, is not obligated to follow the poll rigidly, since its members have been elected by the church to do their work. Another advantage in this plan is that individuals nominated to an office are more likely to serve because they realize that they were selected by the church.

This plan is not perfect, but it has worked well for me since I began using it about seven years ago. I commend it to you for consideration.

General Conference Ministerial Association



APPRECIATING THE PASTOR:

Pastors wear multiple hats: shepherd, teacher, speaker, counselor, administrator, and entrepreneur. On a good day, pastoral ministry can be exciting and invigorating; on a bad day, ministers may wonder why they ever entered ministry.

The apostle Paul understood the hardships ministers face. In his letters to churches, he often included an encouraging word to his co-laborers in the field. In Philemon 1:7, he wrote, “Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.” Paul knew that ministry is tough and needs appreciation.

Hope Reformed Church of Brantford, Ontario, Canada, posted the following humorous insight on their Web page: “When a church seeks a pastor, they want the strength of an eagle, the grace of a swan, the gentleness of a dove, the friendliness of a sparrow, and the night hours of an owl. And when they catch that bird, they expect the pastor to live on the food of a canary.”¹

Scripture tells us that church leaders are to be people of high integrity, but people frequently hold pastors to a higher set of standards than they set for themselves. At times this pressure-cooker existence can become unbearable. One Sabbath morning, a wife prepared for church. It was nearly time for the service when she noticed her husband wasn’t ready. Perplexed, she asked, “Why aren’t you getting dressed for church?”

He said, “Because I don’t want to go.”

“Do you have any reason?”

“Yes, I have three good reasons. First, the congregation is cold. Second, no one likes me. And third, I just don’t want to go.”

The wife replied, “Well, honey, I have three reasons why you should go. First, the congregation is warm. Second, there are a few people there who like you. And third, you’re the pastor! Get dressed!”²

People have the innate desire to be noticed and valued. Pastors are no exception. Encouragement and appreciation can re-energize us to press on when we are weary and discouraged.

Churches are recognizing the need for appreciation. A church in Gurnee, Illinois, gave its pastor permission to take an eight-week sabbatical from his duties. “Make it something you enjoy and something that will refresh you for the next 10 years of ministry,” they encouraged. So the pastor and his wife, both avid motorcyclists, packed their bike and headed east on a combination mission trip/vacation. During the trip, they visited 12 different churches and returned with a renewed passion for serving and many new ministry ideas gleaned from the churches they had visited.³

Organized efforts. Many churches have started celebrating Pastor Appreciation Month. The Seventh-day Adventist Church

has reserved the fourth Saturday of October to express special recognition to pastors and their families. A concrete date on the calendar brings pastor appreciation to the front of members' thoughts. One church in Englewood, Colorado, annually enlists its small groups in its appreciation efforts, assigning them specific days during Pastor Appreciation Month to show their gratitude. They bombard pastors with cards, dinners, and gifts. A member who knew the pastor's weakness for Carmella bars anonymously left a candy bar at his door each day. When she had to go out of town, she arranged for a substitute delivery person. Another church hired a limousine to whisk the pastor and his family to a classy restaurant. Yet another put on a variety show imitating the pastor. From doing yard work at the pastor's home to passing out blank cards so members can write notes saying what they appreciate about their minister, churches are making efforts to show they care.

Random acts of kindness. Organized efforts are the first step in showing appreciation, and they can create a "what-we-are-going-to-do-this-year" sense of obligation. My husband and

I have served in ministry for years and, on several occasions, we have been recipients of these efforts, which are always appreciated. But it is often the unplanned acts of kindness that have touched us most, like the time our minivan's air conditioner broke a few days before we were to drive to Florida for vacation, and an elderly couple paid to have it fixed. Or the time, just after we'd relocated to a new church, a professional hairstylist offered to cut our family's hair for free. Even more recently, a couple who had just read a book on pastor appreciation told us they wanted to be our support network. They now pray for us regularly and ask how we are doing.

What pastors really long for in the way of appreciation. Remember the game you used to play as a kid where you'd hide something and someone else would guess if they were getting close or not? Hints like "You're getting warmer" or "You're burning hot" helped the other players know when they were getting near the hidden object. When we offer notes, chocolates, and kind deeds to show appreciation, we are getting "warmer," closer to the real heart of the matter. Each of the aforementioned gestures moves closer

WHAT YOU CAN DO

to the real issue—that we truly want our pastors to feel loved, encouraged, and supported in some basic, foundational areas.

Salary. Denominational corporate structure can help encourage fair treatment of pastors by establishing regulations regarding how clergy hiring and firing should be handled, and for setting adequate salary and benefits.

Participation. Congregations have often been referred to as flocks. Those who serve in ministry can agree that pastoral ministry is very akin to shepherding. Naturally when a sheep is missing, it can cause the shepherd to fret. Because pastors care so much about the people they serve, it is discouraging when members attend only sporadically, or when they sit through the sermon week after week without ever getting involved.

Showing up for church regularly can encourage your pastor more than you'll ever know, but if you really want to encourage him or her, get involved in ministry. Serving shows Christian maturity and demonstrates that we support the pastor and want to be a part of the greater vision of the church.

Respect. Like politicians, pastors are always in the public limelight, and they are constantly barraged with criticisms because everyone has a differing opinion about how the church should operate. Keep this in mind before you force your opinion on your pastor regarding the way things should really be run: it is one thing to nit-pick and quite another to offer constructive

criticism. Constant criticism shows a lack of respect for the pastor. Sometimes criticism results from church members not having a clear idea of the pastor's role. People may look at the minister as the "hired hand," but healthy churches recognize the role of the pastor as more of an administrator who equips and teaches members for lay ministry. When members adhere to the idea that they are the ones who should be doing the bulk of the service, criticism usually declines since they recognize they are also to blame when things go wrong. To effectively get members to embrace this idea, we must continually recast the vision of the role of the pastor alongside of the role of the lay minister. Only then will members respect the pastor's position.

Appreciation is more attitude than act. Earmarking a special month and giving creative gifts are wonderful ways to show appreciation for pastors, and these activities do have their place. However, genuine pastoral appreciation that is concerned with the pastor's wellbeing is most valued by those in ministry.

What are you doing to show your pastor you care? **ED**

(Endnotes)

1. <http://www.bfree.on.ca/comdir/churches/hoperc/index.htm>
2. Dan Chase, October 97, http://www.case-studies.com/articles/pastor_appreciation_month.htm
3. Joe Boerman, "Ride Across America" in *The Standard*, April 2000.

Teena M. Stewart

From Pastor to Elders

JOURNEY OF HOPE



Former US President, Bill Clinton, launched his election campaign for the presidency by harking back to his Arkansas hometown, a place called Hope!

For believers, hope is more than our heritage. Hope is more than even our destination. Hope is a journey, a process of moving our lives and the lives of our members from “here” to “there” through Jesus’ power.

For this five-year quinquennium, Adventists have adopted, “Journey of Hope” as the overarching theme of our spiritual life and experience with the task-oriented mission objective, “Tell the World,” growing out of the church’s corporate core values of unity, quality of life, and growth.

“Tell the World” and “Journey of Hope” are both messages that every spiritual leader can preach as well as mission methodologies which every member can utilize to hasten Jesus’ coming.

Seven specific goals were adopted for the world church during the next five years. Imagine what could happen if we adopted the following goals, not just as agenda minutes, but as an integral mission for our congregations and our personal lives:

Spiritual Growth. The essential elements of spirituality (Bible Study, Prayer, Fellowship, Witnessing, and Obedience) begin with our individual commitment to invest more personal time in the Word and in prayerful interaction with our God. When Sharon and I challenged our own congregation to “just ten minutes more” each day in studying the Bible, we saw lives transformed, marriages restored, factions dissolved, plus financial, numerical, and spiritual growth.

Community Involvement. If your church were to close its doors, would anyone in your community miss its presence? Who would come pleading for you to re-open? How is your own congregation viewed in your community? People are seeking far more than intellectual information. They don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care. The greatest argument in favor of the gospel is still a loving and lovable Christian.

Personal Witness. We add approximately one million new members annually. What would happen if we blossomed these new members into full discipleship. Can you envision five million members individually committed to introducing one other person to Jesus and then to bringing that individual into fellowship? “God will do the work if we will furnish the instruments” (Testimonies to the Church, Vol. 9, pg. 107). The only instruments I can furnish is myself and my members.

City Outreach. Soon, over half of the world’s population will reside in large metropolitan centers. The largest unentered mission fields are the world’s largest cities. Multiplied thousands of people transition from rural to urban life every day. What would happen if the church was determined to be there and become meaningful in the lives of individuals who are most spiritually open during such transitions?

Church Planting. Growth is more than expanding the membership of our existing congregations. Even more important than adding new believers to your church is the necessity of adding new lighthouses for the world’s darkness. The kingdom of evil will be vanquished only as the kingdom of light permeates the gloom of hopelessness. No method is more penetrating than establishing newly-planted churches.

Media Ministry. Consider the potential for reaching every soul on earth through the technological advances of radio, television, internet, and printing. Consider the power if all our various methods were united in determination to proclaim a consistent, unified message of hope and assurance.

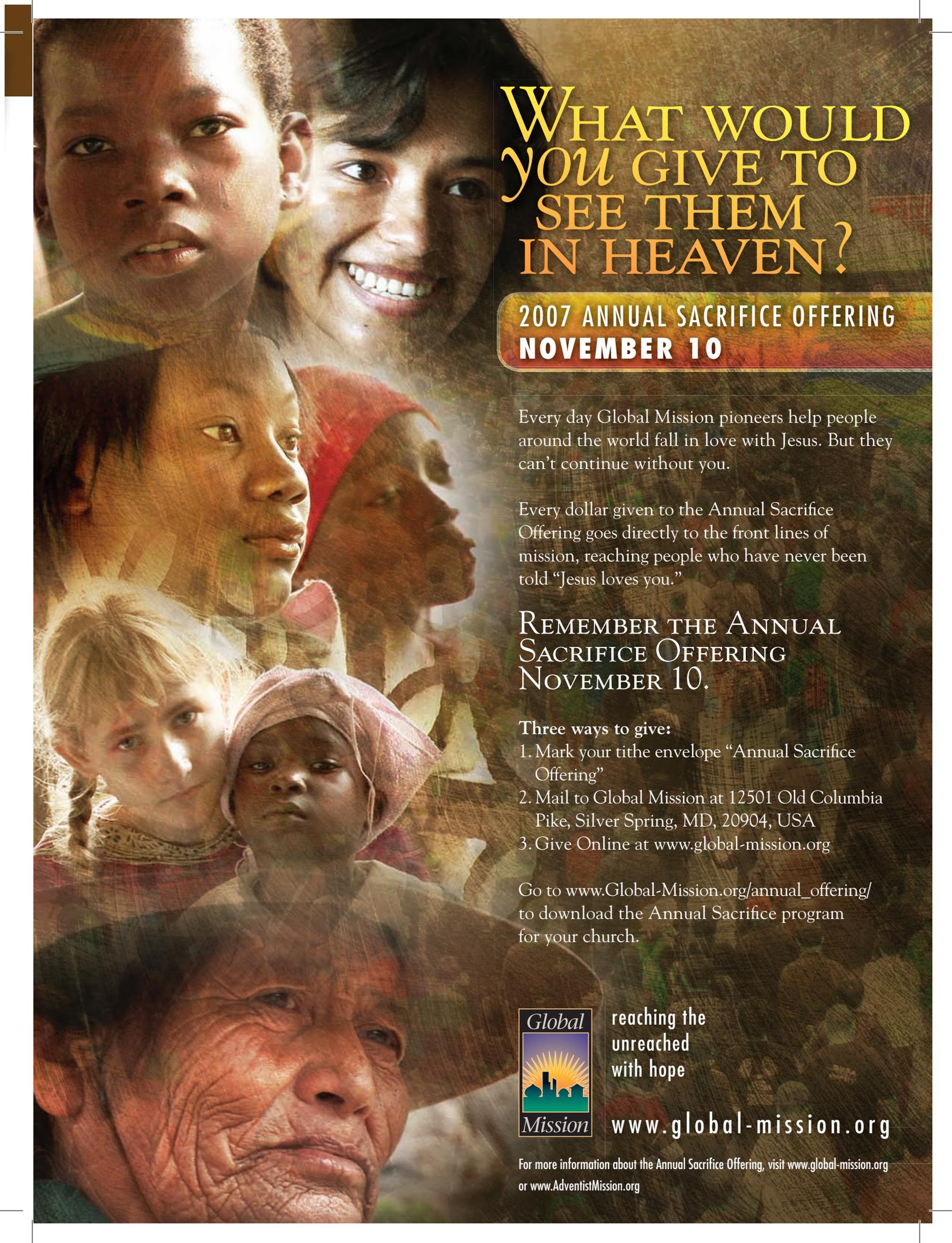
Evangelistic Experience. To put shoes on the vision, consider the unique impact if every local congregation hosts one specific, well-planned public evangelistic initiative every year. Open the doors of your churches and you will open the hearts of your members as well as the hearts and minds of those who come to share the joyous reality of hope.

Our world president, Jan Paulsen, challenged the church to envision a church of praying members, filled with the Spirit, nurtured on God’s Word, with all departments, entities, leaders, and individual members unified in single-minded mission to provide opportunity for the entire world to hear and respond to the good news about Jesus Christ.

Our journey begins with the assurance of God’s love and purpose and culminates with the return of Jesus. Our journey will thrive only as we individually and corporately open our lives to the Holy Spirit’s power and furnish ourselves as the instruments which heaven will use to accomplish the task.

You and I can purpose, preach, and powerfully proclaim this Journey of Hope. ^{ED}

James A. Cress, General Conference Ministerial Association Secretary



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