

# Elder's Digest

A Quarterly Resource for Local Church Elders

Number Nine

PAID  
Silver Spring, MD  
Permit No. 5910

1996-118-03  
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ARE AT  
THE WHEEL**



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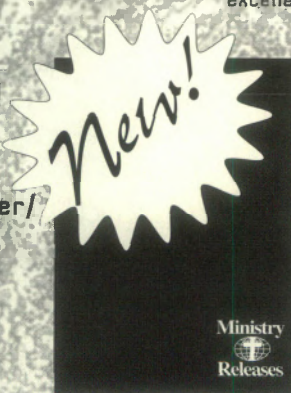
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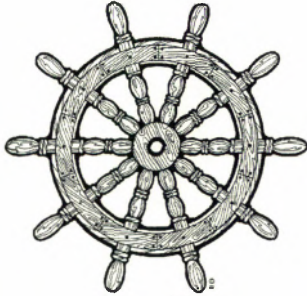
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*God has given the Seventh-day Adventist church a unique message for the world.*

Special Section  
**Church Life**



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*His hands are at the wheel.*

# Elder's Digest

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# Love, Not Power, Is the Mark of a Christian Leader

Joel Sarli



Often, the relational tensions between pastors and elders, officers and members, children and parents, employees and employers, teachers and students, and men and women in our modern society are understood in terms of power and control. This semantic slant on the discussion often leads to the conclusion that leadership includes the forceful use of power by the one who is in command resulting in domination if not outright abuse of those dominated. This misconception of leadership has created a lot of unnecessary tension even in the church.

If we take a look at some Biblical injunctions we can correct this false assumption and its conclusion.

Jesus reminded the disciples in Luke 22:25-26 (NIV) "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves." Likewise, Peter describes leadership and authority as gentle service, "serving as overseers . . . eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you" (1 Peter 5:2-3, NIV).

In the home Paul does not command husbands to dominate, rather he instructs them to lovingly and sacrificially serve their wives as Christ does His church (Ephesians 5:25-33).

Along these lines, Diane Knippers of the Institute on Religion and Democracy declared in Beijing, "I am likewise skeptical of the use of the concept of power in the family. . . . What a sterile and bankrupt view of the most private and intimate human relationship! . . . The root problem is husbands who do not love their wives. Our goal should be to change their minds and hearts, not merely to restrict their behavior."

Love is the factor that makes the difference in any kind of relationship. Love, and not power, must be the basic characteristic of a leader in the Adventist church. Clearly, sacrificial service, not power and control, is what is desired and required in Jesus' pattern of leadership.

May the Lord help us to be the kind of leaders that He envisioned as He talked to His disciples about leadership for His church.



## Elder's Digest

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General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

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*Elder's Digest* is published quarterly by the Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, which retains full editorial control. It is printed by the Review and Herald® Publishing Association, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, MD 21740, U.S.A. Articles about the work of the local church elder are welcome, and may be submitted to *Elder's Digest*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904 (301) 680-6516. A stamped, self-addressed envelope should accompany unsolicited manuscripts. Subscription requests or changes may be sent to the same address. Subscriptions: US\$9.95 a year. Single copy US\$3.00. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

**Postmaster:** Send address changes to *Elder's Digest*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 U.S.A.

# Standing on Solid Ground — The Bible

Robert Folkenberg



**W**e claim that we are a people of the Book. It is our foundation, our core, our essence. Everything we do is tested by “What saith the Lord?” for we believe that the Bible is the divine Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

But in contemporary Protestant theology, the authority of the Bible is being undermined and ignored. Denied is the existence of a solid, objective revelation of God upon which our faith and life must be founded.

Seventh-day Adventists have not been unaffected by this trend. Often we hear members say that Christian truths are relative rather than absolute—and therefore, neither universal nor normative.

Others say that they fully accept the Bible, but then appeal to and wholly accept what other sources say the Bible says. They appeal to reason, tradition, science, cultural relativity, and history, and accept the conclusions of these other authorities over what the Bible plainly says.

We cannot condemn wholesale these other fields, for they have served us well in understanding many aspects of God’s Word. But their pernicious claims to supersede or to be the final interpreters of the Bible must be staunchly rejected. . . .

Our unequivocal, historic emphasis upon the divine inspiration and trustworthiness of Scripture has strengthened our church. It has helped us resist the error of treating some parts of Scripture as God’s Word, while ignoring or rejecting other parts. If we accept it as God’s Word, we must accept it all, whether or not we like what it says. To us the Scriptures should be the ultimate revelation of God’s will for our lives.

To submit to Scripture, then, is part of our Christian calling. Without it we would essentially

degenerate into a debating society for the discussion of ideas—not a church with a clear, specific message. As church members we must accept the authority of the Bible and recognize that its teachings are not optional, but normative, and must be obeyed.

Questions then arise: What demands shall the church make upon its members? What is it to do if a member refuses to comply with its demands, or if a member’s conduct or beliefs contradict those the church considers of divine origin? Should the member be allowed to go his or her way and to lead others also? Or should the church, both local and universal, confront such members? . . .

Church discipline is simply the right of self-preservation. No argument about individual liberty, academic freedom, or popular objection to ‘heresy trials’ should negate the need for any group to preserve its fundamental doctrinal commitments.

The church worldwide should have the right to a body of doctrine that is a test of fellowship as well as the right to censure or exclude those who affirm some other creed. The clarity of the faith demands this. Any other attitude would have a debilitating effect on the mission and spiritual vitality of the church.

And those who disparage biblical doctrine must face a practical question: Does honesty permit one to continue in a church while explicitly rejecting specific doctrinal truths?

Without our uncompromised acceptance of scriptural authority and our fundamental beliefs, only a shadow of Adventism will remain for our coming generations. **E**

*Robert Folkenberg is president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland.*



# The Uniqueness of the Seventh-day Adventist Message

Alberto Ronald Timm

**H**ave you ever thought about the uniqueness of the Seventh-day Adventist message? What would you consider as the component of the Seventh-day Adventist message that distinguishes it from the preaching of other Christian denominations? Would it be the doctrines of the perpetuity of God's law and the seventh-day Sabbath, Christ's heavenly ministry, Christ's Second Coming, the conditional immortality of the soul, or the prophetic gift of Ellen White?

I firmly believe that our distinctive doctrines contribute to the uniqueness of the Seventh-day Adventist message. But I do not believe that any of these doctrines (or even all together) can genuinely account for the overall uniqueness of that message as understood by the founders of Seventh-day Adventism.

Allow me to briefly present a few insights on (1) how early Seventh-day Adventists understood the uniqueness of their message; (2) how that understanding gradually shifted over the years; and (3) how to revitalize the uniqueness of the Seventh-day Adventist message in our contemporary setting.

## How Early Seventh-day Adventists Understood the Uniqueness of Their Message

The founders of Sabbatarian Adventism did not confine the uniqueness of their message to one, two, or more isolated doctrines. That uniqueness was seen in the overall setting of their integrated system of doctrines. Uriah Smith, for instance, stated in 1858 that "the present truth is harmonious in all its parts; its links are all connected; the bearing of all its portions upon each other are like clock-work; but break out one cog, and the work is stopped; break one link, and the chain is broken; let down one stitch and we may unravel the whole."<sup>1</sup>

In 1894 Ellen White asserted that "the truth for this time is broad in its outlines, far reaching, embracing many doctrines; but these doctrines are not detached items, which mean little; they are united by golden threads, forming a complete whole, with

Christ as the living center."<sup>2</sup>

These statements underline the fact that the uniqueness of the Seventh-day Adventist message is found in the overall system formed not only by (1) all doctrinal components of that message but also by (2) all the linkages between those components and (3) a "living center." In other words, the whole of the Seventh-day Adventist message is far broader and richer than the simple sum of its parts.

My dissertation, entitled "The Sanctuary and the Three Angels' Messages, 1844-1863: Integrating Factors in the Development of Seventh-day Adventist Doctrines," has shown that it was both the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 and the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12 that helped integrate the major doctrinal components of the early Seventh-day Adventist doctrinal system.<sup>3</sup>

While the sanctuary typology integrated those components theological-historically, the three angels' messages integrated them historical-theologically. The theological-historical integration was due to the fact that the post-1844 cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary was theologically connected to almost all basic Sabbatarian Adventist teachings. The historical-theological integration of the system was brought about by the incorporation of those teachings into the chronological structure provided by the consecutive preaching of the three angels' messages.<sup>4</sup>

Stephen N. Haskell was right when he declared in 1904 that "the truth has come to us as a system."<sup>5</sup>

## Shift from a System Focus to a More Isolated-Docctrine Approach

Up to the early twentieth century, Seventh-day Adventist authors continued to emphasize the interrelationship of doctrines. This emphasis, however, was gradually replaced by a more restricted focus on isolated doctrines.

Four factors seem to have influenced that shift. The first of those factors was the post-1888 attempt to make each of the Seventh-day Adventist doctrines

Christ-centered.<sup>6</sup> While attempting to make Christ the center of each doctrine, Seventh-day Adventists gradually lost sight of the integrating functions of both the sanctuary and the three angels' messages.

A second factor that fostered a more isolated-doctrine approach has been the influence of the Seventh-day Adventist dialogues with Evangelicals which began in the mid-1950 with Walter Martin and D. G. Barnhouse and continued within the broader scholarly milieu. Those dialogues helped Seventh-day Adventists to be better understood and accepted by the larger Evangelical community, but they obfuscated the overall uniqueness of the Adventist message.

In addition to the post-1888 Christ-center emphasis and the Adventist dialogues with Evangelicals, the compartmentalization of theological training into distinctive specialties has produced a whole generation of specialists in a few specific doctrines who have felt uneasy to deal with the broadness of a theological system. This has become an increasing problem because of the considerable lack of dialogue between them.

A fourth anti-system force comes from the over-exaggerated concerns in some Adventist circles about contemporary social and/or existential issues. Those concerns have generated an increasing anti-doctrinal feeling, leading to a further departure from the early Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the uniqueness of the Adventist message.

As a result, the restricted emphasis on isolated doctrines has led some Adventist scholars to limit the broad sanctuary message to its preadvent judgment dimension. Social-existential concerns have influenced other scholars to restrict the meaning of the 1844 event to a non-doctrinal, existential experience of faith and courage.<sup>7</sup>

### Broadening Our Understanding of the Uniqueness of the Adventist Message

The shift of emphasis just mentioned calls for a broadening of our understanding of the uniqueness of the Adventist message. To meet this challenge, Seventh-day Adventists should, in my opinion, (1) revitalize the function of the sanctuary and the three



## God has given the Seventh-day Adventist church a unique message for the world.

angels' messages as integrating factors of the Adventist doctrinal system; (2) demonstrate how each Adventist doctrine is organically interrelated to the other doctrinal components of that system; and (3) show how the whole system can lead us to a more biblical and Christ-centered understanding of the Adventist message.

Starting with the messianic prophecies and the sanctuary typology of the Old Testament, we should be able to show how the religious life of ancient Israel and the teachings of the Old Testament were connected with the

earthly sanctuary. Then we should explain how the life of the Christian church and the teachings of the New Testament are directly related to Christ's sacrifice on the cross and His priestly ministry in the

heavenly sanctuary. Finally, let us demonstrate how the doctrinal system integrated by the antitypical sanctuary has been revitalized and is being proclaimed by the three angels' messages.

I strongly believe that God has given the Seventh-day Adventist Church a unique message for the world. May God help us to proclaim the wholeness to that message "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev 14:6, KJV). **E**

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> [Uriah Smith], "Are the Seven Last Plagues in the Future?" RH, Jan. 7, 1858, 72.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1986), 2:87.

<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed study of the integrating function of the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 and the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12 in the early Seventh-day Adventist doctrinal system, see Alberto R. Timm, "The Sanctuary and the Three Angels' Messages, 1844-1863: Integrating Factors in the Development of Seventh-day Adventist Doctrines" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 475-76.

<sup>5</sup> S. N. Haskell, "The Sanctuary," RH, Oct. 27, 1904.

<sup>6</sup> A classical expression of that attempt is found in W. W. Prescott's textbook, *The Doctrine of Christ: A Series of Bible Studies for Use in Colleges and Seminaries* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1920).

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Steven Daily, *Adventism for a New Generation* (Portland, OR: Better Living Publishers, 1993), 157-68; Jack W. Provonsha, *A Remnant in Crisis* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1993), 123-36.

*Alberto Ronald Timm, Ph.D. writes from Brazil where he teaches theology and serves as elder in the church.*



# Finding Joy in the Sabbath

Bruce Manners

Once, it seemed, every Seventh-day Adventist knew about appropriate Sabbath-keeping—what could and what should not be done.

Not that we didn't at times push the borders, but those borders were well-defined. At times we argued over things: if it was OK to walk on the beach in water up to our ankles, why was it breaking the Sabbath once the water went above our knees?

But mostly we understood about Sabbath-keeping. The things we did were right or wrong, black or white. And that was comforting.

The Age of Why? has changed that. We've been taught to question, and seek reasons. And we've taught our children and our children's children to do the same.

So the depth of water now becomes irrelevant as we tend to talk about principles rather than rules. We take into account cultural backgrounds and influences on Sabbath-keeping. And we even say we shouldn't judge others in the way they keep the Sabbath.

The Sabbath-keeping of my youth seems to be dying. Praise God!

Praise God? Isn't it time to raise the standard again? Sure, let us raise the Sabbath-keeping standard high—but not on the basis of rules.

Jesus worked hard to move the religious leaders of His day away from this approach to Sabbath keeping (John 5).

Can you see them? Red-faced priests rushing as fast as their dignity will allow, to quell the disturbance? Who would dare to break the sanctity of the Sabbath?

Someone has been found walking through Jerusalem carrying his bed mat on the Sabbath. Did I say walking? There was a bounce in the step of this man. A bounce? No, it's more than that. After 38 years of being an invalid, he's testing renewed legs.

Can you see him? Look at his face. Unbelief. Ecstasy. Tears of incredulity.

Watch him. He gives a hop, a run, a jump. He skips—a springbok in the Sabbath herd—it's no wonder he is noticed. Especially with that bed mat. (They have rules about that kind of thing.)

No wonder the people begin to grumble. No wonder they say, "It's the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat."

"The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'" he replies.

Had the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28) instructed him to break the Sabbath rules? Obviously not, but He does help us get Sabbath-keeping into perspective.

He put it something like this, "The Sabbath was made for humans as a rest, a delight and a refreshing; humans weren't made for the Sabbath" (see Mark 2:27).

In telling the man to carry the mat, Jesus gave the Sabbath a flexibility that had not been seen by others of His day. The health and well-being of the cripple was His foremost priority.

This incident illustrates well the principle-based approach to Sabbath-keeping. Here it is to help others. Carrying the mat just happens to be a practical result of the man now being able to walk.

The principles are important. These principles include: The Sabbath is time given from God, for God. The Sabbath is time for family and friends. The Sabbath is time away from the workaday week and business (with rare exceptions in people-helping work). The Sabbath is time for worship. The Sabbath is time to witness to and help others. The Sabbath is time to shut oneself away from the negative influences about us. The Sabbath is not time for selfish entertainment.

Do we lose something as we become principle-based rather than rules based? Does it open Sabbath up to abuse?

One could ask, Does a husband remain faithful to his wife simply because of a marriage agreement? He may, but there's a better way. A husband who loves his wife is faithful because of that love.

If Sabbath-keeping comes out of a love relationship with the Creator-Redeemer, faithfulness will not be a problem. In a love relationship the question is never How little do I have to do to keep this relationship going?, it's What more can I do for this person?

The day becomes precious. So precious, in fact, that it will be guarded with extra care.

And valid questions will be: What would Jesus say? What would Jesus do? What did He do? What can I learn about Sabbath-keeping from Him? What more can I do for Him?

That roots the Sabbath in a Person, not in rules. The Pharisees proved that a legalistic approach to Sabbath can be achieved, but it made Sabbath a burden. When Sabbath-keeping is based on a relationship with the Creator-Redeemer it becomes a joy. **E**

*Bruce Manners writes from Australia where he serves as editor of Record, the official paper of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific Division.*



# Seven Facts About The Sabbath

"The Sabbath is a part of the Decalogue—the Ten Commandments. This alone for ever settles the question as to the perpetuity of the institution.... Until, therefore, it can be shown that the whole Moral Law has been repealed, the Sabbath will stand. . . . **The teachings of Christ** confirm the perpetuity of the Sabbath."—T. C. Blacke, D.D., "Theology Condensed," pages 474, 475.

CHRIST is the Divine Example after whose life the Christian ought to pattern his own. 1 Peter 2:21; (Luke 4:16).

## 1. CHRIST HAS A SPECIAL DAY.

- It is called "The Lord's Day"—Revelation 1:10.
- He is called "Lord of the Sabbath"—Matthew 12:8.
- Which day is the Sabbath?—Exodus 20:10.

*Why is the seventh-day Sabbath the "Lord's Day"?*

## 2. CHRIST WAS THE CREATOR OF THE SABBATH

—Genesis 2:1-3.

- Christ identified as Creator—Colossians 1:13-16; Hebrews 1:1, 2; Ephesians 3:9.
- "God" in Genesis is to be understood as a collective noun referring to the "Godhead"—Genesis 1:26: "let US".

## 3. CHRIST GAVE THE SABBATH TO MANKIND

—Mark 2:27, 28.

- It was not a national institution.
- It was not ceremonial—it was given to man *before* he sinned.
- Its observance pre-dated Sinai—Exodus 16:22-26.

## 4. CHRIST BLESSED THE SABBATH

—Genesis 2:3; Exodus 20:11.

- His infinite blessing is associated with a "day," not a principle or an institution.
- The blessing to include:

*Physical rest*—Exodus 34:21.

*Spiritual renewal*—Hebrews 4:3, 4; (Matthew 11:28-30).

## 5. CHRIST SANCTIFIED THE SABBATH

—Genesis 2:3; Exodus 20:11.

- "It is a sign" of His sanctifying and redeeming power—Ezekiel 20:20; Exodus 31:13-17.
- The same power operative in creation to be manifested in transforming human lives—John 1:12; Romans 1:16.

## 6. CHRIST COMMANDED SABBATH OBSERVANCE

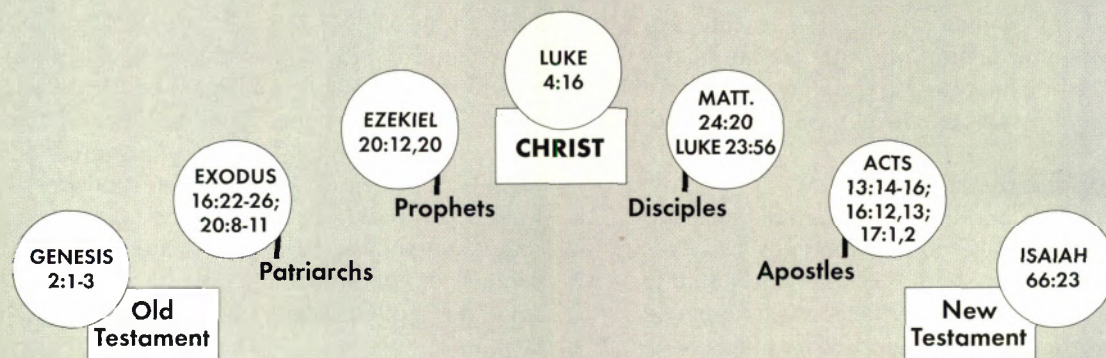
—Exodus 20:8-11.

- Christ is creator, redeemer and **Lawgiver**—Isaiah 33:22; Nehemiah 9:6, 13, 14.  
(*"Lord"* = Christ, e.g., Isaiah 10:11 c.f. John 10:14; Isaiah 40:3 and Luke 1:76.)
- He taught true Sabbath observance—Matthew 12:8-14; Mark 6:2; John 5:16-18.
- His followers observed it after His death—Luke 23:56.
- He expected it to be respected after His resurrection—Matthew 24:20.
- The apostles observed it—Acts 13:14-16, 42-44; 16:12, 13; 17:1, 2; 18:1-4, 11

## 7. CHRIST WILL KEEP IT WITH THE REDEEMED

—Isaiah 66:23.

Through the Ages the SABBATH links the temporal with the Eternal.



Paradise Lost

Rex D. Edwards, D. Min., is the director for continuing education of the General Conference Ministerial Association, Silver Spring, Maryland.

Paradise Restored

# Three Teaching Categories in Evangelism

Mark Finley

**R**ecently Dr. Win Arn has completed a fascinating study on the relationship between the evangelistic process, the number of converts, and the dropout rate of those converts. He has concluded that the process by which people come into the church will determine the rate at which they drop out. This fascinating study reveals some important, significant truths regarding teaching techniques in the seminar setting. Dr. Arn has divided the teaching process into three major categories.

## Manipulative Monologue

The first he calls, *Manipulative Monologue*. In *Manipulative Monologue* the teacher is like a salesman. The attempt is to convince the listener. A series of carefully prepared psychological questions are asked to get the listener to respond in a certain way. The goal of this process is decisions. The only question asked is, "How many decided?"

## Information Transmission

The second teaching method Dr. Arn discusses is *Information Transmission*. Here the individual is a teacher desiring to impart information without desiring to influence the choice of the individual. As a dumptruck backs up and unloads a truckload of dirt, so the individual unloads his truckload of Biblical truth. The question here is not how many decided, but how many heard? The teacher sees himself as a purveyor of information. His goal is to get out the information. He is not as interested about whether people respond or not as long as they hear.

## Non-manipulative Dialogue

The last method Dr. Arn calls *Non-manipulative Dialogue*. In this method information is clearly and logically communicated. It is done in the setting of caring and love. The other person is treated with dignity and respect. His questions are openly received and intelligently answered. His needs are understood. In creative dialog the basic goal is presenting information in a loving way to positively

influence the life of the other person, but never manipulating the will.

Dr. Arn studied three groups of 240 members each who had been recipients of an evangelistic invitation. He analyzed those who made a Christian commitment and were now active, those who dropped out after making a commitment, and those who said no. His findings are startling!

Eighty-seven percent of the dropouts, 209 out of 240, came through the *Manipulative Monologue* approach. Although initially this *Manipulative Monologue* approach persuaded the greatest number of converts, the apostasies from this approach were absolutely overwhelming.

Second, 75 percent of those who said No, 180 out of 240, saw evangelism as a process of communicating certain facts. They were approached through the *Information Transmission* process.

Seventy percent of those active, 169 out of 240, came through the *Non-manipulative Dialogue* approach. In other words they carefully listened to the information, filtered it through their minds, asked questions, felt satisfied that their questions were answered and personally decided on the basis of the information presented.

A seminar process which does not allow for questions or respect the opinions of another is bound to have low results. An evangelistic process which sees its goal as decisions, rather than disciples, tends to create dropouts. A decision and a disciple are not synonymous. Disciple-making is a process, not an event. The Biblical goal is not merely oral confession but a life transformed. If truth is presented too quickly, if doctrines come too fast, if they're not logical and systematic, if an individual feels manipulated or forced, he will either drop out of the seminar or continue to attend with a blockage of mind and not ultimately make a decision. **E**

*Mark Finley writes from Thousand Oaks, California where he serves as the director of It Is Written, an international evangelistic telecast program.*



# The Greatest of These is Evangelism

A Paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 13

Melvin K. Eckenroth

**T**hough I speak with the tongues of scholarship, and though I use approved methods of education, and fail to win my pupils to Christ, or to build them up in Christian character, I am become as the moan of the wind in a Syrian desert.

Though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries, and can command great forces of argument and crush all who would dare argue with me, if I win them not to Christ I am indeed a noisy and harmful sounding brass, with no more value than a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the best teaching skill and understand all mysteries of religious psychology, and though I have all Biblical knowledge, and lose not myself in the task of winning others to Christ, I am become as a cloud of mist in the open sea.

And though I read all the conference bulletins and Sabbath School lessons, though I raise my Ingathering goal and pay my honest tithe, and though I attend ministerial institutes and go to summer camp meetings, and yet am satisfied with less than winning sinners to Christ and establishing souls in Christian character and service, it profiteth me nothing.

The soul-winning teacher, preacher, and worker of any station suffereth long and is kind, and finds great joy only in scattering the words of saving truth; he envieth not others who are free of the teaching task and lowly estate; he vaunteth not himself to some great position of authority and is not puffed up with intellectual pride.

The soul winner doth not behave unseemly between Sabbaths, and seeketh not his own comfort and is not easily provoked, nor dwelleth upon evil reports concerning his brethren; beareth all things, believeth all things the brethren give for assurance, and hopeth all things will so develop.

And now abideth knowledge, methods, evangelism, these three; but the greatest of these is evangelism. **E**

*Melvin K. Eckenroth was Assistant Professor of Practical Theology at the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary when he wrote this article.*

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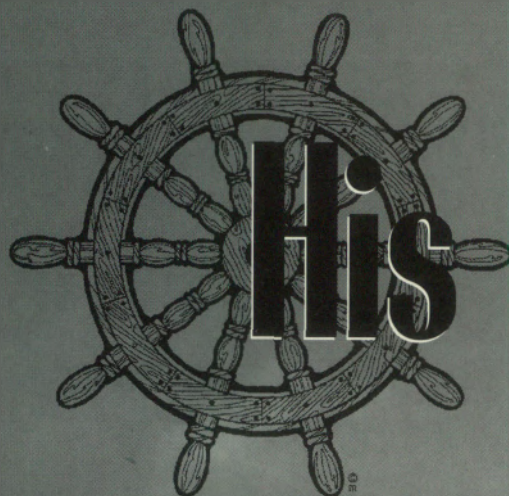
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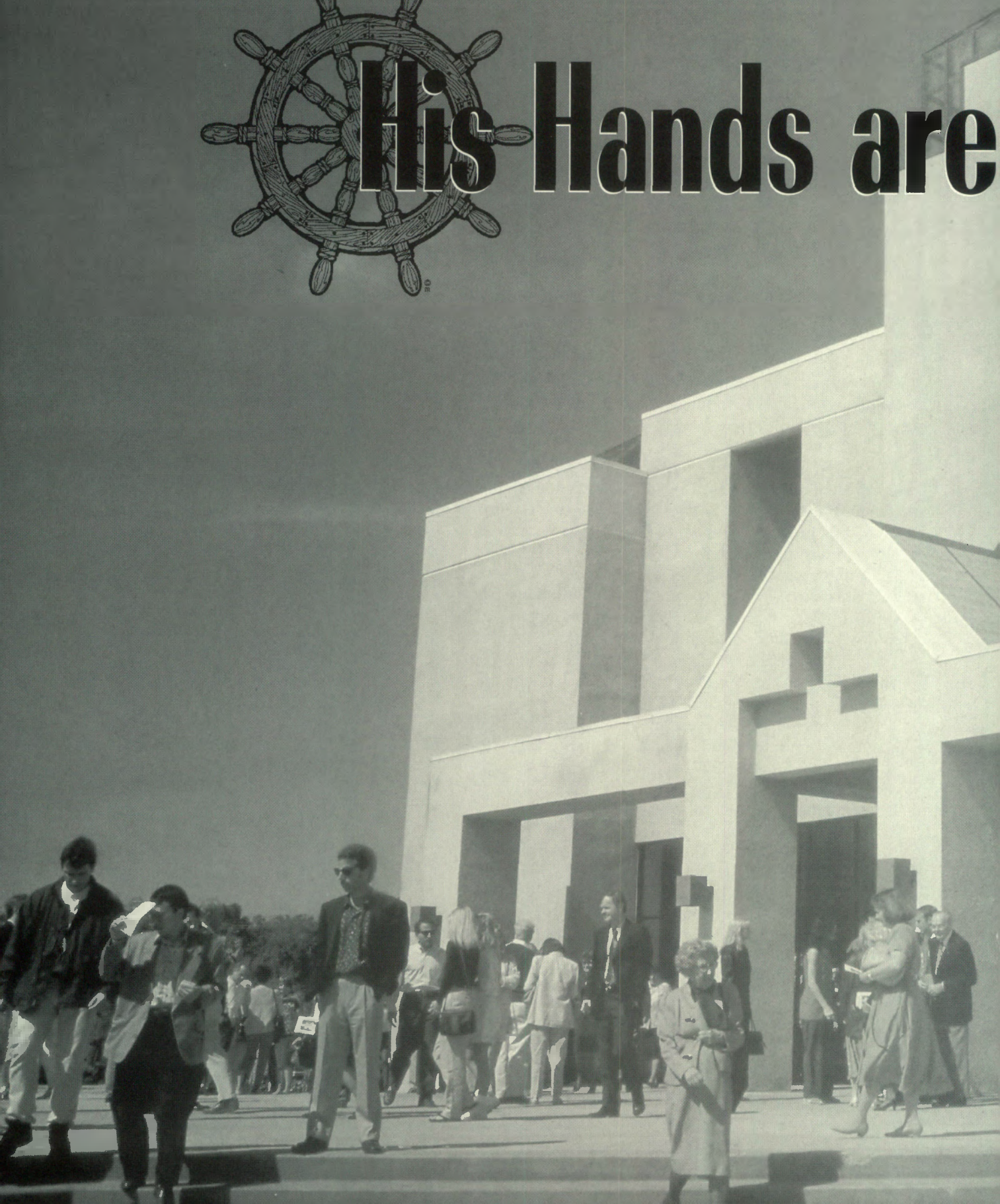
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Special Section: Church Life



# His Hands are





# at the Wheel

by Ellen G. White

**T**here is no need to doubt, to be fearful that the work will not succeed. God is at the head of the work, and He will set everything in order. If matters need adjusting at the head of the work, God will attend to that, and work to right every wrong. Let us have faith that God is going to carry the noble ship which bears the people of God safely into port. When I voyaged from Portland, Maine to Boston, many years ago, a storm came upon us, and the great waves dashed us to and fro. The chandeliers fell, and the trunks were rolled from side to side, like balls. The passengers were frightened, and many were screaming, waiting in expectation of death. After awhile the pilot came on board. The captain stood near the pilot as he took the wheel, and expressed fear about the course in which the ship was directed. "Will you take the wheel?" asked the pilot. The captain was not ready to do that, for he knew that he lacked experience. Then some of the passengers grew uneasy and said they feared the pilot would dash them upon the rocks. "Will you take the wheel?" asked the pilot; but they knew that they could not manage the wheel. When you think that the work is in danger, pray, "Lord, stand at the wheel. Carry us through the perplexity. Bring us safe into port." Have we not reason to believe that the Lord will bring us through triumphantly?

There are before me many who are old hands in the cause. I have known some of you for the last thirty years. Brethren, have we not seen crisis after crisis come upon the work, and has not the Lord carried us through, and wrought for the glory of His name? Can you not believe in Him? Can you not commit the cause to Him? You cannot with your finite minds understand the working of all the providences of God. Let God take care of His own work. You are to hang your helpless soul upon Jesus. Commit the keeping of your soul unto God, as unto a faithful Creator. When you do this, you will have something of the love of God; for it will abound in your heart unto His glory. The meetings will be uplifting in character; for the Lord will put a new song into your mouth, even praise unto our God. You will say, "Hear what the Lord has done for my soul." Your soul will be all light in the Lord." — *Review and Herald*, September 20, 1892. **E**



# Ministering to the Whole Church

**Reviewing the spiritual gifts** which qualify a person to be an elder, we readily discover that many women are well-suited to fulfill this position.



**T**hina rested her elbows on the kitchen table, a cup of hot chocolate warming her hands, but not her heart. For months, she and her husband had been arguing and fussing with one another, making the daily routine of life more stressful than usual. She had considered discussing the situation with a church elder. But when she realized most of the elders were his friends, she decided not to. And she was not aware of any women in the church qualified to lend a supporting shoulder. For nearly two years, her sister's church had been expanding their roster of elders to include women, thus heeding the guidance in *Evangelism*, page 460, and *Welfare Ministry*, page 145, respectively: "When a woman is in trouble, let her take her troubles to women." "The Lord has a work for women as well as for men . . . They can do in families a work that men cannot do, a work that reaches the inner life. They can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach."

Joan Patrick and Judy

Fehlenberg verify this counsel. As a local elder in New South Wales, Australia, Patrick writes, "I am often able to encourage the mothers, wives, singles, and young people of the congregation in ways a male elder or minister could not." From Marietta, Georgia, USA, Fehlenberg, states, "Our church has a significant number of working mothers, and my circumstance allows me to better relate to them."

Reviewing the spiritual gifts which qualify a person to be an elder, we readily discover that many women are well suited to fulfill this position. Some of the Spirit's gifts needed to perform the duties of an elder involve nurture, and most women seem to be naturals at nurturing. Such gifts include: *exhortation*—the ability to encourage and console others, especially the bereaved, lonely, and discouraged; *pastor/shepherd*—the ability to carry a personal responsibility for the spiritual well-being of a group of believers and to act as their shepherd, overseer, protector, and guide; and

*hospitality*—the skill of extending an open home and warm, genuine feelings to others. Furthermore, many women are proficient in *administration* and *leadership*, illustrating their gift for the former in their ability to direct and steer household schedules, finances, et cetera, and the latter in their ability to assist in establishing family goals in accordance with Christian principles, then communicating these goals in such a way that family members work harmoniously to achieve them.

Avril Lockton's work as elder in the Avondale College Church, Australia, puts to use many of the above mentioned gifts. She visits women, especially those experiencing the trauma of divorce; helps manage church staffing issues; and assists in organizing worship services by encouraging more women to participate in this aspect of church life. Jennifer Baldwin's church in Australia particularly enjoys the creative touches she as an elder incorporates into their worship services. She reports that many members, especially women, appreciate and notice these diversions from the usual formula.

Women elders also can alleviate strains placed upon the pastor's family. One woman elder from the state of Nebraska, USA, recalls that in the past, the pastor's wife did much of the mentoring of female members. Now, because of

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finances and other priorities, many a pastor's wife finds herself needing to work outside the home and thus unable to perform such a ministry by herself. Therefore, it is important to have women elders assist with such work.

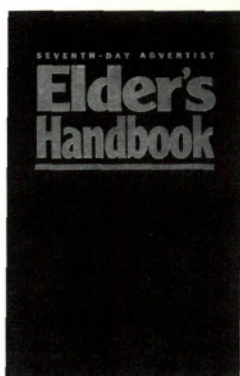
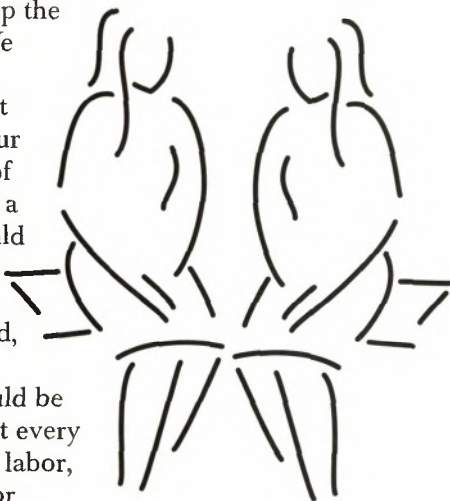
If your church is debating whether to appoint women elders, consider what is occurring at the Pioneer Memorial Church of Andrews University. Here, Katherine Smith and her husband minister to their Christian sisters and brothers as co-head elders. Smith reports that the entire church soon will be divided into parishes with elder teams overseeing each parish. She elaborates, "Because this church feels that an elder's spouse is her/his best helpmeet, more wife/husband teams are being elected."

Elder Dwight Nelson, pastor of the Pioneer Memorial Church on the campus of Andrews University testified, "Since 1987 our Pioneer Memorial Church has been blessed with the ministry of women elders. And as a result, for the past nine years we have experienced a deepening in the spiritual ministry of this vital church office. Our women elders have brought a sense of intentionality to the service of an elder. Their congregational prayers, their reading of the Scriptures, and their worship participation in the Lord's Supper on Sabbath mornings have demonstrated a careful

preparation and planning behind those public expressions. Their example of professionalism in public ministry is one our men elders emulate! Our women elders have also led the way in ministering in the homes of our members through visitation. In fact, since Katherine Smith became one of our two head elders, we have experienced a whole new dimension in every-member visitation by the elders. Having women elders on our pastoral team now allows us to send a woman into the home of another woman who has been wounded through divorce or family dysfunction, or to the hospital to visit a woman who needs the sympathetic ministry of one who has journeyed the way before her. I thank God for the women elders of Pioneer who live the life of Christ, not only in their ministries as elders, but as women of faith in every walk of life."

The following by E. G. White summarizes how the end-time church can be blessed by women elders: "Women who are willing to consecrate some of their

time to the service of the Lord should be appointed to visit the sick, look after the young, and minister to the necessities of the poor. They should be set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of hands. . . . This is another means of strengthening and building up the church. We need to branch out more in our methods of labor. Not a hand should be bound, not a soul discouraged, not a voice should be hushed; let every individual labor, privately or publicly to help forward this grand work. Place the burdens upon men and women of the church, that they may grow by reason of the exercise, and thus become effective agents in the hand of the Lord for the enlightenment of those who sit in darkness" (*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, "The Duty of the Minister and the People," July 9, 1895). **E**



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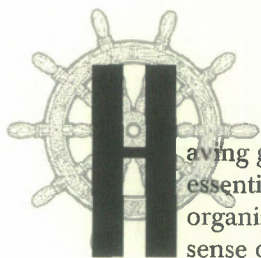
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# Setting Goals

**The issue** never should be whether our churches should have goals, but rather how we use them.



Having goals is the one essential for all organizations. Goals give a sense of direction and purpose, promote enthusiasm, facilitate effective operation, reduce needless conflict, and give a clear understanding of what is expected. Indeed in an organization there are few things more powerful than the idea of a goal.<sup>1</sup>

Goals are important for another reason as well. They act as the measure by which we can tell whether something has been achieved. Without goals we have just activity, and we cannot be certain that a predetermined level of performance has been actually achieved. Set goals, and you know where you ought to go. Fail to plan, and you in fact plan to fail.

You may ask, "What does goal setting have to do with nonprofit organizations, such as my church?" Ever since Peter Drucker coined the term "management by objectives" some 40 years ago, goals and goal setting have been a central feature of management theory and

practice. Research has shown time and again that people and organizations that have objectives consistently outperform those who do not have any, even though they may be instructed to do their best.<sup>2</sup> Dale McConkey, in his book *MBO for Nonprofit Organizations*,<sup>3</sup> suggests that those who might question goal setting in nonprofit organizations would do well to consider the following:

1. Does the organization have a mission to perform? Is there a valid reason for its existence?
2. Can priorities be established for accomplishing the mission?
3. Can the operation be planned?
4. Does management believe it must manage effectively, even though the organization is a nonprofit one? If the answer is yes, then you do need goals.

The Bible too speaks of men and women who established specific goals. Abraham envisioned "the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Heb. 11:10, NIV). Moses pressed toward the Promised Land. Hannah fasted and prayed for a son. David

looked forward for the liberation of his people from captivity. John the Baptist prepared the way for the Anointed One. Jesus set His eyes upon the cross. Dorcas defined her work within the needs of her community.

## Effective goals

Effective goals should have the following characteristics:

### 1. Specific and verifiable.

To set a goal is to predict accomplishment. But accomplishment cannot be determined unless measurement parameters are built into the goal. When a goal is not specific enough, we cannot formulate plans to achieve it, and we would not know what resources we will need to carry out the plans, and we will have no means to measure the accomplishment.

### 2. Realistic and attainable.

Challenges are necessary for improvement, but a challenge must be within the range of performance capability and resource availability. Goals based on hopes, desires, and wishes are seldom realistic.

### 3. Clearly understood.

All persons involved in setting goals must clearly understand their respective roles in the reaching of their set objectives. Otherwise confusion and misunderstanding will frequently result.

### 4. Ranked by priority.

Goal setting must be preceded by a clear definition of priorities. An organization's—and more so a church's—resources of time, funds, and personnel are limited, and we must

**Pablo Perla** is pastor of the Washington Spanish Seventh-day Church, Washington, D.C.



ensure that we devote our resources to the most important objectives.

5. *Communicated in writing.* A written goal promotes better understanding, avoids confusion, and serves as a constant referral point.

6. *Set in prayer.* A church goal cannot be taken lightly. Seeking God's guidance through prayer should precede goal setting. A prayerful atmosphere has a way of weeding away that which contradicts God's will.

7. *Set in faith.* A church goal merely demonstrates the faith of members regarding what God can accomplish through them. Regarding membership goals, for example, the question could be asked: How many new disciples can I trust God to win through me and my church over the next year?

### Church life goals

Often we think of church life goals only in terms of baptism. But other significant areas of church life also deserve measurable goal setting. Some examples of time-bound goal setting in church life are:

1. By December 31, 1996, increase Sabbath school attendance by a monthly average of 10 percent over that for 1995.

2. By June 25, 1998, pay off the church mortgage.

3. During 1996, place literature in the homes of 500 new families.

4. In the third quarter of 1996, train 200 lay members in witnessing.

5. Increase the tithe

monthly average of 1996 by 15 percent above that of 1995.

6. Increase church school teachers from three to six in the next two years.

7. By November 30, 1997, establish a new church in a neighboring vicinity with no less than 60 members.

### Goals and growth

Thousands of churches around the world experience no growth simply because nobody established any growth goal. So says Robert Schuller.<sup>4</sup> Adventist researchers Roger L. Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr., agree. They studied Adventist churches in Hawaii and Atlanta, Georgia, and discovered that a higher baptismal goal increased the likelihood of a real rise in the number of local members, and that church baptismal and church growth goals were among the most significant factors that distinguished high-growth from low-growth congregations.<sup>5</sup>

The motivational theory in goal setting emphasizes the role of intentions to act as major causes of motivated behavior.<sup>6</sup> Actions are governed by intentions.<sup>7</sup> If an individual makes a commitment to an objective or a desired endpoint, that resolution will in fact strongly influence the subsequent behavior of that person. Therefore, commitment is an essential component of motivation in goal setting.<sup>8</sup>

Commitment is the totality of internalized

normative pressures to act in a way that meets organizational goals and interest. Most people engage in church activities on the basis of duty, cooperation, support, loyalty, or recompense. These bases, however, are not strong enough to support a process in which the church will move in a prescribed direction.

Studies show that a person will not truly commit to achieving a result unless that person has had a voice in determining what the result will be. Conversely, people will be more motivated to work for the success of a project if they have helped develop it. Thus, high commitment and high motivation usually go hand in hand to the degree that people feel that the project is their own.

Why? First, mutually formed goals tend to be both more demanding and fair than unilaterally imposed goals. Second, members who have participated in goal setting are more likely to be ego-involved in attaining those goals. Because they have made themselves responsible for the expectations in the goals, they are eager to see them fulfilled. And third, through participation members gain a better understanding of the reasons behind their goals as well as how to attain them.

### Setting goals

Setting goals for the church should have a sequence. Craig Pinder<sup>9</sup> suggests the following. First,

**Commitment is an essential component of motivation in goal setting.**

**Wrongly  
employed,  
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problems.**

the pastor confers and negotiates with members individually to determine church objectives for an upcoming time span. The degree to which members may participate in this goal-setting process varies according to the personal styles of both pastor and members. Second, members prepare an action plan that specified how they will pursue the agreed-upon goals. Third, both pastor and members conduct a periodic performance review to measure progress. Finally, it will be time to set new objectives for a subsequent period.

**Numerical goals**

As a pastor in the Inter-American Division I worked with numerical goals. In that division, it's something one cannot escape. I used them and found them effective in my different responsibilities as a pastor, departmental director, conference president, and college president. Where I am pastoring now, numerical goals are not an issue. But our church established specific goals to motivate our members. In 1992-1993 this helped bring us more than 350 baptisms, two new churches, a 25 percent increase in tithe, and the doubling of membership and attendance. Not only did we surpass the goals set, but we gained a collective feeling of accomplishment and increased confidence.

All things are subject to improper use, of course. Wrongly employed, goal

setting may cause rather than solve problems. For example, if the goals are unfair, arbitrary, or unreachable, dissatisfaction and poor performance may result. If goals are set without proper quality controls, quantity overcomes quality. When goals become more important than human considerations, they become burdensome, detrimental, and destructive to church community.

The danger to avoid is making numerical and measurable goals an end in themselves. Goals are only a means to an end. Focusing on numbers to the exclusion of making responsible disciples can lead to unfaithfulness to our paramount goal: to disciple the church into Christlikeness. Numbers can never be substituted for rebirth through the Holy Spirit. So the issue is ultimately not whether we

should have numerical and measurable goals but rather how to use them. **E**

**Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Edward Dayton and Ted W. Engstrom, *Strategy for Leadership* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1979), p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> See Edwin A. Locke, Gary P. Latham, and Miriam Erez, "The Determinants of Goal Commitment," *Academy of Management Review* 13, No. 1 (1988): 23-29.

<sup>3</sup> McConkey, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Robert H. Schuller, *Your Church Has Real Possibilities!* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books Division, 1979), p. 72.

<sup>5</sup> Roger L. Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr., *Adventures in Church Growth* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1983), p. 61.

<sup>6</sup> Richard M. Steers and Lyman W. Porter, *Motivation and Work Behavior* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991), p. 355.

<sup>7</sup> William C. Howell and Robert L. Dipboye, *Essentials of Industrial and Organizational Psychology* (Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1986), p. 77.

<sup>8</sup> Locke, pp. 23-39.

<sup>9</sup> Craig C. Pinder, *Work Motivation* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984), p. 172.



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# Dreaming the Impossible

**The only way to help young people build spiritual lives is to stop, listen, become a believable friend, and then personally demonstrate Christ's remedies for their needs.**



Do you remember the fairy tale of the ugly toad who was really a handsome prince? All he needed to break the spell of the wicked witch was a kiss from a beautiful maiden. But what beautiful maiden would stop to kiss an ugly toad? Obviously, only one who stopped first to talk to him and get to know him."<sup>1</sup>

It's true! The only way to help young people build spiritual lives is to stop, listen, become a believable friend, and then personally demonstrate Christ's remedies for their needs.

I was sharing this concept with a group of youth workers over a cafeteria lunch when a young pastor began to sputter, "It cannot be done. The kids are just too much into the world. No matter how close I come to them, I cannot offer them anything as exciting or meaningful as all that the devil is providing. Toads just do not become princes anymore!"

Not true! But the pastor's frustrations are real and common. In fact, the job at times does seem beyond all hope, and we find ourselves dreaming impossible dreams. But dreams do come true.

In my own ministry I have learned many times that impossibilities do become realities.

As principal of a Seventh-day Adventist boarding academy, I had dreams for the school and for the students. I wanted each young person to find a rewarding relationship with Christ while at the school. Regularly I shared that dream with faculty and students, and we worked night and day to make it happen. We planned meetings, study groups, sermons, prayer sessions, retreats, campouts, and even "Christian tugs-of-war."

But the students seemed more excited about Satan's glittering offerings than those of God. We were almost to the point of accepting that our "impossible dream" really was impossible.

Then one night the planned program fell through and I invited a retired minister to speak to the students. He simply said, "God needs you to change the world." Even though he talked too long and broke many of the rules of homiletics, we sat amazed as princes and princesses

were created before our eyes.

The result of all that?

Four guys in the senior class decided we needed a "mission project." Several girls started prayer bands in their dorm rooms, and faculty members found themselves flooded with interest about spiritual things. The students raised more than \$40,000 and built a church in Nicaragua, helped start an orphanage in the Dominican Republic, bought a bicycle for a pastor on Guadalcanal, and sent a nurse to an island in the South Pacific.

As the students became more involved in practical spirituality and began to focus on the needs of others, a whole new feeling began to grow on campus. Before long, Christianity was the "in" thing and the devil was losing out. Our impossible dream was coming true!

Even though it didn't happen just when and how we wanted it to, it happened. Our role had been to create a campus climate that made room for God. Then, at the most opportune moment, God moved in and was able to transform young people.

I have surveyed hundreds of teenagers and youth workers over the years, trying to discover from them what youth leaders can do to build the kind of climate that makes it possible for God to make major transformations. From those conversations come five major points of advice: (1) be a model of what you want them to become; (2) build an atmosphere of friendship; (3) be aware of what they are going through; (4) remember that each youth is a unique

**Richard Duerksen** is vice president for communications, marketing, and creative ministries, Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Columbia, Maryland.

individual; and (5) remember that you are here to serve them.

### Be a model

Be a model of what you want your youth to become. Nothing can substitute for your own personal dedication to Christ. Young people are not so much interested in facts about Jesus as they are in the story of what Jesus means to you. They are watching to

discover if your Christianity is something worth experiencing. Paul Little says, "We ourselves must be

convinced about the truth we proclaim. Otherwise we won't be at all convincing to other people."<sup>2</sup>

The more you experience the personal joys of growing as a Christian, the more you will feel God leading you toward creative solutions in your youth ministry. Youth, you see, are not impressed or moved by "part-time Christians." They are looking for leaders who are "real," whose Christianity is a practical, daily friendship with Jesus. Young people are keenly aware of justice and injustice in life. They will be watching to be sure that your Christianity includes a well-developed sense of fair play.

Roger Dudley, in his book *Passing On The Torch*, has put it well: "It is not our responsibility to force our values upon our young people. It is our responsibility

to model our values so attractively that these youth cannot help seeing that they are vastly superior to the competition, and will freely choose them."<sup>3</sup>

Youth ministry is a demanding responsibility, and it is very easy to get so caught up in the activities and expectations that you neglect your relationship with God. The youth will pick that up quickly and, even though the programs may continue to run, you will have compromised your influence.

On the other hand, when you remember that you are not doing your own work but are following after Him, the youth will realize your genuineness and respond to it. To inspire spirituality, be spiritual; be transparently His.

### Be a friend

Build an atmosphere of friendship. During a Bible conference at which we were discussing youth leadership, a young man came up to me with some advice for youth leaders. "If you want to lead me," he said, "be my friend. Don't spend your time pointing out all my wrongs, but lead me toward the rights, like a friend would. Give me more love and less criticism."

Friendship, true friendship, is a key to the success of any youth leader. "But how," one newly appointed youth leader asked, "can I become the friend of young people who are automatically aloof from adults, and especially from youth leaders?"

Several years ago I saw a

cartoon on youth ministry. It showed a young youth worker who had only six basic body parts: *eyes*—open to see all needs, even in dark places; *ears*—open to listen to all needs, as a true friend; *heart*—open to share others' feelings in interested empathy; *feet*—moving, visiting, carrying, going to, going for; *hands*—extended and open to grasp and lift, to give a hand; *knees*—calloused from praying for and praying with.

If our eyes, ears, heart, feet, hands, and knees are open and dedicated to meeting the needs of our youth, we are truly serving them as their friends. In our lives they will then see a model of Christ, a person who is living the Father's love for others.

But this is not an easy assignment. It requires time, energy, dedication, and sacrifice. "If love is real, it will be expressed. If it is God's love (*agape*), it will be expressed sacrificially. Divine love cannot remain silent or uninvolved! People are waiting for its expression—for someone to get involved with them where they live and work (and play)."<sup>4</sup>

How can we do that effectively? The following possibilities are given only as idea starters.

#### 1. *The focused half hour.*

Plan at least 30 minutes each day when you do nothing but work with your youth. This is not a time for you to sit in the study and plan; it is a time for you to be with one or more of the youth in person or on the phone. It is a time of focused friendship. Your conversations



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may include planning for the April Fool's Day party, but you will probably spend more time talking about the pizza at Valentino's, the Super Bowl, or today's hit song.

2. *Your place, however humble, is best.* Our family's favorite memories include teenagers joking, laughing, playing games, and telling tall tales around our kitchen table. In fact, we have made many friends there over corn bread and chili, friends who stop by when they're in town, who ask us to share in their weddings, who call when they want to just talk. Those are some of our richest friendships.

Invite the youth to your home. No, you don't have to prepare a great meal or plan any marvelous entertainment. Just open your home and your popcorn popper, set your family photo albums on the table, and open your heart to your youth. Be a friend.

3. *Outdoors, even in the parking lot, is wise.* Take them outdoors, away from the TV, away from stereos, away from the church out into somewhere different and as natural as possible. You will find it much easier to get to know most youth when they are outdoors. While you're out there, share a personal experience of how you are growing in Christ. Somehow it is all more believable outdoors.

Your outdoor experiences could include weekend campouts, longer retreats at a summer camp (in the deep snow of winter), or just part of a day in a local park. Be sure to let the young people choose

the place, plan the program, and prepare the menu.

4. *Phone numbers, wallets, and automobiles are for sharing.* You must be willing to be used for a vast variety of needs. If the youth realize you are serious, they'll call when they need help, ask if they can "borrow" a dollar, and hope you can take them to town to get the new starter for the car.

Yes, you must share responsibly. But you must share openly, as a Christian servant would share.

5. *Enjoy things their way.* I know, you hate to think of another pizza supper, but as long as you do not compromise your witness by being along, be where your youth are.

6. *Look for needs.* Your youth have many very special needs, needs that you and the Lord can nicely fill. Keep your eyes and ears open for signs of those needs. If you are praying for God to reveal their needs to you, you will always be juggling two dozen special challenges with your youth.

Adolescents need friendship. You can provide that friendship. You and God.

### **Be aware**

Be aware of what your youth are going through. Being an adolescent can be extremely traumatic! It is a time of crisis, of reevaluating everything, of searching for meaning. For Christian youth, it is also a time of faith crisis, a time when all they have ever believed is "up for grabs."

You must be tuned in to

the individual faith crisis of your youth. Each one is going to respond to this time a little differently. Each one is going to need your support in a creative, individual way. The key is simply being aware of what is going on and being open and available.

Charles Shelton, in his book *Adolescent Spirituality*, lists eight forces to which youth must relate during this "faith crisis."

1. *Peer pressure.* Peer pressure is "one of the greatest barriers to making proper ethical decisions."<sup>5</sup> The temptation to rebel against organized religion is enhanced by the large number of peers who have already chosen that option.

When college freshmen move into the dormitory, for instance, they often notice that many of their peers are not attending Sabbath services. This peer behavior then becomes both a subtle pressure to conform and a legitimate and safe avenue for the young person's own withdrawal from the practice of group religion.

2. *Institutional alienation.* Young people are more interested in personal, relational forms of worship than they are in large institutions, large worship services, or church programs."

When you are aware of this fact, you will be much more understanding when youth express dissatisfaction with "church," throw verbal rocks at the school, and stay away from programs in droves. Your understanding will lead you to help them discover alternatives within

**Youth who  
are facing  
great  
personal  
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more  
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of love  
than they  
do prayer  
groups and  
sermons.**

the institutional church, creative ways to keep them as part of "church" in ways that are comfortable.

Youth are very idealistic and often enjoy being involved in social causes. If you help them focus on the needs of the poor, help them work for the hungry people in your community, or guide them in attacking some other social issue, you will find them interested, involved, and even excited.

**3. Separation from parents.** In the teen years most youth are thrashing about in an attempt to discover who they are and where they fit in life. This is also true in the area of personal faith. Although the faith of their parents forms a foundation for the search, each young person must now develop an understanding of what God means for "me."

It is important for you to encourage their need for independence while at the same time discouraging the feeling that their parents are "old-fashioned" and "no good." Help them understand why their parents still want to be involved in their lives. And help parents understand why teenagers are wanting to break free from all parental authority.

**4. Rebellion.** Sometimes the process of "finding myself" takes a direction the psychologist Erickson calls "negative identity." Most youth leaders simply call it "rebellion."

You can be a key factor in those lives by accepting the rebels for the developing adults they really are, and by

helping them find creative and acceptable avenues for their rebellion.

**5. Search for meaning.** Remember that this process is healthy! Young people are now having to answer the great questions of life honestly and carefully. You are privileged to be right there to help them articulate those answers in the context of God's love and His will for their lives. Design some of your activities to provide for discussions on topics such as God's will, the Christian's mission, the Christian and politics, God's answer to hunger, and how to hear God's voice.

**6. Disillusionment.** Youth see the failures of adults and wonder aloud if life is worth the trouble. Religious youth see the hypocrisy, pride, jealousy, and other forms of sin that tarnish the lives of church members, and they ask, "Why bother?"

Their asking gives you a marvelous opportunity to answer with friendship, love, and an open discussion on the character of God. Don't be afraid to point out some of the renegades like Peter, King Manasseh, Moses, and Uncle Billy, whom God transformed by continuing to give His love freely.

**7. Personal difficulty.** Teenagers are having to grow up in an ugly and confused world. Many come from homes where the conflicts are harsh and constant, and their emotional insecurities simply do not encourage them to make a "faith commitment" to God. Youth who are facing great personal

difficulties often need more bandages of love than they do prayer groups and sermons.

**8. Environment.** Concerns about spiritual things are seldom very high on the list of discussion topics in groups of adolescents. In fact, most youth seem almost happy to be sucked along into "live for today" cultural pressures. That truth gives you the challenge of helping youth look at their culture as critically as they look at the church. A critical perspective, one that is always honestly asking the wise "why" questions, will be a great asset as even greater challenges come along.

These are by no means a complete list of pressures and problems youth face, but being aware of them will help you face impossible situations with understanding and hope.

**Be alert to their uniqueness**

Remember that each of your youth is a unique individual. Don't expect all young people to react to ideas, programs, or even to you in the same way. God created each young person as different, unique, and special.

Each young person with whom we work is changing at a unique rate. Each is in the process of personal discovery but is discovering different things at different times. Your responsibility is to love each as the person he or she really is, and to be a personal, trustworthy friend. You also need to plan activities that encompass the interests and personalities of each young person in the group. Some youth are



repelled by small group devotions, so plan some devotional activities for larger groups and develop a few other devotional suggestions for individual and team study, prayer, and service. God will work through you to help individualize the pathways to friendship with Him.

### Be ready to serve them

Remember that you are here to serve your youth. It is always a temptation for a leader to be more concerned about his or her personal reputation and "success" than about the spiritual growth of each young person. Great youth leaders, however, work to make others into whole people by giving them a larger vision and purpose than they would have come up with on their own.

This happens best when you see yourself as a servant of God and therefore as a servant of the young people. Such an approach makes it possible for you to let them make many of the decisions regarding youth activities while at the same time challenging them to take responsibility for the consequences of their decisions. It gives you the privilege of supporting young people as they grow into the persons God wants them to become. Then the impossible dream will become possible. **E**

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Howard G. Hendricks, *Say It With Love* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1975), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Little, *How to Give Away Your Faith* (Downers Grove, Ill.:

Inter-Varsity Press, 1966), p. 81.

<sup>3</sup> Roger L. Dudley, *Passing On The Torch* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1987), p. 117.

<sup>4</sup> William M. Fletcher, *The Second*

*Greatest Commandment* (Colorado Springs, Col.: NavPress, 1983), p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Jerry White, *Honesty, Morality, and Conscience* (Colorado Springs, Col.: NavPress, 1979), p. 62.

## What Can the Church and Elder Do for the Youth?

by Rudy R. Baloyo

The Church is grateful for the presence of our young people. Brimming with ideas, curiosity and desire for action, they give life, color and charm to church activities.

Although many of our youth are actively participating in the work of the church, it is also a fact that we are losing a good number of our young people. According to the Youth '93 Survey sponsored by the Commission on Youth of Far Eastern Division, (now Asia Pacific Division), one of the most important reasons why many youth left the church is **lack of attention**.

Here are some suggestions on what the elder and church can do for its youth:

1. **Give the youth opportunity to participate in the plans of the church.**
  - Include a representative from the youth in the selection of the Nominating Committee.
  - Include young people in the roster of officers other than the Youth Department, such as, Youth Elders, Youth Deacons and Deaconesses, and other major church offices.
  - Invite responsible young people to the Church Board meetings.
2. **Give them the opportunity to actively participate in different activities and programs of the church.**
  - Allow them to participate in the Divine Worship like offering a prayer, Scripture Reading, or even preaching.
  - Encourage and challenge them to conduct the Sabbath School lesson study, Bible studies, Voice of Prophecy crusades, Revelation Seminars, and Youth Week of Prayer meetings.
3. **Equip and train them.**
  - Encourage and support them to attend seminars, retreats, camping or any youth related activities that will help them learn and develop their talents.
  - Conduct seminars for them.
  - Teach them how to preach, visit, distribute tracts and give Bible studies.
4. **Support them.**
  - Let the adults join and participate with them during AY meetings.
  - Give between 15% to 20% of an offering to the Youth Department.
5. **Be kind to them.**
  - Accept them as they are. Don't be critical of their youthful "different" looks and ways. Remember that length of hair and hemline doesn't constitute one's morals.
6. **Provide for their social needs.**
  - Young people need to socialize with their fellow young people, with whom they learn social graces and living in harmony. Full of energy, they need positive activities to channel them. Provide them social nights, picnics, nature hikes, sports fest and youth retreats.

The local churches may become the "hub for church work—a place for training and nurture, and the base for outreach and fellowship." But it should primarily be a warm, loving and accepting place, with interesting and relevant worship services and church programs. This is conducive to make the youth stay. This conveys a message of joy and grace. The greatest motivation comes when the youth see the church as genuinely caring for them.

*Rudy R. Baloyo writes from Philippine where he serves as the Youth Director for the Central Philippine Union Mission.*



# What's Good About Our Church?

**The Adventist church** is the most Christ-centered church I've ever heard of.



Magazines often come to my desk which specialize in what is wrong with the church. I have not felt called to the ministry of tearing down the church or calling attention to what is wrong with the church. In fact, I'd like to tell you some things that I think are good about the church.

## **It preaches about Jesus.**

Our church produces Christ-centered media programs, literature, and sermons every day. I want to make sure that church members talk about Jesus, so I'm reminding myself, right now, to do it. The Adventist Church is the most Christ-centered church I've ever heard of.

## **The church is growing.**

It took us 97 years to reach our first million members, but in 1994 we added 629,710, and the total membership now is almost nine million.

## **The church encourages education.**

My aunts and uncles did not accept this message, and none of them were privileged to receive the type of education I got. One of the main differences is this church. We talk about preparing for greater service, and education is a big part of that. Adventist members are among the most educated in the world. Imagine a city in the United States with a population of 800,000 supporting the number of church-sponsored colleges and universities that we operate in addition to supporting public education.

## **The church encourages healthful living.**

You can hardly find an Adventist

magazine that does not offer some suggestion for healthful living. All this contributes to the average Adventist living seven years longer than the average population.

## **The church is making bold attempts to spread the message about Jesus' return.**

NET '95 was a great experiment. NET '96 will be bigger yet. Approximately 2,000 churches in North America will be open at the same time so people can hear the full message being preached. Twenty million handbills will be mailed—enough to fill 20 semi-trucks. I expect that more than 10,000 people will be baptized from this one initiative.

## **The church urges its members to be compassionate.**

Corporately and personally. Thousands of people were helped by our community service centers last year.

## **The church is big business.**

It owns thousands of pieces of property and has thousands of employees who handle millions of dollars. Once in a while something goes wrong with an investment. This happens so rarely that it makes big news. People talk about it for years, and some publications devote many pages to the discussion. Yet most every day correct business decisions are being made, and thousands of employees are doing their jobs properly.

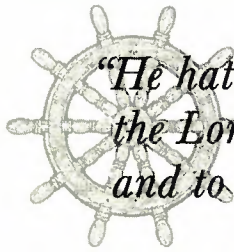
## **This church is organized to help members and non-members find Jesus.**

I'm thankful for the Adventist Church. It has made a difference in my life. **E**

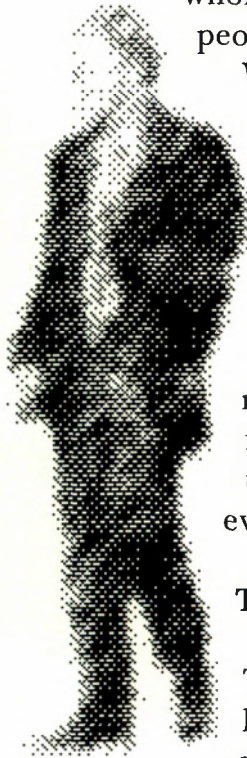
**Don Schneider**  
writes from  
Berrien Springs,  
Michigan,  
where he works  
as president of  
the Lake Union  
of the Seventh-  
day Adventist  
Church.



# What God Requires from an Elder



*"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" — Micah 6:8 KJV*



**To be fair and just** is simply to apply the Golden Rule—to give tribute to whom tribute is due and honor to whom honor is due. It means treating people fairly regardless of what position, possession or blood relation.

We are not to be respecter of persons but to respect all persons. A just person is "anyone who refuses to slander others, does not listen to gossip, never harms his neighbor, speaks out against sin, criticizes those committing it, commends the faithful followers of the Lord, keeps a promise even if it ruins him" (Psalms 15:3, 4, TLB).

**To love mercy**, for "happy are the kind and merciful, for they shall be shown mercy" (Matthew 5:7, TLB). In dealing with the erring members it is at times better to err on the side of mercy, to wait for full information, rather than to have him disciplined. To love mercy is to "be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32, KJV).

**To walk humbly with thy God.** "Humble men are very fortunate . . . for the kingdom of Heaven is given to them" (Matthew 5:3, TLB). The measure of true greatness of a man is his humility. It takes humility for one to accept that he is wrong or has sinned and to apologize or ask for forgiveness. To say, "I am sorry," is part of the vocabulary of great men, of humble men, but not the proud. "Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself . . . Your attitude should be the kind that was shown us by Jesus Christ, who . . . humbled himself even further, going so far as actually to die a criminal's death on a cross" (Philippians 2:3, 5, 8).

Our profession, position, possession and even spiritual gifts may differ but we are all members of one body. At the foot of the Cross, the ground is level. "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14, KJV). ■

**Dr. Manuel Tornilla, Jr.,**  
writes from  
the Philippines  
where he is an  
elder in the local  
congregation and  
president of Miller  
Sanitarium and  
Hospital.

## Communion Services

Joel Sarli

### 1. Importance

Communion is an occasion of solemnity and heart-searching, of rejoicing and anticipation. Everything connected with it should suggest as perfect a preparation as possible. . . . This ceremony is not to be performed listlessly. . . . (*Evangelism*, pages 277, 278).

Properly planned and conducted, it brings encouragement and spiritual renewal to the congregation. Conducting Communion service is, therefore, one of the most sacred duties of a pastor or elder.

### 2. When held

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church the Communion service customarily is celebrated once every quarter.

### 3. Foot-washing Ceremony

Foot-washing should always be included.

### 4. Announcement

The Communion service should be announced at least a week in advance so members can prepare themselves, and deacons and deaconesses can prepare the emblems and equipment.

### 5. Who officiates

Ordained elders are qualified to officiate over a Communion service. The elder and the pastor should always communicate with each other in planning the Communion service. Deacons assist by distributing the bread and wine.

### 6. Who participates

Jesus' example of including Judas at the first Communion proves that participation should not be limited to only exemplary Christians. "Christ's example forbids exclusiveness at the Lord's Supper. It is true that open sin excludes the guilty. This the Holy Spirit plainly teaches. But beyond this none are to pass judgement. God has not left it with men to say who shall present themselves on these occasions. For who can read the hearts?" (*Desire of Ages*, page 656).

### 7. Cultural differences

Several cultural factors influence the way the Communion service is celebrated. People of different cultures need not be discouraged as long as they effectively teach the spiritual lessons Jesus intended.

### 8. Sermon

Traditionally the Communion sermon is given just before separating for the foot-washing service. The sermon should be short but meaningful.

The Communion service sometimes lasts longer than other worship services. However the elder must be sensitive to the feelings of the members in general.

## Funeral Services

Joel Sarli

### Some Suggestions About Appropriate Procedure

1. As soon as the elder knows that he is to have charge of the funeral service he should hasten to the home of the deceased to offer comfort to the bereaved.
2. He should ascertain the wishes of the family concerning the funeral arrangements and carry out these wishes in a manner to give confidence, comfort and complete satisfaction.
3. The funeral service calls for good taste and tact.
4. It is, in all probability, the time when the elder gets closest to his people—when the heart-strings are vibrant.
5. The simpler the burial service the better.
6. Let the service be full of heart power and sincere sympathy.
7. The elder does not speak as a judge in relation to the deceased, but rather as a comforter to the bereaved.
8. Because the elder will probably address more people in the funeral, or memorial service, than on any other occasion, he should make ample, thoughtful preparation.
9. A brief obituary may be read to bring before the assembly of relatives and friends a few essential facts regarding the deceased.
10. A brief story of the life of the deceased, spoken in high appreciation of the sterling qualities of character exemplified, will often be very appropriate.
11. In any event the elder will do well to make ample preparation for a funeral service in order to say and do that which is right.
12. It is a worthy practice for the elder to return with the family to the home of the deceased after the memorial service. Some of the most effective ministries of comfort and understanding can be offered at this time. The tension has been released. There is the satisfaction that all that was possible to do has been done to lay away the body of the loved one in reasonable dignity and order. The hearts of relatives are open for kindly suggestions from the elder.
13. During the time of bereavement it will be possible for the elder to get acquainted with other members of the family and circle of friends. Lasting and helpful contacts will be made at this time.



*Funeral Service continued***Suggestions for Funeral and Memorial Service Programs**

1. The order of service for a funeral should be simple.
2. Several factors must be taken into account.
  - a. It is wise to honor the requests of the family of the deceased wherever possible.
  - b. A service held in a home, will usually be less formal and quite brief.
  - c. Local practice is usually a sufficient guide.

**Suggestive Program**

1. Instrumental Music (Hymns of Comfort)
2. Scriptural Reading
3. Prayer of invocation
4. Hymn
5. Scripture Selections
6. Pastoral Prayer
7. Hymn
8. Obituary or Life Story
9. Memorial Address
10. Hymn
11. Benediction
12. Instrumental Music

**Suggestive Service at the Grave**

1. Scripture Reading
2. Poem or Bible Reading of specific passages
3. Benediction

**Quotation from the Spirit of Prophecy**

*A Christian's funeral can provide a powerful witness for Christianity.*

"When we called at night we found the young man very near his end. His mortal frame was racked with pain. We prayed with him, and his heavy breathing and groaning ceased while we were praying. The blessing of God rested down in that sick room, and we felt that angels were hovering around.

"He was relieved a little, yet knew that he was dying. He tried to have us understand that hope lightened up the future, and that to him it was not a dark uncertainty. We understood from broken sentences that he should have part in the first resurrection, and then be made immortal. Said he, 'Tell Bro. Bates that I will meet him then.' His faltering tongue often spoke that dear name, so precious to the dying Christian—Jesus—in whom all his hope of eternal life centered. He fell asleep in Jesus a few hours after we left" (*Spiritual Gifts*, Vol 2, page 92).

**Deciding Now for Christ**

Isaias Pereira

**Text:** "How long halt ye?" — 1 Kings 18:21

**I. Problem of a Conflict**

- A. "Double minded man is unstable" (James 1:8).
- B. "No man can serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24).

**II. Responsibility of Light**

- A. "Path of the just is as the shining light" (Prov. 4:18).
- B. "Light rejected becomes darkness" (John 12:35, 36).
- C. "We wait for light, . . . but we walk in darkness" (Isa. 59:9).
- D. "Light rejected invites deception" (John 3:19-21; 2 Thess. 2:10-12).

**III. Importance of Prompt Obedience**

- A. "If we sin willfully . . . no more sacrifice" (Heb. 10:26).
- B. "Disobedience makes prayer an abomination" (Prov. 28:9).

**IV. Responding to Present Truth**

- A. "Consecrate yourselves to day to the Lord" (Ex. 32:29).
- B. "Turn ye again now" (Jer. 25:5).
- C. "Return ye now" (Jer. 35:15).
- D. "To day . . . hear his voice" (Heb. 3:7, 8, 13).

**V. Uncertainty of the Future**

- A. We know not what shall be tomorrow (James 4:13-17).
- B. Dead cannot hope for truth (Isa. 38:18).
- C. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found" (Isa. 55:6).

**VI. Appeal**

- A. "Choose you this day" (Joshua 24:15).

*Isaias Pereira writes from Toronto, Ontario where he serves as first elder in the Luso-Brazilian Seventh-day Adventist Church.*


# The Remnant Church Not Babylon

by ELLEN G. WHITE


**F**or years I have borne my testimony to the effect that when any arise claiming to have great light, and yet advocating the tearing down of that which the Lord through His human agents has been building up, they are greatly deceived, and are not working along the lines where Christ is working. Those who assert that the Seventh-day Adventist churches constitute Babylon, or any part of Babylon, might better stay at home. Let them stop and consider what is the message to be proclaimed at this time. In place of working with divine agencies to prepare a people to stand in the day of the Lord, they have taken their stand with him who is an accuser of the brethren, who accuses them before God day and night. . . .

Although there are evils existing in the church, and will be until the end of the world, the church in these last days is to be the light of the world that is polluted and demoralized by sin. The church, enfeebled and defective, needing to be reproved, warned, and counseled, is the only object upon earth upon which Christ bestows His supreme regard. The world is a workshop in which, through the co-operation of human and divine agencies, Jesus is making experiments by His grace and divine mercy upon human hearts. . . .

God has a church on earth who are lifting up the down-trodden law, and presenting to the world the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. The church is the depository of the wealth of the riches of the grace of Christ, and through the church eventually will be made manifest the final and full display of the love of God to the world that is to be lighted with its glory. The prayer of Christ that His church may be one as He was one with His Father will finally be answered. The rich dowry of the Holy Spirit



*"God has  
a people in  
which all heaven  
is interested,  
and they are  
the one object  
on earth dear  
to the heart  
of God."*



will be given, and through its constant supply to the people of God, they will become witnesses in the world of the power of God unto salvation.

There is but one church in the world who are at the present time standing in the breach, and making up the hedge, building up the old waste places; and for any man to call the attention of the world and other churches to this church, denouncing her as Babylon, is to do a work in harmony with him who is the accuser of the brethren. Is it possible that men will arise from among us, who speak perverse things, and give voice to the very sentiments that Satan would have disseminated in the world in regard to those who keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus? Is there not work enough to satisfy your zeal in presenting the truth to those

who are in the darkness of error? . . .

God has a church, and she has a divinely appointed ministry. "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-15, KJV).

The Lord has His appointed agencies, and a church that has lived through persecution, conflict, and darkness. Jesus loved the church, and gave Himself for it, and He will replenish, refine, ennoble,



and elevate it, so that it shall stand fast amid the corrupting influences of this world. Men appointed of God have been chosen to watch with jealous care, with vigilant perseverance, that the church may not be overthrown by the evil devices of Satan, but that she shall stand in the world to promote the glory of God among men. There will ever be fierce conflict between the church and the world. Mind will come into contact with mind, principle with principle, truth with error; but in the crisis soon to culminate, which has already begun, the men of experience are to do their God-appointed work, and watch for souls as they that must give an account. . . .

If their zeal led them to work in the same lines in which their brethren who have carried the heat and burden of the day are working, if they were as persevering to overcome discouragements and obstacles as their brethren have been, they might well be imitated, and God would accept them. But men are to be condemned who start out with a proclamation of wonderful light, and yet draw away from the agents whom God is leading. This was the way in which Korah, Dathan, and Abiram did, and their action is recorded as a warning to all others. We are not to do as they have done—accuse and condemn those upon whom God has laid the burden of the work.

Those who have proclaimed the Seventh-day Adventist Church as Babylon, have made use of the Testimonies in giving their position a seeming support; but why is it that they did not present that which for years has been the burden of my message—the unity of the church? Why did they not quote the words of the angel, “Press together, press together, press together”? Why did they not repeat the admonition and state the principle, that “in union there is strength, in division there is weakness”?

It is such messages as these men have borne that divide the church, and put us to shame before the enemies of truth; and in such messages is plainly revealed the specious working of the great deceiver, who would hinder the church from attaining unto perfection in unity. These teachers follow the sparks of their own kindling, move according to their own independent judgment, and cumber the truth with false notions and theories. They refuse the counsel of their brethren, and press on in their own way until they become just what Satan would desire to have them—unbalanced in mind.

I warn my brethren to guard against the working of Satan in every form. The great adversary of God and man is exulting today that he has succeeded in deceiving souls, and in diverting their means and ability into harmful channels. Their money might have been used to advance present truth, but instead of this it has been expended in presenting notions that have no foundation in truth. . . .

I urge those who claim to believe the truth, to walk in unity with their brethren. Do not seek to give to the world occasion to say that we are extremists, that we are disunited, that one teaches one thing, and one another. Avoid dissension. Let everyone be on guard, and be careful to be found standing in the gap to make up the breach, in place of standing at the wall seeking to make a breach. Let all be careful not to make an outcry against the


only people who are fulfilling the description given of the remnant people who keep the commandments of God and have faith in Jesus, who are exalting the standard of righteousness in these last days.

God has a distinct people, a church on earth, second to none, but superior to all in their facilities to teach the truth, to vindicate the law of God. God has divinely appointed agencies—men whom He is leading, who have borne the heat and burden of the day, who are cooperating with heavenly instrumentalities to advance the kingdom of Christ in our world. Let all unite with these chosen agents, and be found at last among those who have the patience of the saints, who keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus. . . .


God has a church upon the earth who are His chosen people, who keep His commandments. He is leading, not stray offshoots, not one here and one there, but a people. The truth is a sanctifying power; but the church militant is not the church triumphant. There are tares among the wheat. “Wilt thou then that we . . . gather them up?” was the question of the servant; but the master answered, “Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them” (Matthew 13:28, 29, KJV). The gospel net draws not only good fish but bad ones as well, and the Lord only knows who are His.

It is our individual duty to walk humbly with God. We are not to seek any strange, new message. We are not to think that the chosen ones of God who are trying to walk in the light compose Babylon.

The fallen denominational churches are Babylon.



*It is our  
individual  
duty to  
walk humbly  
with God.*



Babylon has been fostering poisonous doctrines, the wine of error. This wine of error is made up of false doctrines, such as the natural immortality of the soul, the eternal torment of the wicked, the denial of the pre-existence of Christ prior to His birth in Bethlehem, and advocating and exalting the first day of the week above God's holy and sanctified day. These and kindred errors are presented to the world by the various churches, and thus the Scriptures are fulfilled that say, "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

Enfeebled and defective, needing constantly to be warned and counseled, the church is nevertheless the object of Christ's supreme regard. He is making experiments of grace on human hearts and is affecting such transformations of character that angels are amazed, and express their joy in songs of praise. They rejoice to think that sinful, erring human beings can be so transformed (1902, vol. 7, p. 16).

God has a people in which all heaven is interested, and they are the one object on earth dear to the heart of God. Let everyone who reads these words give them thorough consideration, for in the name of Jesus I would press them home upon every soul. When anyone arises, either among us or outside of us, who is burdened with a message which declares that the people of God are numbered with Babylon, and claims that the loud cry is a call to come out of her, you may know that he is not bearing the message of truth. Receive him not, nor bid him Godspeed; for God has not spoken by him, neither has He given a message to him, but he has run before he was sent (*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 41).

The Lord has declared that the history of the past shall be rehearsed as we enter upon the closing work. Every truth that He has given for these last days is to be proclaimed to the world. Every pillar that He has established is to be strengthened. We cannot now step off the foundation that God has established. We cannot now enter into any new organization; for this would mean apostasy from the truth (1905, *Notebook Leaflets*, "The Church," No. 1).

There is no need to doubt, to be fearful that the work will not succeed. God is at the head of the work, and He will set everything in order. If matters need adjusting at the head of the work, God will attend to that, and work to right every wrong. Let us have faith that God is going to carry the noble ship which bears the people of God safely into port (*Review and Herald*, Sept. 20, 1892). **E**

*Ellen G. White was one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A prolific writer, she produced more than 100,000 pages by the time she died in 1915. Her work continues as a prophetic voice within the Adventist church. This article was taken from Testimony Treasures, vol. 2, pp. 355-363.*



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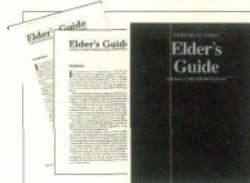
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## Here are some illustrations for your files.

### Blessings in Disguise

Charles Spurgeon said, "The Lord gets His best soldiers out of the highlands of affliction." He allows us to go through the test of suffering and trial so that we may be fashioned into instruments of strength.

Years ago the village blacksmith produced useful implements out of pieces of iron. As he pumped the bellows, the furnace glowed red. Into the fire he thrust the metal until it became almost transparent in the white heat. Then the blacksmith pulled it out of the fire, placed it on the anvil, and with a heavy hammer pounded the metal made malleable by the flame. Again the iron was put into the fire and again the blacksmith struck it with the hammer. All the while, he alternated plunging the metal into the fire and into the water. The shock tempered it and gave it durability and toughness. That newly formed instrument developed a strength that could be produced no other way.

### Promises Concerning Affliction

An evangelist told the following story in one of his campaigns. He said, "I have a friend who during the depression lost a job, a fortune, a wife, and a home, but tenaciously held to his faith—the only thing he had left. One day he stopped to watch some men building a stone church. One of them was chiseling a triangular piece of rock. 'What are you going to do with that?' asked my friend. The workman said, 'Do you see that little opening way up there near the spire? Well, I'm shaping this down here so that it will fit up there.'

Tears filled the eyes of the heartbroken man as he walked away. It seemed that God had spoken through the workman to explain the ordeal through which he was passing."

Perhaps you have recently suffered a great loss. Or maybe you are experiencing physical or emotional pain. The outward man seems to be "perishing." Yet, if you know the Lord as your Savior, you need not despair. All these things are under the loving hand of your heavenly Father, who is using them to prepare you for heaven.

### Pearls—A Healed Wound

We are told that pearls are the product of pain. When the shell of an oyster is chipped or pierced by a worm or boring parasite, a foreign substance, usually a grain of sand, gets in. The inside of an oyster's shell is made up of a lustrous substance called nacre. When a grain of sand gets into a shell, the nacre cells get busy. They cover the grain of sand with layer after layer of nacre in order to protect the soft body of the oyster. The result is that a beautiful pearl is formed. An oyster which has not been hurt does not grow a pearl—for a pearl is a healed wound.

Have you been hurt by an unkind word of a friend? Have you been accused of saying that which you have not said? Have you worked hard in the church and had no one express appreciation? Have your ideas been rebuffed? Then grow a pearl. Cover your hurts and your rebuffs with layer after layer of love. Just remember that an oyster which has not been hurt does not grow a pearl—for a pearl is a healed wound (*The Lamplighter*).

### Refining Influence of—The Tribulum

In the pictures of the ancient Roman method of threshing grain, one man is always seen stirring up the sheaves while another rides over them in a crude cart equipped with rollers instead of wheels. Sharp stones and rough bits of iron were attached to these cylinders to help separate the husks from the grain. This simple cart was called a tribulum—from which we get our word "tribulation." When great affliction comes to us, we often think of ourselves as being torn to pieces under the cruel pressures of adverse circumstances. Yet as no thresher ever yoked up his tribulum for the mere purpose of tearing up his sheaves but to disclose the precious grain, so our loving Savior never puts us under the pressure of sorrow and disappointment needlessly.

### The Church Has One Foundation

"God's love for His church is infinite. His care over His heritage is unceasing. He suffers no affliction to come upon the church but such as is essential for her purification, her present and eternal good. He will purify His church even as He purified the temple at the beginning and close of His ministry on earth. All that He brings upon the church in test and trial comes that His people may gain deeper piety and more strength to carry the triumphs of the cross to all parts of the world. He has a work for all to do. There must be constant enlargement and progress. The work must extend from city to city, from country to country, and from nation to nation, moving continually onward and upward, established, strengthened, and settled" (*Testimonies Treasures*, vol. 3, page 392).

*The church has one foundation,  
'Tis Jesus Christ her Lord;  
She is the new creation,  
By water and the word;  
From heaven He came and sought her  
To be His holy bride;  
With His own blood He bought her,  
And for her life He died.*

*Elect from every nation,  
Yet one o'er all the earth,  
Her charter of salvation,  
One Lord, one faith, one birth;  
One holy name she blesses,  
Partakes one holy food,  
And to one hope she presses,  
With every grace endued.*

*Though with a scornful wonder,  
Men see her sore oppressed,  
Though foes would rend asunder,  
The Rock where she doth rest,  
Yet saints their faith are keeping;  
Their cry goes up "How long?"  
And soon the night of weeping  
Shall be the morn of song.*

*'Mid toil and tribulation,  
And tumult of her war,  
She waits the consummation  
Of peace forevermore;  
Till with the vision glorious  
Her longing eyes are blest,  
And the great church victorious  
Shall be the church at rest.*

Poem by Samuel S. Wesley  
Music by Samuel J. Stone

*Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, 348

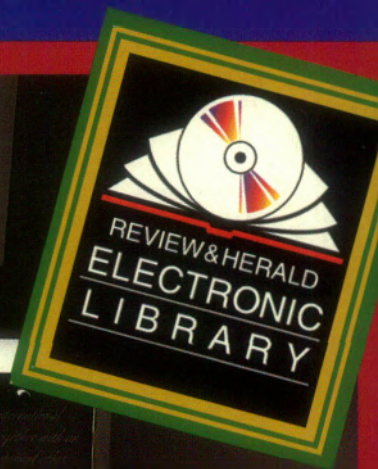
"In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history" (*Life Sketches*, page 196).

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