

# ELDER'S DIGEST

A Quarterly Resource for local Church Elders Vol. 8 No. 2



*"To the humble, believing soul, the house of God  
on earth is the gate of heaven."*

E. G. White



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## Elder's Digest

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# How elders can HELP MEMBERS in a crisis situation

*Joel Sarli*



**B**eing available to help and give orientation to people in difficult occasions is one of the great challenges to elders. A couple welcomes a new baby into their home; a woman has experienced a painful divorce; an elderly man loses his mate

of 50 years; a middle-aged man must change vocations; an unmarried teenager is pregnant, and a young family must relocate to a new city are just examples of situations that call for help.

As a spiritual leader, you often help individuals during these times. Crisis situations demand our ministry. A crisis is a time of opportunity. What must we do when we recognize a crisis situation? Five suggestions are offered.

## EVALUATION

During a crisis situation ask yourself a few questions:

- What are the needs of the individuals?
- Are those needs being met?
- Can I mobilize others to help?
- What can I do?
- When should I go?
- How long should I stay?
- Is the crisis severe enough to require an immediate response?
- Is the crisis something I need to respond to at all?

After making an assessment, you will be able to respond in a wise and reasonable manner.

## AVAILABILITY

Your availability should be threefold: before, during, and after the crisis. Before the crisis you earn the right to minister. You prove you care. During the cri-

sis you put your faith into action. After the crisis the need may be greatest because other support has moved on.

## ACCEPTANCE

Elders in local congregations, in our modern times, are likely to encounter those contemplating suicide, homosexuals, unwed mothers, murderers, thieves, those impacted by a dreaded disease, divorcees, and many others in a crisis situation.

An understanding, accepting attitude will enhance your ability to minister to such individuals.

This idea of acceptance is amply illustrated in Job's three friends: Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. When they first visited Job, they were content to sit quietly; however, they could not resist the temptation to give advice. These friends told Job everything that was wrong without stopping to understand or listen to him. They could not accept Job and his questions.

## HERALD OF ASSURANCE

You may give assurance in several ways. Read a carefully selected passage of Scripture or of the Spirit of Prophecy books. Give assurance by leaving a comforting pamphlet or booklet.

Give assurance by the gentle touch of a hand.

Give assurance through being silent.

For some reason most people feel they always must say something to people experiencing a crisis. Sometimes the best comfort is to say nothing.

## ASSISTANCE

The ministry of the presence is quite important in times of crisis. Most leaders of the local congregations usually know about service agencies that help people during times of crisis such as the Red Cross, funeral homes, counseling centers, government services, and

*(Continued on page 30)*



# Submission: IS IT REAL?

*Shelly M. Ríos*

What is the use and does it really matter? I would watch my Mom serve my Dad a meal and think to myself, he is being really lazy and making Mom do extra work. One day I approached my Mom and asked her why she would serve my father when he had two feet and was capable of doing it himself. She told me because she loved him so much and wanted to make his life a little more relaxing and be helpful. When I marry, will I be willing enough to serve my husband with no questions asked or will I put up a fuss? It all has to do with submission and how we incorporate it into our lives. Women should submit to God and their husbands, but in the process they can keep their own identity.

In the beginning all started with the submission of Adam and Eve to God and each other in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, death, suffering, pain, heartache, and more came to be common in the lives of humans.

Cain and Abel were the first children and Cain murdered his brother. God tells children to respect their parents for it pleases the Lord (Col. 3:20). Respect requires listening to the rules, good judgment, and submission. Cain didn't like that his brother was the favored one and had to be second in line when it came to gaining the respect of the Lord (Gen. 4:4, 5). Throughout history there has



been story after story of people who didn't submit to the Lord. So the question we should be asking is, who did submit to their husbands and the Lord?

Hadassah was a young girl who lived with her Uncle Mordecai due to the death of her mother and father (Esther 2:7). A decree went out for all the beautiful maidens to be summoned to the palace for the possibility of being chosen as queen (Esther 2:8). As a young woman I would fear the king wouldn't pick me, then

leaving me for the rest of my days in the second house of concubines. Esther went to the palace and Hegai liked her out of all the women. He sped up her purification time, gave her seven maids, and put her in the best apartment in the house of women (Esther 2:9). If someone was in my care that was behaving bad and giving me a hard time, questioning every move, after a while I wouldn't want to spend any time with that person. I can just imagine Esther trying to be helpful and make Hegai's daily chores lighter. She probably also helped women who were homesick or depressed. She was submitting to God's will that she be in the palace to be chosen as queen and also to her future husband through his decree. The king found favor with her and crowned Esther queen (Esther 2:17). She was able to be a witness to her king and husband but wouldn't have ever been able to do so

if she had not been submissive. God wants to bless His children but they need to be obedient and submit to His will.

Another young woman who submitted to her Lord and husband was Ruth. She married outside her faith and didn't have any children by her first husband. When her husband and brother-in-law died her mother-in-law decided to return to her home land of Judah (Ruth 1:7). Naomi told her daughters to return to their homes and enjoy life. Orpah did return but Ruth told Naomi she would never leave her. Ruth made the God of Naomi her's and promised to go wherever she went (Ruth 1:16). When Ruth arrived in Bethlehem she worked the fields to provide for Naomi because there was no man to do so. Naomi got the idea for Ruth to marry Boaz instead of the other relative, but that meant that Ruth needed to follow the directions Naomi gave. Ruth could have argued and hesitated but she trusted Naomi and did as she instructed. God used the situation and out of it came the union of Ruth and Boaz who were in the lineage of a king (Ruth 4:17). Ruth submitted to her mother-in-law and God, because she did follow directions she was blessed and is one of the four women named in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew.

God has given guidelines for both men and women about submission. Ephesians 5:22, 23, 25, 28, 31 instruct, "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is of the church. . . . In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself."

God tells how a home should be and who is the head. Volume 6 of the *SDA Bible Commentary* states "The submission enjoined upon the wife is of a kind that can be given only between equals. The wife should see the relation to her husband as a reflection of the relationship to Christ" (p.1036). The *Commentary* tells us for verse 23 that the husband should protect and sustain his wife and family, if there are to be no questions about who is the head he must be as Christ was to his church (1036). In verse 25 the *Commentary* states "the husband is not to give a command, but to love making a partnership and not a dictatorship. A true husband never utters rude commands. His love will find expression in a variety of ways. It will be given in words of understanding and affection. The husband will properly provide for the wife's temporal support; he will do everything possible to assure

her happiness; he will give her every honor. The husband is to imitate Christ, giving up personal pleasures and comforts to obtain his wife's happiness, standing by her side in the hour of sickness.

Christ gave Himself for the church because she was in desperate need; likewise the husband will give himself for the salvation of his wife, ministering to her spiritual needs, and she to his, in a spirit of mutual love" (1036-37). Both husband and wife have important functions in a marriage that require love and devotion to each other. In a way the husband has the larger weight and is responsible for the wife's well being while she is to respect, support and love him. There need to be an essential unity and be headed in the same direction in a sense of goals, interests and ideals (1037).

When God mapped out marriage he designed it to be a lifelong bond between a man and a woman, and any society that treats it lightly is planning its own demise (1038). The family is the center of the universe and if it is ripped apart our world will crumble. God gave us an outline but the question is are we doing as he instructed? Why is our society in such upheaval and straining at the seams? We need to ask God to teach us to do his will (Ps. 143:10) and be willing to take the cup God has for us even if we don't want it, we must be willing (Matt. 26:39). In James 4:7 the best advice is given, "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." God wants to be an active part of our lives but that requires submitting to his laws and his plan. Submission was a part of the Garden of Eden and needs to be a part of us now here on earth. An element of the plan is for someone to be head of the home, responsible and accountable to God for all that was done.

To answer the question in the beginning, yes I plan on serving my husband to the best of my ability because he was the one ordained by God to take care of me and is responsible for all that happens in his household. Being submissive to God and their husbands as in Esther and Ruth's story, they were women used by God and still remained unique, their own person. Women can enrich a home by obeying God's law and still be themselves, they are now part of a unit that can't be severed and is blessed by the Lord.

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# Christian influence and ministry

James A. Cress

This issue of Christian influence and ministry particularly impacts what we do with new believers. Just as the first learning patterns of children will govern their future behavior, so the first learning patterns of baby Christians will determine their future discipleship. John Wesley insisted that to lead people to Jesus Christ without also providing an adequate opportunity for growth and nurture is simply "to beget children for the murderer."<sup>1</sup> Tuttle adds: "I am personally convinced that the only way to keep Christians alive is to keep them moving. The Christian walk is much like riding a bicycle; we are either moving forward or falling off."<sup>2</sup> Thus, it is the church's responsibility not only to ensure that each new believer is taught to *ride* the bicycle, but to ensure that the new believer gets ongoing exercise and stays on the path. This cannot be done without helping new believers discover and employ their spiritual gifts.

Typically, we have considered the first ministry of new believers to nonbelievers to be that of direct witnessing, and there is certainly biblical support for such a concept. When the demoniac of Gadara was healed (Mark 5), Jesus did not yield to the man's begging to join His group of disciples, but instead sent him back to his own village. "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you and how He has had compassion on you" (Mark 5:19). Verse 20 tells us that the man's witness was not without results, and when Jesus later returned to that region, there were believers



there, apparently a result of the man's ministry.

However, while witnessing to others should be one desirable result of coming to Jesus, evangelism is not the only gift of the Holy Spirit. New believers should be led to discover that which best fits their own capabilities and Spirit-given gifts. Otherwise, witnessing may be the result of a religious compulsion or the new believer's guilty regret for "wasted" years. If new believers are "forced" into one mold of ministry, they

may become frustrated and potential souls may be lost to Christ's kingdom.

*Believers may be categorized into five witnessing types:*

1. The strong, silent type. Says he/she just lives his/her faith.
2. Happens to drop the fact that he/she has been to church or says his/her prayers.
3. The "won't you attend?" type. Invites people to a service to hear someone else say what he/she does not have the courage to personally say.
4. The public-speaking type. Speaks forthrightly in classes, meetings, or services in a way he/she is not quite able to do individually.
5. The conversational/relational type. Witnessing derives from a relationship with Jesus and flows naturally in and through the person's conversation and daily activities.<sup>3</sup>

"Much modern exhortation to witness is futile and may actually be harmful. If men do not have a vital up-to-date relationship with Christ, witnessing

can become pharisaical religious proselytizing so we can hang up more scalps on our ecclesiastical belts or pad our religious pride by the number of visits we made . . . A failure to engage in some high-pressure witnessing activity may pile up layers of religious guilt for not witnessing. Consequently, when we do speak to others for Christ, it is out of fear and guilt more than out of faith and guidance. The result? Not much! Compulsive witnessing may have the thrasher going wide open, but not much wheat comes out."

Witnessing, then, is not something we "do" as much as something we "are". A relationship with Jesus produces the fruit of Christian character, and this, unconsciously, even more than consciously on our part, draws men to Christ. Jesus told His disciples, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1:8). "Christ says that Christian witnessing is not optional. But neither is it mandatory. It is inevitable."<sup>4</sup>

Employment of spiritual gifts in ministry is important for spiritual growth in the life of the new believer, and its vital role should not be underestimated. McGavran and Arn say, "Inherent in being saved was that the redeemed share the good news."<sup>5</sup> However, while the Spirit's purpose in bestowing gifts is twofold—increasing the kingdom as well as increasing the faith of the new believer—we should not confuse *ministry*, in which every believer must engage, with *evangelism*, which is one of many gifts the Holy Spirit gives.

This is a subtle, but important, distinction. The *ministry* of every believer provides a witness, but every life of *witness* has not been given the gift of evangelism. We must carefully maintain this distinction in order to assist new believers, first, not to feel frustrated if their spiritual gift is not evangelism and, second, to encourage them to discover and utilize that which the Spirit has given them in *ministry*. In her little book, *Beyond Baptism*, an introduction to what new believers should know about the Adventist lifestyle, Fannie Houck says, "It is important that the new believer settle in to the Christian way of life quickly and solidly. This process, called discipling, includes learning how to gain spiritual victory, how to prioritize and use personal resources in God's service, and *how to work effectively* for Him."<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, our need is to employ the energy and enthusiasm of new believers in such a way that it builds their own spiritual strength and thus nurtures their own relationship with their Savior and, simulta-

neously, accomplishes ministry for the kingdom. Stott says, "If Jesus first command was 'come!', His second was 'go!', that is, we are to go back into the world out of which we have come, and go back as Christ's ambassadors." He quotes the report, *The Church for Others*: "The biblical view of conversion envisages a double movement, the turning away from preoccupation with one's own interest and the turning toward the interests of the neighbor (Philippians 2:3). It is a movement of turning away from the world in that the terms of the world, based on self-interest, can no longer be accepted. At the same time, it is a turning toward the world, now seen from the perspective of hope in the light of God's purpose."<sup>7</sup>

Unfortunately, studies show that even among believers the concept of turning toward the world in ministry is diminishing to the point that it soon may become extinct. In surveys that back his report, *What Americans Believe*, George Barna discovered that there is not one demographic group of believers in which adult members are spending more time in church related activities (much less ministry activities) than they were one year ago. He says, "The bad news for churches is that across-the-board people are spending less time participating in church activities. On the other hand, 26 percent report they are spending more time watching television and 55 percent report watching about the same amount as they did one year ago. Furthermore, although sociological studies demonstrate Americans to be among the loneliest people on earth, you might expect people to spend increasing amounts of time with friends. Sadly, just the opposite is happening. There is actually a net decrease, albeit small, in the proportion of adults who are spending more time with friends than they did one year ago. Isolationism is becoming a way of life in virtually every area. The potential negative impact of this upon the ministry of the church is staggering."<sup>8</sup>

It is the privilege and responsibility of the church to see that new believers are taught to minister. In fact, we will be judged, both corporately and individually, for squandered resources that could and should have been utilized in ministry for the Savior. Oscar Thompson says, "Someday all Christians will give an account of their lives to the Lord. He has given us many commandments by which we are to live. His last commandment, often called the Great Commission, is found in Matthew 28:19-20 . . . In our concentric circles, everyone has a Jerusalem, a

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# Revitalizing lethargic liturgy

John Killinger

*Even within the confines of a traditional service, and without adjusting the rubrics at all, we can introduce changes that can revitalize the tone and tenor of the service.*

London theater audiences have been entranced for some time by Peter Shaffer's *Lettice and Lovage*, a comedy starring Maggie Smith. Smith plays the part of a guide in a rather unexciting National Trust home. Bored with the job, she begins spicing up her presentations with highly imaginative concoctions about the families that lived there and the royalty who visited them. One fanciful story involves Queen Elizabeth I, who is said to have tripped on the stairway and been caught in midair by her host, who was subsequently knighted for his deft act!

I couldn't help thinking, the day after seeing the play, what the woman played by Maggie Smith could do for some of the unimaginative worship services I've sat through or even led. She'd spark a one-woman liturgical renaissance.

Having only recently moved back to an academic setting after several years in the pastorate, I'm quite aware that we ministers are not that free to invent our material out of whole cloth or to introduce it without general consent among our congregations. There is, nevertheless, a great deal we can do to enliven the worship offered up on most churches by our parishioners.

For big changes, such as placing the offering after the sermon (where by both theology and tradition it properly ought to be, if I may say so), it is undoubtedly best to work through a worship committee and perhaps even obtain a mandate of the congregation. I've known pastors who shortened their tenure by acting presumptuously in shaping or reordering the liturgy, even though the congregation appeared to be largely apathetic about it before the "tampering" took place.

But even within the confines of a traditional service, and without adjusting the rubrics at all, we can introduce changes that can revitalize the tone

and tenor of the service. To do so doesn't require taking the liberties assumed by the guide in *Lettice and Lovage*. It merely requires our thoughtful devotion to the details of the liturgy.

## Prayers that evidence thought

Consider the prayers, which interlace the service, set a mood for the worshipers, and help move everything along from the time the congregation gathers until it is ready to be dispersed again into the world.

It's a temptation to regard prayers as mere conversational interludes during which we can voice whatever we happen to be feeling at the moment. It's not uncommon to stand and offer prayers that, genuine as they are, are filled with rather mindless thoughts and impressions spoken in the language of cliché.

I once heard a man complain of his minister's casual attitude toward praying. He said, "My wife even makes a list before she goes to the grocery store. You'd think anyone would have the decency to think through what he wanted to say to God!"

George A. Bultrick, the great New York preacher and chaplain to Harvard University, said on many occasions that if he had time before a service to prepare only the prayers or his sermon, he would choose every time to spend it on the prayers. He knew that accuracy of thought and phrasing, together with a prayerful spirit, brings a sense of reality to worship and helps bind worshipers to the Spirit of God.

Stanley Mooneyham, the former president of World Vision, called me once to say that he and his wife, Nancy, would like to visit our early worship service on a particular day. Delighted to hear that, I asked Stan if he would offer the morning prayer for us. When he consented, I said, "Now, Stan, the



early service is rather small. We have it in the chapel, and there won't be many people." I didn't want him to expect too much. But the size of the crowd mattered not at all to Stan.

When he got up to pray, he spoke one of the most beautifully composed prayers I have ever heard. It was in several parts, each part concerned with a separate area of our praying, and one part flowed to another with the grace of a sonnet by Shakespeare or a composition by Mozart.

Afterward, people wanted copies of the prayer because it expressed so well what they wanted to say to God.

I'm convinced that if we considered more carefully what to say in our public prayers, the prayers alone would raise the spiritual temperature of our congregations by fifteen degrees. Whatever is worth saying publicly to God is worth premeditation.

### Affirmations that reflect current faith

Affirmations of faith? Deadly, most people think.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty . . ." Good theology, but heavy. And dull, when you repeat it service after service .

But suppose I rewrite the affirmation occasionally, substituting for the traditional language some thoughts for our times. Here's one from my book *Lost in Wonder, Love, and Praise: Prayers and Affirmations for Christian Worship*. I composed it for a worship in the springtime:

*"I believe in the beauty of spring that is known in windy skies, blossoming fruit trees, waving jonquils, and sweet-smelling grass.*

*I believe in the warmth of a friendship that is communicated in gentle eyes, a loving smile, a fond touch of the hand, and an arm laid on the shoulder.*

*I believe in the power of Christ, whose presence is felt in every season of the year but especially now, when life wells up everywhere and folks feel a quickening in their souls because it is spring and summer is on the way.*

*I believe Christ is responsible for both spring and friendship, and that the excitement I feel today is related to the fact that he was dead but is alive forevermore, not only in our memories but in the truest kind of actuality.*

*I worship him by coming here, and say, "Hallelujah! Christ is alive and in this very place!"*

Affirmations need to affirm a faith that is current. While the ancient affirmations link us with the sound theology of the past, our new creations can tie that

theology to the thought forms and concerns of the people in our pews. When our people can say, *Yes! That's what I believe!* we have helped enliven their worship.

### Scripture readings that live

The reading of Scripture takes place in every church on every worship. It's a cut-and-dried event, too brief to worry much about in the overall planning of the service.

Or so goes the conventional wisdom.

I still haven't forgotten the confession of a layman in a church I attended years ago. "I get along very well in the worship service," he said, "until the preacher gets up to read the Bible. Then something happens to me. It's like a curtain drops in my mind, and I shut off. I guess I'm just a contemporary man, and it's an ancient book, and I have a hard time listening to it."

There may not be a lot of those "contemporary" people out there in my congregation, but I always worry about them. What if they shut off and miss the Word of the Lord?

How can we help people to listen to the Scripture reading? One way is by being sure it is read as clearly and winsomely as possible, so that the power of the words breaks through.

A few months ago, the actor Arthur Petersen was presenting his one-man show about Robert Frost, *Fire and Ice*, in our church's Commonwealth Theater. Impressed by Petersen's personal piety as well as his dramatic skills, I invited him to read from the Old and New Testaments at a morning worship service. It was a treat beyond anything I had imagined.

Familiar texts leapt to life, danced, turned, twisted, revealed aspects of themselves I had never seen, and then concluded like a graceful ballerina finishing her act and bowing low before the audience. No one breathed. We were torn between worship and applause. We had heard the Word!

As one untrained in drama, I probably shouldn't attempt to give dramatic readings of the Scriptures; that would be posturing, and it would call attention to the wrong things. But I can be better prepared to read than I sometimes am. One trick is to print the texts in orator type so I can see them easily; another is to familiarize myself with those texts so completely that I'm able to communicate them without excessive strain or fumbling.

I worshiped for several years with a church that

used lay people to read the lections each service, rotating them so that each person on a team of a dozen readers read only a few times a year. The readers were given simple instructions by a local speech professor and were coached individually when they sought assistance. The variety kept the readings interesting, and, perhaps more important, reminded us that the Bible belongs to the people and is not the exclusive domain of the clergy.

In the desiderata department, I have always wished for a choral reading group in my church that frequently would read the Scriptures. I have heard such groups occasionally at conferences and in college or university chapels and found them extraordinarily powerful. By alternating parts between soloists, small groups, and the entire choir, they are able to move almost instantly from a whisper to a shout, from music to cacophony, from thunder to moonlight, and the effect is spine-tingling.

No one yawns when the Scriptures are read with the skill they deserve.

### Preaching that captivates

The sermon is probably more exclusively the business of the preacher than any other part of the liturgy, and, because it normally requires more time than almost anything else, it offers us the greatest opportunity to invest the service with power and vitality. Granted that not many of us are stem-winders, what can we do to improve the contribution of the sermon to the worship as a whole?

I suggest we begin by thinking in terms of *renewsal*. No, not *renewal* but *renewsal*: getting the news back into preaching.

As I visit churches and ministers, I find some preachers tend, because of their great familiarity with the message of Christianity, to assume everybody in their congregation has heard the message. Therefore they bring little evangelistic fervor to their preaching and fall into the rut of what I call "foot-note preaching," dealing with secondary concerns such as managing personal loneliness, coping with grief, and leading a moral life in an immoral society.

The latter are important, but they are important only after people have met Christ and decided to make him the center of their lives. If Christ is not exalted regularly in our sermons, they soon become moralistic homilies, not words to raise the dead.

Worse, congregations begin to think of themselves as sophisticated or uptown and actually start to deplore too much emphasis on Christ and the

Spirit at work among them. They may even sneer at a new minister who talks too much about Jesus and not enough about the cultural trends or sociological musings they have been accustomed to hearing.

When this happens, churches die from a lack of spiritual oxygen. The only thing to save them is a renewal in preaching. We have to remember Who it is we preach about.

Delivery is also important. Even sermons focusing on Jesus can be dull and routine unless I take care to make them otherwise. My experience of Christ must be continually fresh, and my expression of that experience faithful and effervescent, if my preaching is to be effective.

"Seeing" truth—perceiving it with the right side of the brain—is especially important. And, when we've learned to do this, we'll soon be seeing Christ everywhere—in books, plays, art galleries, newspapers, and all our personal encounters. Most good stewards of the mysteries of life keep a notebook or journal of their sightings, so that they can recollect them months and years afterward and then distill their essence into usable form—in the minister's case, into sermons.

Everywhere I go, I urge preachers to develop the habit of writing thoughts, observations, anecdotes, and experiences in notebooks; and, just as faithfully, I hear later from these preachers, "I'm so glad I began keeping a notebook. Now I never run out of preaching material. My sermons are fresher than they've been in years!"

Some ministers find that even varying the form of the sermon improves their communication skills. They cast their thoughts into dialogue sermons, dramatic monologues, sermon epistles to particular persons or biblical characters, imaginary newscasts, story sermons, and even musical presentations.

The important thing, I've found, is to see the sermon in its true perspective. It is not a twenty-minute space in the liturgy merely to be filled with my talk. It is an opportunity within the orchestration of the divine service to speak for Christ in the most imaginative, communicative way possible, so that the Holy Spirit finds the situation combustible and can truly ignite the hearts of the congregation.

### Music that motivates

To this point, I've said nothing about music, although it doubtless plays one of the most critical roles in helping the congregation worship with enthusiasm. The reason I've waited is that in most



instances it is the part of the service least under our control. Many musical directors or ministers of music have rather independent feelings about the choice and disposition of church music and tend to be somewhat jealous of their prerogatives.

But even in situations in which we have no direct control over the music, we often hold considerable power of negotiation within the framework of relationships and can make suggestions regarding the kind of musical selections that will best serve the purposes we envision.

I've served all kinds of churches, from small, country churches where the pianist couldn't play hymns with more than one flat or sharp, to large city churches with fabulous organs and paid choir personnel. What I have learned about church music is that the majority of people in any congregation, whether in the country or the city, prefer music that is (1) singable by even the untalented people, (2) simply and memorably worded, (3) in English, and (4) charged with deep and true emotion.

I have two personal beefs about the music in most of the worship services I attend (including my own). One is that it is too heavily weighted by old hymns and classical anthems, giving the liturgy an air of mustiness and antiquity. The other is that the contemporary hymns and anthems are often poorly written and scored, so that they amount to what conductor Roger Shaw calls "holy slush."

The solution? Work. We have to dig out the best of contemporary music and retain the classic works of old. We have to plan the musical fare with the care we do our sermons or prayers. If it is true that more doctrine is learned from hymns than from sermons, and that Christianity sings, not speaks, its way in the world, then we should spare no effort to insure that the music with which we worship God is the finest music of our time.

### A tone that invites

Finally, there is the matter of the tone of the service—its temper and personality—which is largely in our hands.

Is the service positive in its outlook? Then it is probably because we exude these characteristics. Is it predictable and plodding? Again, it is probably an extension of the worship leader's attitude.

Take a simple item like the announcements. They can be regarded as a necessary evil to be dispatched with as swift a nod as possible. Or, one may evidence no particular attitude toward them and

merely muddle through them.

I prefer to look brightly upon announcements as an expression of the theology of Incarnation, and deliver them with a kind of lightness and happiness that reproduces such an atmosphere in the congregation. I suspect my people prefer to receive the announcements each worship service in such a way.

Even the lowly benediction is significant for the way it continues and climaxes the mood of a good service. The easy way out is to intone a few words that I memorized years ago when I began ministry: "May the Lord bless you and keep you . . ." It can become mindless for both the benedictor and the beneditees.

I like the story of the young minister who spent so much time talking baby talk to the recent addition to his family that he lapsed one day and said, "Now may gracey, mercy, and peacey . . ."

But, rather than some vapid verbalization, wouldn't it be richer and more meaningful for the congregation to be dismissed with a blessing that thoughtfully draws to a conclusion the service they have been offering to God that particular day, something that forms a natural bridge between the themes they actually have dealt with and the life they are going out to live in the world?

If the service has centered on the seasons of life, for example, why not a benediction that concludes:

*Now may God, who has ordained the seasons of the year and the seasons of life as well, grant you serenity and joy in this season of your soul, and life everlasting in the world to come, through Jesus who died and lives forevermore. Amen.*

Or if the service was a Communion service, why not words of parting that say:

*Now may God, who has fed us at his table with the gift of his own Son, continue to feed us through this week on his Holy Spirit, that we may be led into every pathway intended for us and possess the joy that has been promised us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

These aren't major changes of the structure of worship; they're minor alterations with major significance. If worshipping God is the greatest joy and privilege we have, and I believe it is, then we'll want to craft every service of worship like a great artist's masterpiece: grand and beautiful in conception, and faithful in the execution of even the smallest details.

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*John Killinger is the author of Mastering Worship, from which this material was taken, pp. 113-122.*

# Renewing Worship Service

*(Ideas For Better Worship Services)*

**C**onsider the following suggestions, designed to add life and vigor to worship services. They are not described in great detail, giving ample opportunity for each congregation to tailor them to local needs. Keep in mind that some ideas are great once or twice a year, but would wear thin quickly if overdone. Also, remember that even the most innovative approach to worship becomes a rut if done all the time.

## General

1. Always have some optional elements in the worship plan that can be quickly deleted if time is getting away. That allows the services to maintain both a prompt beginning and ending time.

2. Let a family comprise the platform party. They can be responsible for the prayer, welcome, hymns, Scripture reading, etc.

3. Change the sequence of events. Don't fall into a rut.

4. Schedule a Communion service for Friday night. Use larger pieces of bread and larger glasses of wine. Candles and sitting around a large table or tables can add to the effect.

5. Have a sermon in the morning lead up to an unhurried Communion service in the afternoon. Announce it well in advance.

6. Capitalize on the public interest in Easter (as many Latin American Adventist congregations do so effectively). Schedule an Easter weekend of religious activity. Thursday night, a Communion service. Friday night, focus on the Crucifixion. Sabbath, an outline of "the day of rest." Sunday, a celebration of the Resurrection. The services could just feature good preaching and well-organized music, Scripture reading, testimonies, etc.

7. Most nations have a national day. Capitalize on it to prepare programs about what the country means to immigrants, brotherhood, or multiculturalism. This can be a good lead-in to a Communion service.

8. Don't forget poetry. Good poetry is magic.

Let the congregations poet(s) share an original piece from time to time.

9. Carefully plan periods for meditation. Silence has its place.

10. Appoint a worship committee so that each Sabbath worship experience will be a treat.

## Welcome

1. Read the visitors' names from the visitors book as part of the welcome. Be sure someone gets every visitor to sign.

2. Make a special feature of the welcome, inviting members to introduce any visitors they have brought.

3. Allow time for people to greet those next to them.

4. Encourage the greeters at the doors to invite one or two guests to come onto the platform during the service and tell about the most exciting thing being done in the church they regularly attend.

## Sermon

1. Don't tell a children's story at the beginning of the sermon, but introduce a "suspense box." Pause to check its contents periodically during the sermon, as a curiosity builder. As a climax, bring out the object(s) in the box to use as an object lesson/visual aid.

2. Make a feature of letting the juniors or early-teens choose the sermon topic for the next week. Then have them participate on the platform, provide special music, collect the offering, or greet people at the door. Involve them in as many ways as possible.

3. Invite a youth or a number of youth to present the sermon.

4. Invite a lay person to preach on a topic dear to him or her—such as a mother, on the home; or a teacher, on education.

5. Prepare handouts on the sermon topic for the children to fill in or color in. The handouts could include a quiz based on the texts to be used





during the sermon.

6. Don't try it often, and be careful that it does not detract from the reverence of the worship service, but a staged interjection/interruption can be a good attention-getter.

7. By all means, prepare a year worth of sermons to guarantee the proper balance in sermon topics and style of presentation.

8. We live in a visual age. Use graphics and visuals. Give the congregation a chance to look at more than just the speaker.

9. Follow Christ's example. Use plenty of simple object lessons. The simpler and the more visual, the better.

10. Do a little research into the different

sensory types—audio, visual, kinesthetic. It will aid in ministering more effectively to each member of the congregation.

11. Give the historical/cultural background to a chapter of the Bible. Sing a hymn or have a musical item. Then show how the passage speaks to today's situation, giving it a pastoral application.

12. How about two short sermons presenting opposite viewpoints on a topic that remains unresolved? Have a fellowship meal and allow the congregation to react during an afternoon meeting.

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*Note from the Editor: These suggestions were collected from many pastors and elders in small and large congregations in several parts of the world.*

Natanael Pereira Bruno  
 Editorial Coordinator: Margarida F. Sarli

# JESUS THIRSTED so that we may drink

## Scripture reading

John 19:23-29

## Suggested hymns

The old rugged cross  
 At the cross

Hymn No. 159

Hymn No. 163

## Thought for the day

"God help us that we may drink of the pure streams that flow from beneath the throne of God. We can drink, and continue to drink. And, if you thirst for knowledge, there is plenty of it here."—E. G. W., *9th Manuscript Release*, p. 67.

"Our Redeemer is an inexhaustible fountain. We may drink, and drink again, and ever find a fresh supply. He in whom Christ dwells has within himself the fountain of blessing. . . . From this source he may draw strength and grace sufficient for all his needs."—E. G. W., *God's Amazing Grace*, p. 119.

## Offering prelude

A man in Travancore, South India, had a coconut grove. When he became a Seventh-day Adventist, he wanted to return the tithe on his coconut trees. He took a brush and a bucket of tar and went through the grove, putting a big cross on each tenth tree.

One of the tenth trees happened to be an unusually small one which had borne no fruit. He hesitated at first to put the cross on this tree, as he felt it would not be right to give the Lord a tree that would yield no fruit. He did mark it, however, and to his surprise, and that of his neighbors, the next year this tree bore as much as any other he had. He felt the Lord had fulfilled His promises to him.

## Children's story

A little girl had broken her grandmother's beautiful vase. Her heart was broken, too.

"Oh, Granny," she cried, "can we ever fix it?"

"I think so, dear," grandmother replied. "We will take it to a shop in the city where a man does this sort of work. I believe he can help us."

The vase was taken to an expert who mended glass and china. A short time later it was back with the break scarcely detectable.

"Oh, Granny," "that's just like being a Christian, isn't it? Satan breaks our hearts and lives, but Jesus mends them, and were just as good as new."

God takes these sinful, broken lives of ours, and through the power of His precious blood forgives the past and makes us whole.



## Sermon *Jesus thirsted so that we may drink*

### I. Introduction

At the beginning of His ministry, He began His conversation with a sinful woman of Samaria by asking her, "Give me to drink." He used it as an introduction to talk with her about His kingdom and to give her eternal water. If a person drinks of this eternal water, he will never thirst again.

How significant that Jesus began His ministry by asking for water, and now ends it by asking for water. During the in-between period, however, He has used the figure of speech, thirst, as a theme in many instances. What a great common denominator is thirst, both of the body and of the soul.

### II. Jesus suffered many things

How terrible were the enemies of Jesus! During His trial He opened not His mouth, but here on the cross His sufferings are so great that He must speak. See how humanity shines forth in the Savior! He was all God, but He was also all man.

The problem of water has been a perennial one. The classic greeting in all cultures has been to ask for a drink of water and the universal gesture of hospitality has been to give water. Palestine has, in every century, been a dry and thirsty land with few wells. The cry, "I thirst," is always a heart-rending one.

Although this cry, "I thirst," seems mild when compared to the other brutalities inflicted upon Him, in reality, it may have been the greatest. To die of thirst is one of the worst deaths.

Thirst was part of the suffering of our Savior. At the beginning of His ministry, He hungered, being tempted by Satan. Here, at the end, He is thirsty. The devil used every possible means to defeat the Savior by making Him take a shortcut to His Messiahship.

### III. Jesus did not shirk His duty

In answer to Jesus' plea, the soldiers gave Him vinegar to drink. When we first read this, we are tempted to suppose, because of the unnatural type of drink offered, that those men intended to insult Jesus. A closer look at oriental historical customs, however, shows that vinegar was the common drink of the Roman army and was most likely to be at hand at the moment.

We read elsewhere that Jesus was offered a drink but He refused it. That was a different situation. They offered Him a medicated potion, wine mingled with myrrh, intended to deaden pain. Jesus refused to meet death in a state of stupefaction.

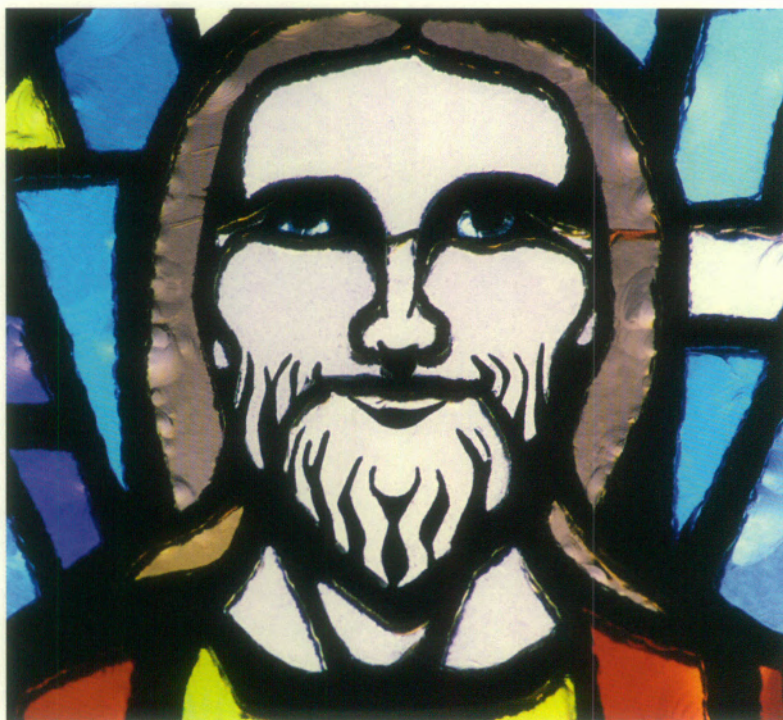
We may seek to meet pain two ways, through the flesh and through the Spirit. The physician may give us something to deaden pain, but this does not give courage to plant our foot on the serpents head and bear the pain without flinching. Jesus refused because He would conquer sin, not through the flesh, but through the Spirit. Had He escaped from pain and suffering through some kind of medication, He would have not completely borne our sins. The vinegar He received was merely a refreshing draught and did not, in any way, deaden the pain or make Him suffer less for our sins.

### IV. Calvary was not a pretty place

The Christmas story is beautiful, but not the message of the cross. Ugly and painful is the story of how Jesus was crucified. The sixty-ninth psalm is certainly a foreshadowing of this dreadful event. Jesus identified with it. When He quoted it, He was saying that He Himself was the very heartbeat of this ancient Hebrew hymn. Jesus identified Himself with all the hope Israel ever had in a Messiah. His cry became a sigh in a dry and thirsty land.

Because Jesus suffered, millions have been blessed with personal salvation and strength for everyday living. Even in His cry for thirst we see Him bearing our sins in His own body on the tree.

He was afflicted in all of our afflictions. Calvary remains as the time of sins victory and yet sins defeat, of God's defeat, and yet God's victory. Sin put Jesus on the cross, but not His sin, rather our sin. God defeated sin once and for all when He raised up Jesus from the dead. But, while it was happening, Calvary was a terrible thing.



## V. Conclusion

Do you thirst? Is there deep within you the desire for something better than what you have and to be someone better than you are? If so, God can meet that need. To the Samaritan woman, Jesus said, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). This is the gift of eternal life. Once we have met the Master, surrendered to Him, and been mastered by Him, life is different. We are no longer "thirsty," because our needs have been met and God's Spirit has been placed within our heart.

The message of the cross is that Christ can quench thirst because He once thirsted. He can make alive because He Himself died. In order to give us the living water, Christ passed through "a dry and thirsty land where no water is." We must remember, however, that the Christian life is not an abundance of material things, but rather a realization of spiritual things.

He reminded the Samaritan woman that "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). When He declared to her that He was the Messiah, she received Him and went to town to tell others of her great discovery. You too, will experience this same joy if you will surrender yourself to Him who, even though He thirsted on Calvary, He has the water of eternal life.

## VI. Illustration

In 1986 two brothers who lived in a kibbutz near the Sea of Galilee made an incredible discovery. As these two Israeli fishermen monitored their equipment on the beaches of Gennesaret, they noticed something they'd not seen before. Something covered with mud glistened in the sun. Upon examination, the archeologists determined that what the brothers had discovered was a fishing boat dating from the time of Jesus.

The only reason the artifact was discovered was because of a three-year drought, resulting in unusually low water in the lake.

The Bible tells us that in times of spiritual dryness, God may uncover something of fabulous value within, His presence (2 Cor. 4:7-12).

See: Job 23:10; 2 Cor. 4:17; Heb. 12:11.

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*Natanael Pereira Bruno writes from Guayaquil, Ecuador.*



# Every believer a preacher

*Mike Stickland*

## *An introduction to the role of laity and the place of preaching within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.*

Perhaps you have been preaching for years, or perhaps you have yet to enter the pulpit and you are a complete novice. No matter what your present level of experience is, this article is designed to take you forward in the "ministry of the Word." We begin by clarifying our thinking about the role, function and significance of the lay preacher in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

### **Preeminent role of the laity**

In the context of the dynamic mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the role of the laity is paramount. This is so for a number of pragmatic as well as rational reasons.

1. We believe in the "priesthood" of all church members,<sup>1</sup> whether "laity" or "clergy".<sup>2</sup> We believe that every Christian individual is gifted by the Holy Spirit<sup>3</sup> in order that they may serve and benefit the body of the church and its community and simultaneously be fulfilled themselves.

2. This is the principle dynamic of the Adventist *modus operandi*. Without it, this church could not have reached the numerical size, nor the missionary impact that it has. The mission of the church stands or falls on the principle of active participation by every able body. This idea is distinct from the notion that "the clergy do all the work" while members maintain a merely passive role.

3. We have more churches than we have salaried pastors. If the functions and meetings of each congregation rested upon the direct participation of the clergy,<sup>4</sup> then we would rapidly come to a halt. Although some professional duties are reserved for "clergy", many functions of ministry can be fulfilled by duly appointed local laity.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, we rely on "lay preachers" taking the pulpit for most Sabbaths in a quarter because the pastor will be serving in the other churches of his district.

4. However many churches we have, we must ever plant more! The Seventh-day Adventist Church has never willingly accepted a *status quo* attitude. We accept the commission given by the Lord,<sup>6</sup> and although we wish to always serve and nurture every existing church family, we see the need to plant new churches.

By definition, this requires the active participation of laity in the planting of new and the maintenance of existing churches. The lay ministry we depend upon must include both the pastoral and the evangelistic dimensions.

### **Primary importance of the sermon**

Real worship needs to be active and corporate, not passive and spectator-oriented. For that reason all aspects of the hour should draw the congregation into participation and involvement.

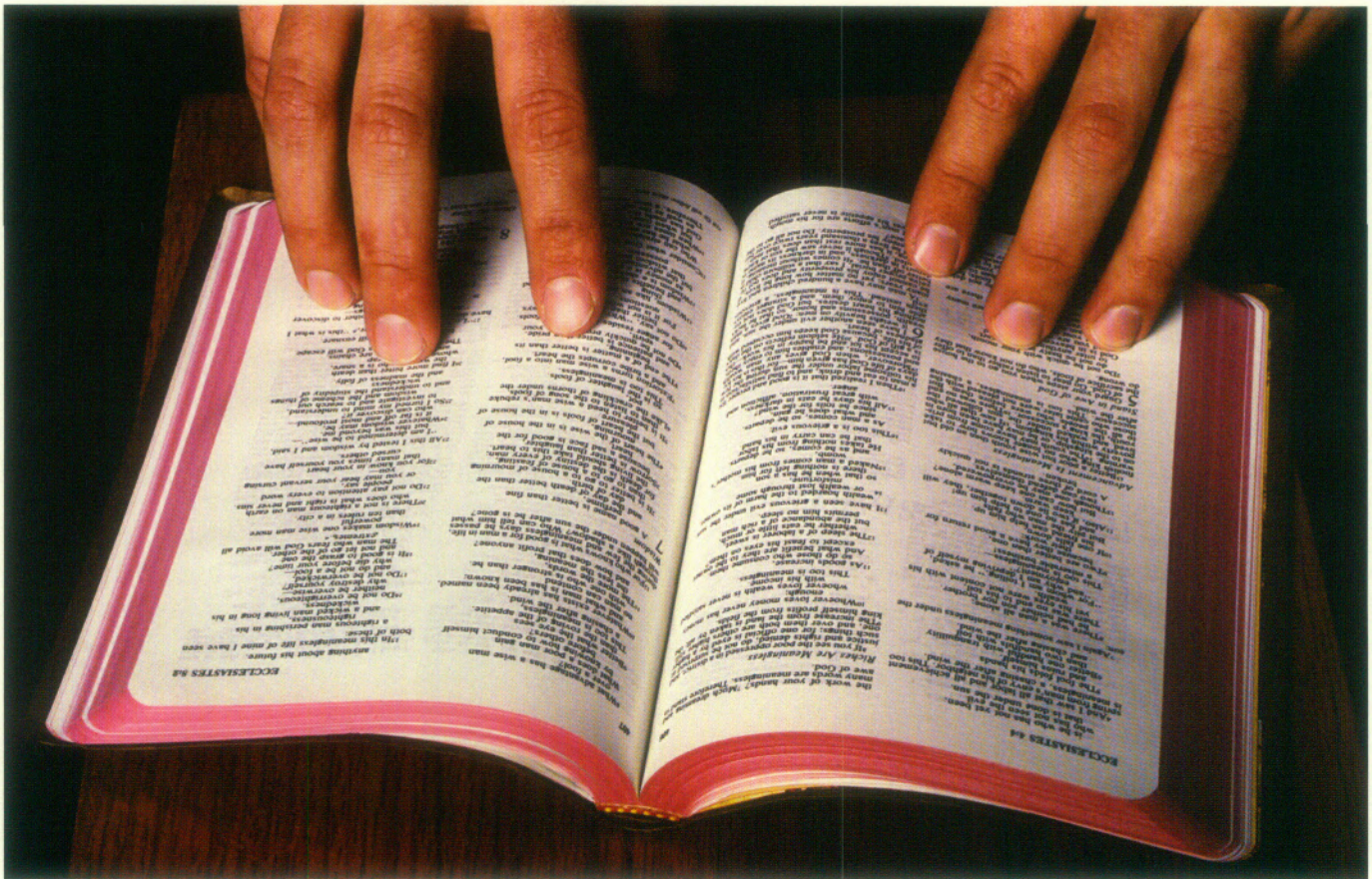
One weakness of the worship service as it has developed in Christian churches over the centuries is that the body of the church is treated as "onlookers" while the priest performs.

Another deficiency is that the clergy have been elevated and the laity diminished. This has reached the point that the father in a Christian household has been spiritually emasculated and expected to relinquish pastoral leadership of his own family to the priest.

This is based on the false assumption that the priest (clergy) has authority but the parent (laity) does not. It is a rebellion against this condition that has been partly responsible for the rise of charismatic churches, in which the whole congregation has a part in the worship hour.

However, in many of those charismatic congregations, the role of preaching has now been relegated almost to oblivion—the Word of God is seldom preached with the weight and majestic pur-





pose with which it should be endowed.

Seventh-day Adventist worship hours must acknowledge those factors:

- We must pursue the active involvement of the whole congregation.
- We must not usurp the pastoral leadership of the parent within his/her own family unit. Having established those factors, we may also say that within the context of the Seventh-day Adventist worship hour, the sermon has primacy. This means:
  - The time allocated for the sermon is still a major portion of the hour.
  - That the content of the sermon should be substantial and well-prepared.
  - That in order to achieve active involvement of the congregation, the sermon must be relevant, coherent, practical, and well-considered.

### Vital ministry provided by the lay preacher

We have established the paramount role of the lay person within the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We have also underlined the important place of the sermon within the whole "active" experience of Seventh-day Adventist worship. It should now become clear that the invitation

to serve the church as a lay preacher is an invitation to one of the highest and most demanding tasks. The person who takes it lightly does so at great risk.<sup>7</sup> Accepting the work of lay preaching is accepting the work of ministry.

- It is *not* about achieving public affirmation or recognition, although it is encouraging to know that your home congregation affirms you by inviting you to take the pulpit.
- It is *not* about filling a vacant slot on the preaching schedule for the sake of filling the slot.
- It is *not* about providing one with the opportunity to ride a favorite spiritual hobby horse, nor to indulge in talking about what has recently been absorbing your interest—unless these subjects are shown to be vitally relevant to the current needs of your congregation.
- It is *not* about taking advantage of a captive audience to "put a few things straight."
- It is about meeting the needs of your congregation as you have identified them during your personal interaction with people in the broad context of church life. It is about revealing the majestic grace of our God, the beauty of Christ, the powerful hand of the Holy Spirit. It is about drawing men



and women to humble themselves before the throne of God where they may find grace to help in time of need.

For these reasons, and in order that the pulpit may be protected from those who may preach questionable doctrine, we recommend that all Seventh-day Adventist lay preachers shall satisfactorily complete a recognized *Certificate Course for Lay Preacher*<sup>8</sup> and that in due course the local congregation shall affirm the appointment as lay preacher by recommending the name to the conference administration that the candidate may be issued a *Lay Preacher License*,<sup>9</sup> which becomes renewable at each conference session.

### Challenges posed by our life and times

At the time of writing this manuscript, the 21st century has already begun to impose its pattern. In reviewing the first principles of becoming a Seventh-day Adventist lay preacher, we must locate ourselves within our age. Several factors will affect your efforts to provide a meaningful lay ministry:

- Personal factors
- Congregational factors
- Pastoral factors
- General factors

### Personal factors affecting the lay preacher

● It is not uncommon that people selected to serve as lay preachers already have a heavy commitment which absorbs much of their time. The demands of employment, of family, and of life mean that there is immense competition for our time. Lay preaching takes time if it is to be done effectively. The lay preacher should recognize that he or she will need to devote several hours to each sermon. The old code of "one hour preparation for each minute of delivery" may be a little too generous, but it is not as wide of the mark as you might think.

● Resources, such as concordances, Bible dictionaries, commentaries, etc., are not cheap. The professional minister accumulates such resources over several years, and it may be difficult for the lay preacher to equip himself overnight. Do not rush out and buy what first meets your eye because a whole lesson is given later to discussing preacher resource tools. But do realize that over time, considerable investment in books and tools will be an asset.

● Opportunity, in terms of time and space, can sometimes pose a problem for the lay preacher. It is not often that a lay preacher can have a dedicated

study or office, and it is more likely that the family living room doubles as your preparation space. This may mean imposing on the family so that there is no distraction from the TV. Some negotiation may be needed so that proper time and space can be given to sermon rehearsal.

### Congregational factors affecting the lay preacher

● We live in a video age, in which minds have been educated to concentrate for only short bursts. On the screen there is constant movement and change. Yet when you stand to preach, there is little apparent movement or variation for 20 to 30 minutes. Some thinking and planning is needed in order to pull those two irreconcilables toward each other.

● You will be addressing people of varying spiritual temperature and maturity. As you look across your congregation, you will see as many variations as there are faces. Some are children, some are elderly. Some are novices to the faith, and others are "old hands." Some will be satisfied with mere entertainment, while others crave substantial spiritual food. Serious planning is needed to overcome these variables and carry the majority toward your goal.

● Familiarity breeds contempt. Even the Master recognized that a prophet is not acknowledged in his own town. Your people know you. Therefore you must be genuine and they must know you speak with integrity. It may take a while before they credit your sermons with the weight they deserve.

### Pastoral factors affecting the lay preacher

● You are not ministering in a vacuum. It is for your pastor to set the pastoral tone and the pulpit menu because he has responsibility to oversee the whole ministry to the church. You are not in competition with him but should see your appointments as opportunities to complement or supplement his program. Talk with him about the spiritual needs of your congregation and let his counsel influence your preparation.

● At times you may feel you are ministering in a vacuum because your pastor seems to be so pre-occupied with his other duties—perhaps for a while he must give his time to an evangelistic series in his other church. Recognize that every pastor has gifts and skills and that these are not standard to all ministers. Some will relish a preaching ministry, while others will emphasize a visiting ministry and

appear to spend little time on sermons. If you find yourself affected by such a vacuum, do not respond negatively. Make it a matter of positive prayer and avoid the inclination to feel you are making up for his deficiencies. Together, as a team, you are ministering to the Lord's people, and you are one component of that team.

### General factors affecting the lay preacher

- Preaching has reached a low ebb in the minds of people. People make jokes about preachers and sermons. The sermon is to be "endured." It is often perceived as empty moralizing. It heaps guilt on people who want to escape from guilt. It is boring and irrelevant. It responds to questions no one is asking. It is an old-fashioned and outdated mode of communication. Some work has to be done if your preaching is to help change that perception.

- Worship facilities and the physical arrangement of churches are not always conducive to helping the preacher. Many Seventh-day Adventist congregations meet in rented buildings whose primary use is not for worship. Even in our own dedicated buildings, people are constantly moving, or there is distraction from the outside world. Part of your training as a lay preacher will include suggestions on how these factors may be reduced.

### Never underestimate what God can make of your dedicated skills and effort

God uses preaching to change lives, to teach and feed the faithful, to comfort, encourage, strengthen the saints. On those grounds, the preacher should remain aware of his awful privilege and open himself/herself continually to the endowments of God. Preaching deserves our very best because it bears such potential as an instrument of the Lord. It is this premise which provides the foundation for this course.

Be encouraged to know how much the Lord can make of you if you will surrender to Him, no matter how humble you may feel your abilities to be.

"He who begins with a little knowledge, in a humble way, and tells what he knows, while seeking diligently for further knowledge, will find the whole heavenly treasure awaiting his demand. The more he seeks to impart light, the more light he will receive. The more one tries to explain the Word of God to others with a love for souls, the

plainer it becomes to himself. The more we use our knowledge and exercise our powers, the more knowledge and power we shall have."<sup>10</sup>

"God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, quickens its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God, develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfill the requirements of God."<sup>11</sup>

"The secret of success is the union of divine power with human effort."<sup>12</sup>

"There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God."<sup>13</sup>

### Two points to remember

- The message of the true preacher is from God.

- This message comes through a man or woman who is totally committed to Him.

Clearly this calls for much more than a quick dip to look for a text from which to preach. It requires an immersion—a continual saturation—in the Word of God and a practicing of the presence of God in one's life, with time and opportunity for quiet, purposeful reflection.

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### References

- <sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 2: 9.
- <sup>2</sup> In this definition, "clergy" refers to men and women employed and salaried by the denomination to provide full-time professional ministry, and "laity" refers to the general body of church members, many of whom provide ministry and service to the church and its community on a voluntary basis.
- <sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:4-31.
- <sup>4</sup> i.e. weddings, funerals, baptisms.
- <sup>5</sup> Men and women ordained as "elders," who have been appointed locally to serve in the current year, may take responsibility for the quarterly preacher's plan, will be expected to stand in when an appointed preacher does not arrive, and may be called upon to serve the Lord's Supper. In exceptional circumstances and with conference approval, a local elder may perform a baptism.
- <sup>6</sup> Matthew 28:18-20.
- <sup>7</sup> Ezekiel 34:7-10.
- <sup>8</sup> This is a Recognized Certificate Course, that is offered under the responsibility of the Ministerial Association of the local conference or mission.
- <sup>9</sup> The "Lay Preacher License" is the official credential issued to authorized Seventh-day Adventist lay preachers. They are granted by controlling committees (i.e. the conference or mission) for limited periods (usually for the triennium). These do not imply a right to preach, but the authority to accept an invitation to preach in any Seventh-day Adventist Church within that specified territory.
- <sup>10</sup> Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 354.
- <sup>11</sup> Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, p. 285.
- <sup>12</sup> Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 509.
- <sup>13</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 250.



# Qualifications for successful leadership

*Ellen G. White*

## Efficiency

Listlessness and inefficiency are not piety. When we realize that we are working for God, we shall have a higher sense than we have ever had before of the sacredness of ritual service. This realization will put life and vigilance and persevering energy into the discharge of every duty.

—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 150.

The time demands greater efficiency and deeper consecration. Oh, I am so full of this subject that I cry to God, "Raise up and send forth messengers filled with a sense of their responsibility, messengers in whose hearts self-idolatry, which lies at the foundation of all sin, has been crucified."

—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 27.

"The work committed to the disciples would require great efficiency; for the tide of evil ran deep and strong against them."

—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 31.

## Cultured speech

"The right culture and use of the power of speech has to do with every line of Christian work. . . . We should accustom ourselves to speak in pleasant tones, to use pure and correct language, and words that are kind and courteous."

—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 336.

"Every minister and every teacher should bear in mind that he is giving to the people a message that involves eternal interests. The truth spoken will judge them in the great day of final reckoning. And with some souls the manner delivering the message will determine its reception or rejection. Then let the word be so spoken that it will appeal to the understanding and impress the heart. Slowly, distinctly, and solemnly should it

be spoken, yet with the earnestness which its importance demands."

—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 336.

"As you seek to draw others within the circle of His love, let the purity of your language, the unselfishness of your service, the joyfulness of your demeanor, bear witness to the power of His grace."

—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 156.

"Every Christian is called to make known to others the unsearchable riches of Christ; therefore he should seek for perfection in speech. He should present the word of God in a way that will commend it to the hearers. God does not design that His human channels shall be uncouth. It is not His will that man shall belittle or degrade the heavenly current that flows through him to the world."

—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 336.

"They will be educated in patience, kindness, affability, and helpfulness. They will practice true Christian courtesy, bearing in mind that Christ, their companion, cannot approve of harsh, unkind words or feelings. Their words will be purified. The power of speech will be regarded as a precious talent, lent them to do a high and holy work."

—*Gospel Workers*, p. 97.

## Mental culture

"Mental culture is what we, as a people need, and what we must have in order to meet the demands of the time."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 414.

"We must not enter into the Lord's work haphazard and expect success. The Lord needs men of mind, men of thought. Jesus calls for coworkers, not blunderers. God wants right-thinking and intelligent men to do the great work necessary to the

salvation of souls.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 67.

“Some need to discipline the mind by exercise. They should force it to think. While they depend upon some one to think for them, to solve their difficulties, and they refuse to tax the mind with thought, the inability to remember, to look ahead and discriminate, will continue. Efforts must be made by every individual to educate the mind.”

—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 188.

“God does not want us to be content with lazy, undisciplined minds, dull thoughts, and loose memories.”—*Counsels to Teachers*, p. 506.

“Men of God must be diligent in study, earnest in the acquirement of knowledge, never wasting an hour. Through persevering exertion they may rise to almost any degree of eminence as Christians, as men of power and influence.”

—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 411.

“Only let the moments be treasured. . . . The time spent in traveling; . . . the moments of waiting for meals, waiting for those who are tardy in keeping an appointment,— if a book were kept at hand, and these fragments of time were improved in study, reading, or careful thought, what might not be accomplished.”

—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 343, 344.

“A resolute purpose, persistent industry, and careful economy of time, will enable men to acquire knowledge and mental discipline which will qualify them for almost any position of influence and usefulness.”

—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 344.

“Men in responsible positions should improve continually. They must not anchor upon an old experience, and feel that it is not necessary to become scientific workers. Man, although the most helpless of God’s creatures when he comes into the world, and the most perverse in his nature, is nevertheless capable of constant advancement. He may be enlightened by science, ennobled by virtue, and may progress in mental and moral dignity, until he reaches a perfection of intelligence and a purity of character but little lower than the perfection and purity of angels.”

—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 93.

“Those who would be workers together with God must strive for perfection of every organ of the body and quality of the mind. True education is the preparation of the physical, mental, and moral powers for the performance of every duty; it is the training of body, mind, and soul for divine service. This is the education that will endure unto eternal life.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 330.

“Mechanics, lawyers, merchants, men of all trades and professions, educate themselves that they may become masters of their business. Should the followers of Christ be less intelligent, and while professedly engaged in His service, be ignorant of the ways and means to be employed? The enterprise of gaining everlasting life is above every earthly consideration. In order to lead souls to Jesus there must be a knowledge of human nature and a study of the human mind. Much careful thought and fervent prayer are required to know how to approach men and women upon the great subject of truth.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 67.

### Christian dignity and politeness

“The lack of true dignity and Christian refinement in the ranks of Sabbathkeepers is against us as a people, and makes the truth which we profess unsavory. The work of educating the mind and manners may be carried forward to perfection. If those who profess the truth do not now improve their privileges and opportunities to grow up to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus, they will be no honor to the cause of truth, no honor to Christ.”

—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 358, 359.

“Be sure to maintain the dignity of the work by a well-ordered life and godly conversation. Never be afraid of raising the standard too high. . . . All coarseness and roughness must be put away from us. Courtesy, refinement, Christian politeness, must be cherished. Guard against being abrupt and blunt. Do not regard such peculiarities as virtues; for God does not so regard them. Endeavor not to offend any unnecessarily.”

—*Review and Herald*, Nov. 25, 1890.

“There is the greatest necessity that men and women who have a knowledge of the will of God, should learn to become successful workers in His cause. They should be persons of polish, of under-



standing, not having the deceptive outside gloss and simpering affectation of the worldling, but that refinement and true courteousness which savors of heaven, and which every Christian will have if he is a partaker of the divine nature."

—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 358.

"We have the greatest truth and hope that were ever given to our world, and the greatest faith; and we want to represent this in its exalted character to the world. We do not want to assume the attitude as though we were passing through the world begging pardon of the world because we venture to believe this precious, sacred truth; but we want to walk humbly with God, and conduct ourselves as though we were children of the most high God, and, although feeble instruments, as though we were handling most important and interesting subjects, higher and more exalted than any temporal, worldly themes."

—*Review and Herald*, July 26, 1887.

"The laborer for souls needs consecration, integrity, intelligence, industry, energy, and tact. Possessing these qualifications, no man can be inferior; instead he will have a commanding influence for good."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 111.

"Men should be at work who are willing to be taught as to the best way of approaching individuals and families. Their dress should be neat, but not foppish, and their manners such as not to disgust the people. There is a great want of true politeness among us as a people. This should be cultivated by all who take hold of the missionary work."

—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 391, 392.

### Genuineness

"There must be no pretense in the lives of those who have so sacred and solemn a message as we have been called to bear. The world is watching Seventh-day Adventists, because it knows something of their profession of faith, and of their high standard; and when it sees those who do not live up to their profession, it points at them with scorn."

—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 23.

"Men may have excellent gifts, good ability, splendid qualifications; but one defect, one secret sin indulged, will prove to the character what the worm-eaten plank does to the ship,—utter disaster

and ruin!"—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 90.

"Paul carried with him the atmosphere of heaven. All who associated with him felt the influence of his union with Christ. The fact that his own life exemplified the truth he proclaimed, gave convincing power to his preaching. Here lies the power of the truth. The unstudied, unconscious influence of a holy life is the most convincing sermon that can be given in favor of Christianity. Argument, even when unanswerable, may provoke only opposition; but a godly example has a power that it is impossible wholly to resist."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 59.

"True character is not shaped from without, and put on; it radiates from within. If we wish to direct others in the path of righteousness, the principles of righteousness must be enshrined in our own hearts. Our profession of faith may proclaim the theory of religion, but it is our practical piety that holds forth the word of truth. The consistent life, the holy conversation, the unswerving integrity, the active, benevolent spirit, the godly example,—these are the mediums through which light is conveyed to the world."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 307.

"Prayers, exhortation, and talk are cheap fruits, which are frequently tied on; but fruits that are manifested in good works, in caring for the needy, the fatherless, and widows, are genuine fruits, and grow naturally upon a good tree."

—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 24.

### Aggressiveness

"God does not generally work miracles to advance His truth. If the husbandman neglects to cultivate the soil, God works no miracle to counteract the sure results. He works according to great principles made known to us, and it is our part to mature wise plans, and set in operation the means whereby God shall bring about certain results. Those who make no decided effort, but simply wait for the Holy Spirit to compel them to action, will perish in darkness. You are not to sit still and do nothing in the work of God."

—*The Southern Watchman*, Dec. 1, 1903.

"Some who engage in missionary service are weak, nerveless, spiritless, easily discouraged. They lack push. They have not those positive traits of character that give power to do something,—the

spirit and energy that kindle enthusiasm. Those who would win success must be courageous and hopeful. They should cultivate not only the passive but the active virtues."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 290.

"The Lord is in need of workers who will push the triumphs of the cross of Christ."  
—*Review and Herald*, May 6, 1890.

"Not with tame, lifeless utterance is the message to be given, but with clear, decided, stirring utterances."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 16.

"It is not silver-tongued orators that are needed to give this message. The truth in all its pointed severity must be spoken. Men of action are needed,—men who will labor with earnest, ceaseless energy for the purifying of the church and the warning of the world."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 187.

"God has no use for lazy men in His cause; He wants thoughtful, kind, affectionate, earnest workers."  
—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 411.

## Determination

"Those in the service of God must show animation and determination in the work of winning souls. Remember that there are those who will perish unless we as Gods instrumentalities work with a determination that will not fail nor become discouraged."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 418.

"He has given us a great work to do. Let us do it with accuracy and determination. Let us show in our lives what the truth has done for us."  
—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 418.

## Zeal

"It is earnest Christian zeal that is wanted,—a zeal that will be manifested by doing something . . . No more could a soul who possesses Christ be hindered from confessing Him, than could the waters of Niagara be stopped from flowing over the falls."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 233.

"Every one who accepts Christ as his personal Saviour will long for the privilege of serving God. Contemplating what heaven has done for him, his heart is moved with boundless love and adoring gratitude. He is eager to signalize his gratitude by devoting his abilities to God's service. He longs to

show his love for Christ and for His purchased possession. He covets toil, hardship, sacrifice."

—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 502.

"There is a wide field for the Marthas, with their zeal in active religious work. But let them first sit with Mary at the feet of Jesus. Let diligence, promptness, and energy be sanctified by the grace of Christ; then the life will be an unconquerable power for good."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 525.

"In the name of the Lord, with the untiring perseverance and unflagging zeal that Christ brought into His labors, we are to carry forward the work of the Lord."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 25.

"We need to break up the monotony of our religious labor. We are doing a work in the world, but we are not showing sufficient activity and zeal. If we were more in earnest, men would be convinced of the truth of our message. The tameness and monotony of our service for God repels many souls of a higher class, who need to see a deep, earnest, sanctified zeal."

—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 417.

## Patience

"To be a coworker with Jesus, you should have all patience with those for whom you labor, not scorning the simplicity of the work, but looking to the blessed result. When those for whom you labor do not exactly meet your mind, you often say in your heart, 'Let them go; they are not worth saving.' What if Christ had treated poor outcasts in a similar manner? He died to save miserable sinners, and if you work in the same spirit and in the same manner indicated by the example of Him whom you follow, leaving the results with God, you can never in this life measure the amount of good you have accomplished."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 132.

"Work disinterestedly, lovingly, patiently, for all with whom you are brought into contact. Show no impatience. Utter not one unkind word. Let the love of Christ be in your hearts, the law of kindness on your lips."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 41.

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*Ellen G. White, messenger of the Lord and one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.*



# Child friendly pastoring

Chanta J. Klingbeil

*Children are members of the church. They may not return tithe, and they might have temper tantrums just when you are making the altar call. But children are the church's future. They are unique, and they need the Savior and His love.*

Jesus had a soft spot for children in His ministry. He risked confrontation to let it be known that His ministry was also for children. When the disciples tried to prevent the children from coming to Him, Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them" (Matt. 19:14, NIV). Children were comfortable around Jesus, and He seems to have found in them comfort and inspiration. Once He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:2, 3, NIV).

A good point of contact between the pastor and the children is the sermon time. However, children generally view sermon time as adult time. We need to help children feel that it is also their time or run the risk of their growing into adolescence and retaining the idea that sermon time is exclusively for adults and time for them to laugh with their peers in the church foyer.

Some churches have tried to involve the children through a special child's story time during worship service. While the church must be lauded for this, the children's time may actually serve to reinforce the idea that the sermon which follows is a strictly adult affair. If your church has a story time, perhaps you should tell the story yourself as often as possible, rather than inviting someone else to tell it. Coming down from the pulpit to sit with the children on the floor as you tell the story is a good way of telling the kids that they are important to you. They may forget the story, but in years to come they won't forget that "Pastor Thomas always came and sat with us and told us a story."

While one would not wish to water down the message of the Word, it may be a good idea to prepare your sermons with a younger audience in mind. The best university professors are often ex-school-teachers. They seem to have brought the ability to speak simply in cliché-free language. Rephrasing theological language and ecclesiastical dialect with plain English will breathe new life into your preaching and make it easy for both children and adults.

Many of Jesus' sermons began with simple stories. Jesus spoke about seeds, yeast, pearls, pigs, and losing things. People listened to Him. No one can resist listening to well-placed, well-told illustrations. If our sermons are too dry and dusty to keep the ten to twelve-year olds' attentions, chances are much of the rest of the congregation has also been lost.

## Listening aids

Listening is an art that needs developing. In the fast pace of modern communications, kids are bombarded with light, action, and color and don't have too much practice in listening skills. Here are some ideas to help children learn to listen to the sermon while also entertaining them and keeping them quiet during the sermon time.

*The picture method.* Just before beginning the sermon, announce that the children will be asked to be involved in the sermon. Have deacons distribute sheets of paper and pencils to each child. Then ask the children to draw the key Bible text, or their favorite illustration from the sermon. Announce that all drawings will be collected at the door and will be on display in the church foyer the following week. Children, parents, and others will be

(Continued on page 30)

# Are Adventist teachings Christ-centered?

*Francis D. Nichol*

A study of Adventist doctrine reveals that we are not only not legalists but uniquely a people who center our teachings in Christ, exalting Him highly in our distinctive teachings. Indeed, our most distinctive doctrines have as their most distinctive feature the exaltation of Christ.

## Second-advent doctrine

Our outstanding doctrine of the literal second advent of Christ truly exalts Him. We proclaim that "this same Jesus" who went up to heaven will return as "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

Whenever we hold a series of lectures setting forth our message, we always present with emphasis the following scripture, along with numerous other texts that exalt Christ: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). None can lis-



ten to our preaching without realizing that the whole drama of the ages is soon to come to its climax in Christ and His glorious advent, and that the hope of all godly men rests upon Him and the deliverance He has promised. We have never fallen into the delusion of believing or teaching that world betterment can come as a result of man's own endeavors. We have no faith in man's powers. We have ever taught that a better world will come only when Christ comes the second time to make all things new.

## Emphasis on prophecy

Our emphasis on prophecy provides us with some of the best proofs that He who was born in Bethlehem was indeed the promised Messiah. Christ proved His Messiahship to His doubting disciples by quoting the Bible prophets. Of His conversation that resurrection day with two disciples on the road to Emmaus we read: "He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter



into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24: 25).

A little later we read these words concerning His statement to the eleven: "He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me." We do not attempt to improve on Christ's method for establishing His Messiahship. One of our distinctive prophetic teachings deals with the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14. This includes the 70-weeks prophecy of Daniel 9: 24-27. And it is this prophecy that provides one of the most amazing proofs that Jesus is indeed the Christ.

### **The mortality of man**

In our preaching of the mortality of man we make very real and forceful the truth, that his only hope of everlasting life is through Christ. We teach the Bible truth that man is not immortal by nature, that his sins doom him to return to dust. We teach that without Christ, only death looms for the whole race, that it was our Lord who "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." We set forth Christ as the one whose voice will call to life the sleeping saints at the great judgment day, for we believe in a literal resurrection from the dead. How could we exalt Him more highly?

### **Sanctuary teaching**

In our preaching of the doctrine of the priestly ministry of Christ in the setting of the ancient sanctuary service, we exalt Him as our great High Priest, who is ministering His shed blood in our behalf, and who is our only hope of salvation. For we teach that when His priestly work is ended, the destiny of all men is settled, the righteous are eternally saved, and the wicked forever debarred from any future probation. How could we exalt Christ more highly as the center of all our hope of eternall salvation?

### **Our preaching of the law**

In our preaching of the law we exalt Christ by revealing that His death on Calvary was man's only means of escape from the judgment of death that was upon him. All of us are worthy of death,

because we are lawbreakers, for "sin is the transgression of the law." If God's law could have been abolished, then Christ's death would have been unnecessary, superfluous, and His sacrifice on Calvary would lose its value as the one way of escape from the death wages that sin imposes on men. We preach that God's divine law could not be abolished, and that man's only hope lies in Christ, who died to pay the penalty that our law-breaking demanded. We emphasize the impressive truth set forth by Paul regarding the work of Christ that enables us to give obedience to God's law. Says the apostle: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8: 1-4). Thus again do we exalt Christ by setting Him forth as the one who makes possible our obedience to God's holy law, the Ten Commandments.

### **Sabbath doctrine**

In our preaching of the Sabbath we exalt Christ by giving reality to the Bible declaration that He is Creator. Indeed, we are almost unique in stressing the sublime truth of His Creatorship. To Adventists, the texts that set forth this fact are very familiar, And it is only as we believe that He is Creator that we can believe He has power to re-create us, that is, to redeem us, for redemption is a creative act. Further, as we have already learned, the Sabbath truth guards the way against taking the first step on the road to an apostasy that robs Christ of His divinity, and His precious blood of its saving power—an apostasy that robs Christianity of its Christ. The Sabbath truth prepares the heart to accept the whole of the Bible, with its solemn climax on Calvary and its glorious climax in Christ's second advent. How could we exalt Christ more highly?

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*Francis D. Nichol, wrote this article when he was the editor of the Adventist Review.*

# Slices of Life

*Henry Feyerabend*

## DESTINY IN THE SLUMS

Kevin and Karen Miller write of the power of a God-given vision: One couple lived in London 130 years ago. For the first 10 years of their marriage, William Booth, especially, was in a quandary: What was God calling him to do? Then his wife, Catherine, a skillful Bible teacher, was invited to preach in London. While they were there, William took a late-night walk through the slums of London's East End. Every fifth building was a pub. Most had steps at the counter so little children could climb up and order gin. That night he told Catherine, "I seemed to hear a voice sounding in my ears, 'Where can you go and find such heathen as these, and where is there so great a need for your labors?' Darling, I have found my destiny!"

Later that year, 1865, the couple opened the "Christian Mission" in London's slums. Their life vision: to reach the "down and outers" that other Christians ignored. That simple vision of two people grew into the Salvation Army, which now ministers through 3 million members in 91 countries.

*See: Mark 13:34; 1 Corinthians 3:9; 2 Timothy 4:5.*

## SAVED BY AN UNKNOWN LAYMAN

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, in the minds of some of us, was the greatest preacher since the apostle Paul. When he was 22 years of age, he preached sermons that some of us hope we may preach before we die.

We won't, but we can dream. Until his death, he preached to five thousand people—morning and evening—in London in the days before you had great big crowds, before transportation was like what we know today.

When Spurgeon was 15 years of age, he had not come to a personal commitment to Jesus Christ. On a blustery, snowy Sunday morning, he decided to go to church. He couldn't get to his planned destination because the weather was so bad. So he turned into a side street, and went into a Methodist church. The preacher didn't even get



there. Only fifteen people had come to the church. A layman decided worship ought to take place, so he got up to preach. He used (Isaiah 45:22), "Look to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth." In ten minutes he had exhausted all that he could think to say.

Then he noticed a boy in the back, under the balcony. He said, "Young man, you look like you're in trouble. Look unto Jesus and be saved." That's exactly what happened that morning. Charles Haddon Spurgeon gave his life to Christ. That troubled young man became the mightiest preacher of the last century. He was led to faith in Christ by a man nobody knows—an obscure layman.

—Gordon Johnson.

*See: Isaiah 12:2; 45:22; Mark 13:22; 1 Corinthians 3:9.*

## EVERY INSTRUMENT IS NECESSARY

A conductor was rehearsing his great orchestra. The organ was rolling, giving beautiful melody. The drums were thundering. The trumpets were blaring out. The violins were singing beautifully.

Suddenly something seemed wrong. Someone in the orchestra had thought, (with all that is going on, I can rest a while. This is a rehearsal anyway).



The conductor threw up his arms and said, "Where's the piccolo?" The piccolo player said, "I'm obscure. I don't amount to much. With all of this going on, I don't have to keep playing." But the one with the trained ear said, "Every one of us is necessary." When you and I feel obscure, we must remember God has something significant for our lives, and we need to respond.

—Gordon Johnson.

*See: Mark 10:43-44; Mark 13:34; 1 Corinthians 12:12-26.*

## EVERY GENERATION IS STRATEGIC

Every generation is strategic. We are not responsible for the past generation, and we cannot bear full responsibility for the next one; but we do have our generation. God will hold us responsible as to how well we fulfill our responsibilities to this age and take advantage of our opportunities.

—Billy Graham.

*See: Matthew 9:37; John 4:35; Philippians 2:12; 2 Timothy 4:5.*

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSPECTIVE

A man came to a construction site where stonemasons were working. The man said to one, "What are you doing?" The stonemason said, "You can see, I'm chipping a stone."

The man walked over to another mason and said, "What are you doing?" He answered, "I'm building a wall."

The man walked over to a third mason and said, "What are you doing?" This mason answered, "I am building a cathedral." Ha! All three were doing the same thing, but what a difference perspective makes!

—Gordon Johnson.

*See: Zechariah 4:9; Mark 13:34; Acts 20:24; 1 Corinthians 15:58; 2 Timothy 4:7.*

## THE WORLD IS MINE

I was coming back from Ridgecrest a few years ago, and there had been three thousand students or so. They show up everywhere—in your bath, in your shower—for a whole week. Finally you're on the plane, and you think, "O Lord, thank you that I'm moving away from this place." And because the Bible is the last desperate defense, you pull it up around your face. When you have your Bible around your face, everybody will leave you alone. It's a frightening specter. Even the stewardess won't ask you if you want peanuts. I said to the Lord,

"Lord, please, I just want to be alone for two or three hours before I get back to Omaha."

I became aware of a young man crying in the seat beside me. He looked like a student, 19 or 20 years of age, and again I said, "Lord, he's not mine. My sinners are all on the ground in Omaha." He kept crying, and finally I put down my Bible and said, "Son, I don't know what is the matter, but if there's anything I can help you with, I'd like to."

He told me that his mother, father, and his little sister had been killed in a car accident in Asheville,



North Carolina, the day before while on vacation. Suddenly, my heart grew very still and silent. Then I felt the pain, or tried to. I turned to him and said, "I don't know what you must be feeling. I can't imagine this, but I know Someone who understands it perfectly." I took the Bible and shared with him about Jesus Christ and was able to lead him to Christ. But it was not my last act. I got off the plane there, and I called someone I knew and asked him to meet him at the plane where he was going to be landing. He needed help that day.

You see, the world is mine. I can't brush off somebody because I happen to sit by him and don't know him. Yes, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." If he is a servant, then we are servants.

—Calvin Miller.

*See: Mark 10:44; Galatians 6:10; Philippians 2:5; 1 Timothy 6:18.*

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*Henry Feyerabend writes from Waldheim, Saskatchewan, Canada.*

*(Continued from page 3—Elders).*

volunteer services.

Sharing or locating information is a greatly needed service during a crisis. Timely information could ease a state of panic. Consider building a file in the church office that contains the names of helping agencies.

Another way elders can offer assistance is in the area of decision making. People experiencing a crisis are often confused and display distorted decision-making capabilities. You can help them explore alternatives and offer clearheaded suggestions that may have been overlooked.

No single formula is right for every crisis. Ministering during crises is difficult. No one can state with authority what must be done during these times. Pastors and elders always should be learning, growing, and developing in caring assistance.

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*Adapted from Tim Patrick, "Caring for Persons in Times of Crisis," Church Administration, March 1989, pages 23-24.*



*(Continued from page 7—Christian influence).*

Judea, a Samaria, and a world. Jesus said to start where you are and move forward.

Where are you now? Where are you going? Jesus told us to make disciples. Are you?"<sup>9</sup>

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*James A. Cress writes from Silver Spring, Maryland. He serves the Seventh-day Adventist Church as leader of the General Conference Ministerial Association.*

References:

<sup>1</sup> In Tuttle, p.103.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Rex D. Edwards, *A New Frontier: Every Believer a Minister*, p.98.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>5</sup> McGavran and Arn, p.108.

<sup>6</sup> Fannie L. Houck, *Beyond Baptism*, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Stott, p.121.

<sup>8</sup> George Barna, *What Americans Believe*, pp. 68-76.

<sup>9</sup> Thompson, pp.156, 162.

Taken from the book *You Can Keep Them If You Care*, pp. 72-75.

*(Continued from page 25—Child).*

eager to see the art display the following week. If a particular picture is good and impressive, it may be worth mentioning up front.

*Tracking Bible verses.* This method is particularly good in a Bible study type sermon. Ask the children to keep track of all Bible verses mentioned in the sermon. Parents and older siblings may help. At the end of the sermon, collect the papers. Next worship service, thank the children who participated, and give each one of them a bookmark or some small token of appreciation.

Probably one of the most important ways to gain the younger audience's attention is to involve them in the service itself. Some churches have a special children's offering. Children collect the offerings in their hands and bring them to the front. This lets the children know that they are an important part of the church family.

In some churches a child or young person could also be asked to lead out in the Scripture reading or song service. In these situations make sure the child is prepared to do this and knows that he or she is doing it as part of the experience of worship leadership. Such opportunities assigned during the week, or even earlier, develop in children a sense of responsibility toward both the church and themselves. They will grow into trustworthy teenagers and adults in the congregation.

### After hours

Contact with the children should not be confined to church service alone. Giving the children small attentions forms lasting impressions: like shaking each child's hand as he or she leaves the sanctuary, learning and using their names, affirming them for their contribution to the church, calling them at home to offer birthday wishes, and praying for them by name when you visit their homes. Small things go a long way in forming positive attitudes.

Growing up in today's climate isn't easy. Many children, even in our churches, come from broken homes and bear some significant scars. We need to pray that God will help our ministries to become child-friendly, our churches secure, warm, and loving places, that our children may grow "in wisdom and, stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52, NIV).

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*Chanta J. Klingbeil is a full-time homemaker in Lima, Peru.*



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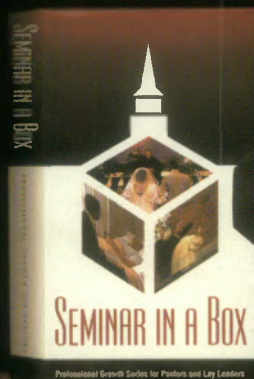
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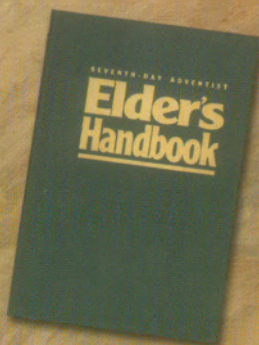
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