

Ministry

International Journal for Pastors

February 1996

Disciplining
the

Nations



Independent ministries

I concur with Mel Matinyi ("Independent Ministries," October 1995) that some independent ministries are fast sowing their seeds of discord everywhere in Africa at a much faster rate than anyone thinks. In addition to the problems already outlined by Matinyi is the problem of communication. Often the actions and statements of the General Conference end up in the offices at the unions or conferences, and never reach the local pastors. Even our local leaders are hardly aware of the positions, operations, and dangers inherent in the independent ministries.

It is time for us in Africa to teach our people the issues involved. Gone are the days when we can sit back and say that these are American problems. A very helpful source of information that needs to be circulated in all the developing countries is *Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Ministries*, published by the North American Division.—Boitirelo Kabo, Botswana, Africa.

■ The experience described as taking place in Africa closely parallels our own here in southern California.

The article was most enlightening and helpful to those of us at the local church level who must be constantly on guard against the emissaries of those groups who attend our churches while attempting to influence our members into their way of thinking. We need more guidance on how to deal with these situations in an objective, noninflammatory way. Periodic articles like this are helpful—articles written from personal experience, without malice, by laying the facts on the line.—Carol Mayers, Chatsworth, California.

■ The author associated Light Bearers Ministry with independent ministries in general. While this is a very unfortunate misrepresentation of Light Bearers Ministry, I do not believe that you or the author did so intentionally.

Light Bearers Ministry is a sup-

porting ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, holding ASI and OCI membership. We work in close and positive relationship to the church at all levels. Our ministry operates under the encouragement and approval of our local conference; and, in fact, one of the local conference officers sits on the board of this ministry. The literature we publish is evaluated and approved by the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference.

In brief, we are a publishing ministry, devoted to providing evangelistic literature for the church in developing countries. To date, we have provided the church with more than 75 million evangelistic publications at no charge. We are presently working with James Zachary and Lonnie Melashenko of the Voice of Prophecy to provide more than 10 million publications for the Target 50,000 evangelistic effort in the Philippines.

It is true that Light Bearers Ministry at one time did not have a positive working relationship with the church. But by God's grace and the patient Christian efforts of various church leaders, Light Bearers Ministry has the privilege of working closely with the church.—Ty Gibson, Malo, Washington.

Importance of our worldview

It is easy to agree with Professor Canale about the significance to the Christian and of the church of a worldview in which God is conceived of as immanent in this world, maintaining and directing it by His providence, and accessibility to those who call upon Him. However, in calling us back to this fundamental orientation, he provides a description of the term theism which falls outside the generally accepted meaning of the term.

There are three major theological terms which are commonly used to describe the relationship of God to the world: deism, theism, and pantheism. Each of these is used in antithesis to the term atheism. The atheist denies the reality of the deity. The deist affirms God as the Creator of all that is, but

denies any subsequent intervention of God in this creation. The theist affirms the existence of a single supreme Being, who is not only the source of everything that is, but who continues to sustain and direct it in his providence. The pantheist believes that the world is the ontic self-expression and manifestation of God's being. It is commonly said that deism is an expression of the transcendence of God, pantheism an expression of God's immanence, whereas in theism both the transcendence and the immanence of God are affirmed.

Canale's statement, "In the theist worldview God limits His activity to the heavenly sphere. . . . This separates God from the human scene . . ." (Page 12) is a more fitting description of deism than of theism and denies the most fundamental element of theism—that God's presence pervades and activates created reality. The worldview of Scripture of a God who sustains and directs the cosmos and who performs miracles and speaks to human beings and hears and answers prayer is described in theological terms as theism. Adventists have always been and remain theist.

What then is Canale's objection to the term theism? I think this. The pervading secularism of the age intrudes relentlessly upon the consciousness of even confessing Christians and engenders a naturalistic worldview which tends to displace belief in a God who sustains all by the immediacy of His presence and who directly intervenes in the affairs of humankind. One of the problems of contemporary Christianity is that even those who are confessionally theists become so enmeshed in this secular worldview that their religion, in fact, amounts to a practical atheism, or a new kind of deism. It appears that Canale is reacting against a truncated theism that is but a short step away from both atheism and deism. His warning is one that all need to hear and think about.—Russell Staples, Berrien Springs, Michigan

The Seventh-day Adventist world of evangelism provides us a mosaic of varied hues. In some places things are going well; there is enthusiasm and involvement. In other places things are slowing down, and in still others the scene seriously challenges us. One method works well in one place but doesn't work in another. As a church we have, under God, created an amazing array of ways of reaching out to people with the gospel and the truths that take on a beautiful luster in the light of Christ. The theme of this issue is devoted to another look at God's commission to evangelize and how we do it, especially in North America.

Jake Lange writes on video evangelism and how it can equip many of our laypersons to engage in this new electronic outreach. Don't miss Abraham Jules' article; it's both inspiring and instructional. Russell Burrill's article is part of a series on church growth and planting that will be featured this year in different issues of *Ministry*.

The 12-part continuing education series under the supervision of Rex Edwards features Larry Yeagley this month. You will not want to miss his excellent article on how to deal with the crisis of death.

One new feature introduced in this issue is on the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and its services for the pastor. The rest of the issue has a number of very helpful articles. We at *Ministry* continue to be committed to serving you better in the days ahead.



Herb Larsen, Jr., owner of an industrial design engineering company and manufacturing plant in British Columbia, kindly contributed the cover art. The drawing is an Indian from the Inuit Tribe from Canada's NW Territory and is entitled "The Wait."

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2 Letters

4 Evangelism from the ground up
Will Eva

5 The truth as it is in Jesus
Bertil Wiklander

9 When death strikes
Larry Yeagley

13 Evangelism goes electronic
Jack Lange

14 Seven secrets of successful evangelism
Abraham J. Jules

18 Blood and judgment
Clifford Goldstein

22 Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry: extension program in North America
Benjamin D. Schoun

25 The India Real Truth Crusade reaps good results
Delbert W. Baker

26 Why plant apple trees?
Russell Burrill

28 Ministering to and through blind and deaf individuals
Larry Pitcher

30 Real life church planting
James A. Cress

31 Shop Talk

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MINISTRY/FEBRUARY 1996 3



Evangelism from the ground up

Will Eva

For a half hour Pastor Jones had been trying to get out of his Claremont church office. Telephone calls, drop-in visitors, and office business had kept him. At last he was ready to leave. Just as he pushed the door open, two of the more enthusiastic women of the congregation arrived. They had something important to say. "You know how we have talked about doing some kind of distinctive outreach here at Claremont," one of them said, "and how concerned we have been to do something that would actually work in our community. We realize that traditional evangelism does not bring people out like it used to, and we believe something should be done. We would like to be part of a scheme to get something going."

Pastor Jones listened patiently. When he left the church, he was overwhelmed by a sense of elation and foreboding. He was encouraged by the enthusiasm of the women and their desire to be involved, but he was not sure how to break the inertia that had settled over Claremont—an inertia that was partly because of the meager results that any outreach attempts had achieved in recent years.

It was his frustrating sense of "I-don't-know-what-to-do-to-change-things" that led him to call his "Pastor's Advisory Council" together. He had handpicked the members of this group after almost a year at Claremont, when he had had time to sense who would serve best as candid, confidential evaluators of his ministry, as well as wise supporters of him as a person. They had become his cabinet of counselors, and he had come to love and respect them.

He put it to them: "How can we break

the back of the evangelistic inertia that has become a part of Claremont? How can we bring ourselves to the point of reaching out in the name of Christ with nerve and courage, and with some expectation of success?"

There was a lot of discussion, but one consistent thought pattern emerged: "We know we can't expect much from conventional spirituality and traditional outreach methodology. It just does not seem to turn us on, or anyone in the community. So let's put together a task force of our best people, commissioning them to be a creative think tank for the congregation, to forge prayerfully a workable plan for special and ongoing outreach at Claremont."

Special approach

Right then and there, nine names were suggested, two of them were part of the Advisory Council. Pastor Jones met regularly with the group over a four-month period as they struggled to come up with a workable plan for their outreach. The task force conceived something quite unique, consisting of five consecutive weekends of special meetings. The best speakers available (one for each weekend) would be scheduled to present subjects highly relevant to the life of the community, and significantly oriented to basic Christian and Adventist belief. A seminar-styled meeting was planned for the Friday evenings of each weekend, when the guest speaker for that weekend would lead out. Sabbath services were carefully planned with particular attention to hospitality, unobtrusive registration, along with the very best they could provide in music.

On each Sabbath a special luncheon was planned. This was followed by a panel discussion again covering the theme of the weekend. Pastor Jones was active in all of the meetings, preaching on a sixth and final weekend, and then involving the Claremont church in comprehensive follow-up.

Evangelism from the ground up

The story of Pastor Jones and the Claremont church is, as you have guessed, partly true and partly imaginary. The point of the story is not the meetings themselves or the activities of the Pastor's Advisory Council (although I think a pastor's advisory of some kind is a great way to enrich one's ministry). The point is that the pastor, along with a group of members, took responsibility for sitting down and creating a way of doing evangelism from the ground up, as God was calling them to do it. Simple as this is, it is not a thing that is often done.

In principle, this is a plan that can be carried out adaptively in any church anywhere at any time. It is something that needs to be done, even in areas where evangelism is going well. It will provide a freshness and vitality in the hearts of the people and in the way evangelism is carried out.

Traditionally the full-time evangelist (thank God for him or her!) has been called into a given church community to run a series of meetings. He or she has had a program of tried plans and procedures. Even the pastor has not been involved significantly in the planning or creating process. Over time this approach has become a tradition. It has become as

Continued on page 20

The truth as it is in Jesus

Bertil Wiklander

**The Adventist
commitment to
truth is rooted in
their love for Jesus.**



*Bertil Wiklander, Th.D.,
is the president of
Trans-European
Division of Seventh-day
Adventists.*

The General Conference Ministerial Association has chosen the theme “The truth as it is in Jesus” for the ministers’ councils to be held in all the world divisions during this quinquennium. The theme reveals a particular concern with “truth.” That, in fact, has been a peculiar mark of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We respect the truth. We search for the truth. We preach the truth. Ellen White speaks about “the truth” more than a thousand times in her writings.

Our message is understood as “present truth” (2 Peter 1:12, KJV).^{*} Peter uses this expression to refer to the preaching of “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:16). Truth is an Advent term.

Adventist concept of truth

The first statement of faith in our history is found in an informal statement James White gave to a Seventh Day Baptist. In that statement White described the sabbatarian Adventist group as being “bound together by the bonds of love—love for the truth, love for each other, and love for a perishing world.”¹ Even today, the concept of “truth” is at the heart of the life, message, and mission of the church. For example, the introduction to the book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .* provides a summary of the Adventist concept of biblical truth. Three basics of the church’s understanding of “truth” emerge:

First, the eternal and boundless nature of God is seen as the basis for a *progressive* concept of truth and knowledge. “Recognizing that He who is the incarnation of truth is infinite, we

humbly confess that there is still much truth to be discovered.”

Second, the Bible is seen as a revealer of truth to those who search its pages under the influence of the Holy Spirit, resulting in our *progressive understanding* of truth. “We acknowledge the noble line of witnesses—such as Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, Tyndale, Calvin, Knox, and Wesley—whose advance into new light led the church forward to a fuller understanding of God’s character. And that understanding is ever progressive.”

Third, the Bible reader’s attitude of openness, obedience, and humility is presented as a condition for finding the truths of the Word of God.² How vital is the Adventist love for truth? James White conceived truth as essential for the unity of our church. It is our “love for truth” that binds us together and delivers us from “all party feelings.”³ It is at the core of our message, mission, and ministry.

Adventist concern for truth

Why should we be so concerned with truth? First, because God is truth and we are His people.

Second, the concept of progressive truth is apparent in both the Old and New Testaments, and challenges us to a continual study of truth.

Third, the impact of the Protestant Reformation on Seventh-day Adventist thinking has always been important. Part of that heritage has led us to accept the ultimate authority of the Bible and the need to search for truth through careful Bible study under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, there is the experience of the

Adventist pioneers and their intense concern for the truth in order to prepare for the Second Coming.

Finally, the great controversy theme carries the perpetual preoccupation of safeguarding truth (see 2 Thess. 2:10, 11).

Truth and Adventist predicament

In spite of our commitment to truth as it is in Jesus, we have from time to time found the church in a predicament regarding our understanding of that truth. We have made mistakes in our history that God has corrected. Some old theological tensions remain with us, on issues such as righteousness by faith, the nature of Christ, and the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.

With doctrinal statements, there is a danger that we forget that which is supremely important: the vision of the infinite and eternal God as truth—the truth as it is in Jesus. This vision of the ultimacy of God must transcend any written expression of doctrinal positions. And, therefore, the truth as it is in Jesus must be the very center from which all texts in the Bible and all doctrinal summaries of its content are understood.

Another issue among us is whether truth does change. Robert Spangler, former General Conference ministerial secretary and editor of *Ministry*, observed in a 1982 editorial that “Adventism creates a rather paradoxical situation in some respects. In teaching people, we emphasize the need of an open mind. . . . We are proficient in getting people to examine truth and investigate it thoroughly, recognizing its superiority to erroneous beliefs. But after having arduously worked with them to rethink and restudy their understanding of Bible doctrines, we then trust they will ‘settle into’ or ‘become grounded and established’ in the truth to such a degree that doubts or questions will never arise again.”

Spangler detects an inherent danger here. “Too often, by ‘being settled and grounded’ in the truth, we mean there is no further need to study or think or reason again. Thus we encourage

fossilization. Or if we do urge ‘study,’ we often mean head knowledge, not a knowledge that involves the heart. . . . This is just as dangerous as fossilization, if not more so. We must have ‘the truth as it is in Jesus’ warm from Heaven in our heart (see Eph. 4:21).”

Having the truth “warm from Heaven in our heart” implies a *growing* truth-growing into the likeness of the infinite God. Spangler continues: “If truth does not become a vibrant, living reality, if it does not become a part of our spiritual flesh and blood, if it does not constantly expand, along with our understanding of the Lord Jesus, into something more real and personal and precious, then it will become legalistic, empty, and meaningless.”⁴

Unfortunately, many did not hear this message in the eighties. Some ministers did not hear, and so they continued their fossilized lives and sermons, and their congregations began to die. As a reaction to that, others who did not hear it either, started their independent ministries based on doctrinal fossilization and careless criticism of church leadership.

As we move into the nineties, the question is no longer “What is truth?” but “Which truth is the more important?” or “Which truth do we need?”⁵

The answer is quite simple: “the truth as it is in Jesus.”

The truth as in Jesus

What does that actually *mean*? The phrase occurs in Ephesians 4:21. Ellen White uses it in the beautiful chapter “Things New and Old” in *Christ’s Object Lessons*.

Having said in verse 17 that the Christians in Ephesus must no longer live as the Gentiles do, “separated from the *life of God* because of . . . ignorance” (verse 18), Paul says: “You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus” (Eph. 4:20, 21).

The phrase is central to Paul’s argument from Eph. 4:17 to 5:21. The apostle’s burden is on how Christians

should *live*—as “children of light.” Previous to this he has spoken about “the unity of the body of Christ” (verses 1-16).

Paul apparently coined the expression “the truth that is in Jesus” in order to describe a *way of life*: “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self . . . ; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (verses 22-24).

Notice how “the truth as it is in Jesus” has to do with *Christian living*, which is a *new* thing, “created to be *like* God in true righteousness and holiness.” Thus, “the truth that is in Jesus” is basically defined as *God’s life*. Only on that premise can the Christian’s life be understood to be a new creation into God’s likeness.

As Paul pursues the argument of the life of God as the new pattern of life in the Christian church, he first admonishes his readers to fulfill the law: not to speak falsely and not to steal, in order to preserve the unity of love (verses 25-28).

Then, in Ephesians 4:29 to 5:2, the apostle broadens the perspective. “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” Our church needs this as the basis for its unity. This is truth as it is in Jesus.

Truth and Adventist life and mission

Love for God is the power that enables us to give ourselves up for

others in ministerial service "as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." That is the truth as in Jesus: to be transformed by His saving grace and by His grace lead a life of love. Recall the words of Jesus: "Remain in me, and I will remain in you" (John 15:4). "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever" (John 6:51). "For this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me" (John 18:37).

Ellen White understood the immeasurable greatness of this truth. "Truth in Christ and through Christ is measureless. . . . Not in this life shall we comprehend the mystery of God's love in giving His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. . . . The truth as it is in Jesus can be experienced, but never explained. Its height and breadth and depth pass our knowledge. We may task our imagination to the utmost, and then we shall see only dimly the outlines of a love that is unexplainable, that is as high as heaven."⁶

"Thousands have drawn water from these wells of life, yet there is no diminishing of the supply. Thousands have set the Lord before them. . . . But these searchers have not exhausted these grand and holy themes. Thousands more may engage in the work of searching out the mysteries of salvation. . . . The subject is inexhaustible. . . . 'Great is the mystery of godliness.'"⁷

Where may we search for a deeper appreciation of this mystery? "The great storehouse of truth is the word of God—the written word, the book of nature, and the book of experience in God's dealing with human life."⁸

What are we to find in the storehouse of truth? "The heaven-born love of Christ,"⁹ "the gospel,"¹⁰ "the deep things of God,"¹¹ and "the truth as it is in Jesus."¹²

Since "it is possible for us to see all that we can bear of the divine compassion," the truth as it is in Jesus "is unfolded to the humble, contrite soul." Thus, "as we search the word of God in humility of heart, the grand

theme of redemption will open to our research."¹³ There is a connection between human emptiness and divine fullness: the more we humble ourselves and confess our needs, the more God is able to provide us His gifts. The way to growth is an awareness of our own emptiness—like the tax collector standing at a distance, not daring even to look up to heaven, but calling to God for mercy upon his life as a sinner.

This humble and diligent search for truth is a spiritual endeavor that cannot succeed without prayer, faith in God, and sharing our treasures with others. When we "rely upon God in prayer, the Spirit of Christ will come upon [us], and God will work through [us] by the Holy Spirit upon the minds of others."¹⁴

The truth should be sought in the attitude of a servant. "If you search the Scriptures to vindicate your own opinions, you will never reach the truth. Search in order to learn what the Lord says. If conviction comes as you search, if you see that your cherished opinions are not in harmony with the truth, do not misinterpret the truth in order to suit your own belief, but accept the light given. Open mind and heart that you may behold wondrous things out of God's word."¹⁵

When that happens, we will rediscover the newness, the freshness, and the relevance of our message and mission, and we will live it and proclaim it with power and effect. ■

This article is an adaptation of the keynote address given at the Trans-European Division World Ministers' Council held in Budapest, Hungary, August 28-September 3, 1995.

* All Scripture passages in this article are from the New International Version.

¹ James White, "Resolution of the Seventh Day Baptist Central Association," *Review and Herald*, Aug. 11, 1853.

² *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .* (Silver Spring, Md.: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988), p. vii.

³ White.

⁴ Robert Spangler, "Does Truth Change?" *Ministry*, October 1982.

⁵ See William G. Johnsson, *The Fragmenting of Adventism* (Boise, Id.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1995).

⁶ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*

(Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900), pp. 128, 129.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 133, 134.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 129.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

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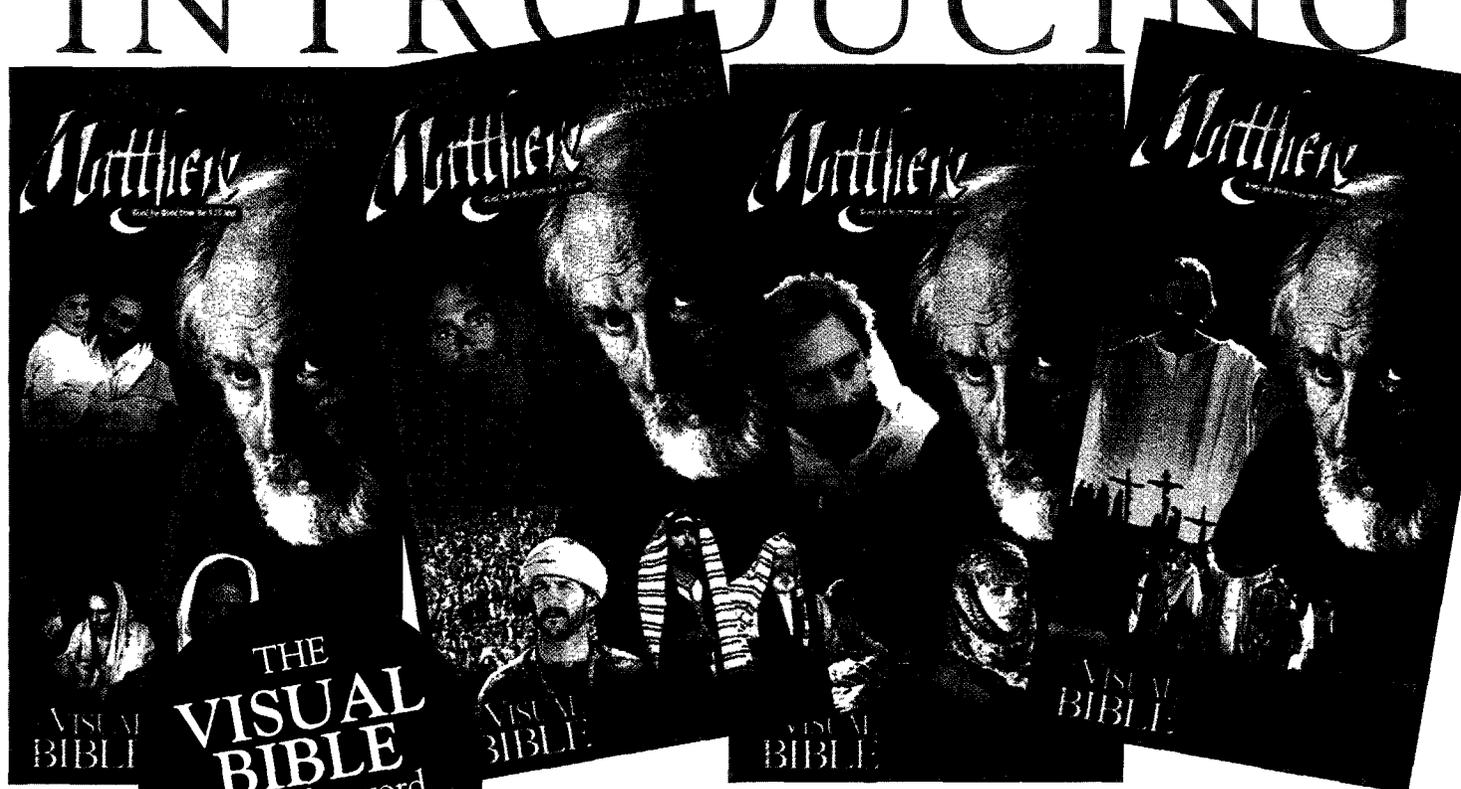
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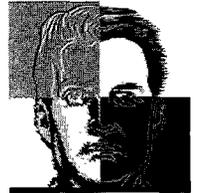
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Pastors may be experts at saying words appropriate to all occasions. But ministering in the crisis of death is a different matter. It requires adequate preparation. It calls for a readiness to be of service in the first few hours of crisis. It demands an understanding of the family dynamic in grief situations. It involves ongoing support following the death itself.

The pastor's preparation

Begin with listening. Listening may be more important than speaking. Listening does not necessarily mean listening with ears. Listening *with* the family is more important than listening *to* the family. Paul Tillich called it the listening love. I call it listening with the heart.

Pastoral preparation requires personal experience. Pastors who have not learned to adjust to personal loss themselves tend to personalize the pain of others. Eugene Kennedy says it well: "Individuals called upon for counsel during emergencies have themselves as their first clients. They must be able to maintain control of their own reactions, to possess themselves . . . with sufficient poise, to remain calm and in command. One of the therapeutic activities of the person consulted at a time of emergency is to be a steady presence in the situation."¹

The head nurse of the emergency room asked me to visit a family in hysterics. I entered the room quietly and remained silent for some time. The nurse was perplexed at my silence until she understood that our orientations were different. I was trained to listen first. She was trained to act in the saving of life.

Don't build detours. In the crisis of death, pastors must be well purged of what Eugene Kennedy calls rescue fantasy. Pain is inevitable, a necessary part of losing one's assumptive world. Families must go through the valley of pain. Pastors who build detours simply lengthen the grief time and betray their own lack of personal preparation to minister in the crisis of death.

Pastors must avoid being aloof. As Henri J. M. Nouwen cautions: "No one can help anyone without becoming involved, without entering with his whole person

into the painful situation, without taking the risk of becoming hurt, wounded, or even destroyed in the process."²

Understand the nature of death and grief. Because pastors frequently meet the crisis of death, they need to have a clear understanding of the nature of death and grief. Reading professional books on death, dying, and grief should be mandatory in a pastor's continuing education regimen. Volunteering with the local hospice and being by the bedside of the dying can provide a depth of understanding unmatched by any seminary course.

The pastor and the first hours of the crisis

During my first week as a hospital chaplain, the moment the beeper sounded I ran to the emergency room, breathlessly rushed in to the family, quickly introduced myself, and began talking. I discovered that my anxiety increased the anxiety of the family. Overcoming that initial impact was next to impossible. My entrance had set the tone for the entire visit.

Here are some basic procedures for the pastor to follow in those first hours of crisis.

Be calm. Whether pastors are called to the hospital or to the home, their demeanor should be one of quietness and calm. Pray for this on the way to the emergency. Enter the room quietly and slowly. Be seated. If there is no seat, lean against a wall or stand comfortably away from the center of the room. Sense the mood in the room. Listen to what everyone has to say. Wait until there is a lull in the conversation. Then quietly identify yourself for the benefit of those who may not know you. After the introduction, say something like "I came to share your sorrow and to help in any way I can."

Don't try to interrogate. Wait for the family to start the conversation. Eugene Kennedy says, "People are always trying to tell the truth about themselves."³ If they do not tell you what happened the moment you introduce yourself, they may be waiting for a family member to become the spokesperson. They may be too sad to speak about the details. Give them time. Trust the family to give you all the information you need to help them during their crisis.

Pastors may have a need to speak about spiritual realities very early in the crisis, but the family has a need to talk about their loss. Their need takes priority.

Once the family describes to you what happened, it is appropriate to ask questions that will help them to expand the details. The family breaks through denial and acknowledges reality when they discuss the death in depth. This is very important during the first hours of grief.

Help review life. Life review is a major part of grieving. That review ideally should begin near the time of death. If a pastor knew the person, he or she can initiate that review by

saying, "I am sad when I think of never visiting Jim again. He was always such an encouragement to me. He must have been special to you, his family." Then listen as they add to the life review. Make short comments that sustain the review.

I have noticed that conversing with a family about the positive attributes and contributions of a loved one's life has a calming effect. They may see no purpose in the death, but seeing an accomplished purpose in the life brings a sense of satisfaction and peace. Sherwin Nuland says, "The greatest dignity to be found in death is the dignity of the life that preceded it. This is a form of hope we can all achieve, and it is the most abiding of all. Hope resides in the meaning of what our lives have been."⁴

Assist the family. Whether death occurred in the home or the hospital, the pastor should invite family members to see the body before funeral home personnel arrive. The pastor should offer to accompany the whole family or individuals as they enter the room of the dead loved one. A medical person may explain what the family will see when they enter the room. Before entering the room, the pastor should ask the family if they want prayer to be offered while they are by the bed. This is important for some families, and the prayer often serves as closure to the viewing.

Often families prefer to be by the bedside without the pastor present. Last words and even confessions may be important keys to their success in grieving. Ask if the family wants to be alone. If an older person wants privacy, I let the person know that I will look in on him or her

occasionally just to be sure he or she is all right, but that is merely a peek in the door, not entrance.

As I visit with the family, I look for individuals who need assistance. The person who is showing signs of anxiety draws my attention. A woman wringing her hands and repeating "Oh, my God" is burning up excessive energy and going nowhere. I quietly kneel beside her and say, "Jim was very important and so much a part of your life. Can you tell me about him?"

Children too need pastoral care in the early hours of a crisis. They are sometimes forgotten. They stand forlornly in the background. I go to them and ask their names if I don't already know them. I may say, "Your grandpa was very special to you, wasn't he? You did lots of fun things together. Can you tell me about some of those fun things?"

I watch for the people who are quiet and withdrawn. I try not to invade their space, but I want them to know that they are an important part of the family. I often place a hand on a shoulder and quietly say, "This is a very sad time for you and your family, isn't it?"

Some families are paralyzed with shock. They are not quick about notifying other family members or about making

**"The greatest
dignity to be
found in death
is the dignity of
the life that
preceded it."**

arrangements for a funeral. If death occurs in a hospital, the staff usually wants to know which funeral home to call. The pastor may assist the family in caring for these needs. The pastor may place the calls, but a family member should be encouraged to talk. Announcing the death to other family members and friends and talking to funeral home personnel help the family to look at reality.

Take time. Ministering to the family experiencing death takes lots of time. Never rush. Sharing, not performing, is the key to effective support. Admitting your own sorrow is always appropriate.

Before you leave, write down what the family can expect. This would include funeral arrangements, timing, personnel, housing for out-of-town visitors, church and graveside services, and arrangements for meals.

While crisis counselors have placed much importance on the value of early intervention, I would caution pastors not to place their *full* attention on the early hours. Under intense anxiety during loss, family relationships often shift from an open communication style to a closed style in order to protect against the pain and anxiety caused by open discussion. According to M. Bowen, simply helping the family express feelings at the time of crisis doesn't necessarily increase their level of emotional integration. Loss of a family member disturbs the equilibrium. Restoring that equilibrium depends on the level of emotional integration versus the severity of the change caused by the crisis. The family's previous style of adaptation and their system of communication are also crucial to the way they react and regain equilibrium.⁵

The pastor and family grief patterns

F. Herz lists four major factors affecting the family grief reaction. The pastor cannot do anything about the first three: the timing of death, the cause of death, and the position of the person in the family. The pastor can do something about the fourth: the openness of the family system. The pastor can expand openness by using factual and open terminology and information, by establishing at least one open relationship with a person in the family that can promote openness in the rest. Help the family focus on hope for life and living instead of focusing solely on death.⁶

During seven years of working in psychiatric units, I discovered that unresolved grief is a factor in 40 to 60 percent of the patients. We treated the patients, but did very little to determine the grief patterns of the family. Ester Shapiro is right: "Grief is at heart a family process, and it is within that process that the injury to an interdependent sense of self can best be understood—and healed."⁷

Establish family equilibrium. Pastors can help families to reestablish the family equilibrium by making individual, family, community, and sociocultural resources available. The greater the loss, the greater the need for resources to limit further upheaval and restore ongoing family development. By resources I do not mean books, although reading is a good resource. I mean people resources—what Shapiro calls the

"unflinching human presence."

Have support ministries. Churches can maintain a data base to keep track of families who suffer loss. These losses can be categorized by type—AIDS, accidents, cancer, etc. When a fresh loss occurs in the congregation, others who have suffered similar loss can forge a support group ministry. This should be an ongoing process. Memorial services can be held annually for all the families who have experienced loss during that year.

Pastors can schedule sermons and seminars on loss and healing. In larger churches newsletters and libraries can be established to provide resources for grief handling and recovery. Church programs can be developed and sustained to use when a family experiences a loss. Educating the entire congregation about the dynamics of grief will help members handle grief in their midst.

The pastor and long-term ministry

The belief that grief is an experience from which we can fully recover is a fallacy. Those who have experienced loss know that they do have subsequent temporary upsurges of grief brought about by memories over which they have not grieved. Pastors should expect to see this fallout of mourning for many years.

Failure to mourn for losses associated with death may complicate the lives of people for years. The pastor must be ready to support them when they come crashing into his or her study.

When the web of life-sustaining relationships is torn apart by death, the strong web of the religious community must be there to uphold the brokenhearted and to assist them in spinning a new web. ■

¹ Eugene Kennedy, *On Becoming a Counselor: A Basic Guide for Nonprofessional Counselors* (New York: Continuum Publishing Corporation, 1980), p. 262.

² Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972), p. 72.

³ Kennedy, p. 42.

⁴ Sherwin B. Nuland, M.D., *How We Die* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), p. 242.

⁵ M. Bowen, "Family Reaction to Death," in P. Guerin, ed., *Family Therapy* (New York: Gardner, 1976), pp. 335-348.

⁶ F. Herz, "The Impact of Death and Serious Illness on the Family Life Cycle," in E. Carter and M. McGoldrick, eds., *The Family Life Cycle: A Framework for Family Therapy* (New York: Gardner, 1989), pp. 223-240.

⁷ Ester R. Shapiro, *Grief as a Family Process: A Developmental Approach to Clinical Practice* (New York: Guilford Press, 1994), p. 10.

Coming in March

The crisis of divorce

CONTINUING EDUCATION EXERCISE

The pastor as a crisis counselor

1. Make a list of your losses in life. Think carefully about each loss. Be attuned to your emotions as you do this. Does a particular loss cause you pain? Spend time reviewing the loss. Share your feelings with a supportive person.

2. Imagine that you are called to be at the bedside of a church member who is dying. Imagine a second call to be at the bedside of a church member who has died. What are you going to do in each visit? Try to be detailed in your imaginary visits.

3. How many books on death, dying, and grief are in your library? How many continuing education events have you attended on these topics? Challenge yourself to read two books in the annotated bibliography in the next three months.

4. Write a report of a recent visit with a bereaved person or family. How long did you stay? Did you ever evade painful conversation? Did you speak more than you listened? Did you encourage life review? How did you feel when their tears flowed freely and their sobs filled the air?

5. What have you done for grieving families in the past year? Be frank with yourself. Are you satisfied with what you have done? Brainstorm with your church elders about what the church can do to meet their needs more effectively.

Suggested reading

1. Nuland, Sherwin, M.D. *How We Die*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993.

A detailed discussion of the discomforts and agonies that accompany illness and death.

2. Rando, Therese A., Ph.D. *Grieving: How to Go on Living When Someone You Love Dies*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1988.

Written for the person experiencing a loss. The author examines reactions to many kinds of relationship losses and gives sound ideas for adjusting to these losses.

3. Rando, Therese A., Ph.D. *Treatment of Complicated Mourning*. Champaign, Ill.: Research Press, 1993.

A specialized history of studies in grief, giving a clear description of uncomplicated mourning and concrete ways of reversing complicated grief.

4. Richards, M. Gregory. *When Someone You Know Is Hurting*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.

Meeting the crisis of death is a joint venture between pastor and parish. The author presents practical interventions for many types of loss and the ways of preventing caregiver burnout.

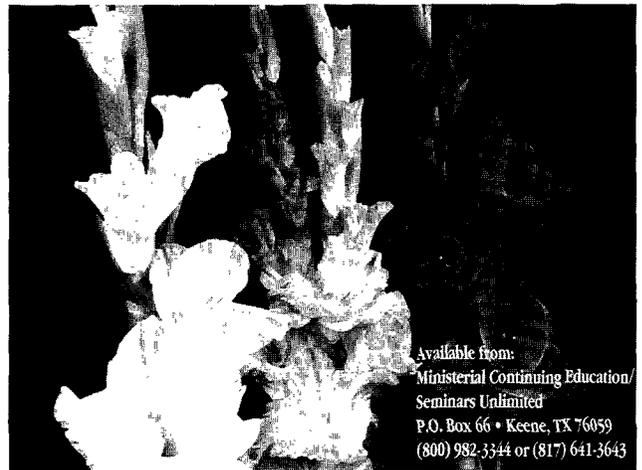
5. Shapiro, Ester R. *Grief as a Family Process: A Developmental Approach to Clinical Practice*. New York: Guilford Press, 1994.

The author maintains that an individual never grieves apart from the family, thus arguing for the need to build close relationships and family equilibrium as part of ministry to the grieving.

Coping With Grief

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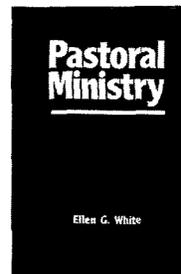


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Evangelism goes electronic

Jack Lange

In our high-tech age the use of videos is a highly successful tool for evangelism. Thousands of families that are not sufficiently motivated to attend a live evangelistic series can view the same evangelist in their homes. Videos can whet someone's appetite for truth where previously there was none. This presents unprecedented openings for evangelism.

Like any form of sharing, video evangelism can be demanding. It isn't an easy street formula to replace hard work or Bible studies. In fact, in most cases, successful video evangelism is a bridge between first contact and Bible studies. If we depend on media methods alone, leaving out live Bible study, the results will be shallow.

Video evangelism promises a high return for the pastor's time. As a pastor I can study with only a limited number of people, but I can lend video tapes to many people, as I get lay members to assist me. For example, I placed one inexpensive advertisement in a small town newspaper offering the first *Dimensions of Prophecy* video. For my \$40 outlay I had 13 requests. This developed into a few families watching the entire series and becoming top interests. There was also the important dimension of giving laypersons the joy of involvement, as they learned how to visit with people.

In this generation used to sensational entertainment, it takes something rather startling to attract attention. Some of our video presentations have that capacity. They are professionally prepared with

gripping audiovisual effects. I have discovered that under the Holy Spirit's winning influence, casual curiosity often turns to a real desire to keep watching the entire series.

An entering wedge

In a secular, materialistic society, few people will accept Bible studies without prior "softening up," especially if they don't know you. However, my experience has shown (in Australia and in New Zealand, both with notorious reputations for being post-Christian) that more than 50 percent of strangers will accept a message video after a casual contact. Recently when I moved to a new town as a stranger, my doctor, car salesman, lawyer, mechanic, and real estate agents all accepted my offer of watching a prophetic video, and in each case they continued viewing the series. Not only that, but their business associates and families borrowed the videos from them. In my experience, approximately 15 percent of those who accept the first video are eventually baptized. So imagine what could happen if a trained laity accepted this method using basic soul-winning techniques.

Let us suppose that trained church members lent out video tapes to 100 homes, and 200 viewers saw the first video. Of these 200, approximately 50 people may develop sufficient interest to view the entire series, so that at least 15 would eventually join with Christ and the church! Even if the laypersons were inexperienced and few or none of the original viewers were baptized, it would not be difficult to channel them into a Revelation Seminar, which surely would bring a significant number to the

point of baptism.

The Kenneth Cox video series, *Dimensions of Prophecy*, is quite appealing. In one conservative New Zealand town we have a small church with only a few working members. Yet they sacrificed and purchased five sets of Cox's tapes and three video players (30 percent of the town didn't own one). The tapes were constantly lent out and helped contribute significantly to the baptism of several persons in just a few months, while others are still being visited.

With Cox's excellent Christ-centered coverage of testing truths, the videos have a special ability to consolidate people who are already receiving studies. After a study with a family on a given subject I often leave them the relevant tape to firm up their knowledge of that particular subject.

Steps in video evangelism

1. Selecting the video series. Get an original set. Copying is illegal, gives poor quality, and makes it difficult for the producers to finance an ongoing video ministry.

2. Organizing the viewing program. Don't expect that an announcement or a promotion during church service will bring members flocking to go out. A better approach is to follow the general announcement with personal contacts with a few keen people, and then take them with you individually. After a few visits with you, they will gain confidence to go on their own. Don't expect viewers to watch the entire series and make decisions. It doesn't work that way. Decisions have to be gained at strategic

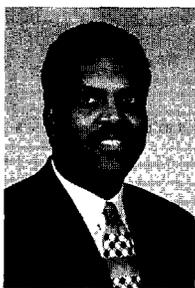
Continued on page 21

Jack Lange is a pastor in New South Wales, Australia.

Seven secrets of successful evangelism

Abraham J. Jules

No church can ignore the call of evangelism and yet retain its zeal and fervor.



Abraham J. Jules, D.Min., is senior pastor of the Kingsborough church, Brooklyn, New York.

Go.” Evangelism was born with that simple command from the risen Jesus. Our task is well defined: mission outreach. Our territory is well laid out: the local neighborhood to the world at large. Our message is plain: Jesus. And the needed means are made available: “Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Matt. 28:20).*

Since Jesus mandated that command, evangelism has become the watchword of every growing, concerned community of faith. No congregation, no minister, no member can afford to ignore the call of evangelism and yet retain the zeal and fervor of the Christian calling. “Do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Tim. 4:5), wrote the apostle Paul to the young pastor Timothy, affirming that the work of the evangelist is inseparable from gospel ministry.

The question often asked is How can I be a successful evangelist? From my experience, let me share seven secrets of successful evangelism.

1. Biblical theology

Successful evangelism is rooted in a healthy biblical theology. God is passionate in His desire to save. No matter how much we may psych ourselves for evangelism, unless our understanding is rooted in the reality of God’s unquenchable desire to save, His ability to save, and His purpose to employ us in the saving mission, we run the risk of leaving unused many of the vast resources God has provided to His people.

A healthy biblical theology will guide the pastor/evangelist to a

complete dependence on God for the mysterious work of conversion that He alone can accomplish. Such a theology will also reveal the need for an approach that involves and incorporates the commitment of the church membership in the entire process. The call of the 12, the 70, and the seven deacons are insightful testimonies of a healthy biblical theology. Even our Lord cultivated and used the gifts of those around Him to accomplish His purposes.

Successful evangelism is well within the reach of every member, for we have all been called out of darkness into God’s marvelous light to be ambassadors, envoys of God’s steadfast love, and the eternal redemption that is in Christ. Paul challenges each member of the body of Christ to “fulfil your ministry.” Reaching out to others in the name of Christ is simply the mission of each member.

The timeless truths that reveal God’s great love for us can be seen on the cross of Calvary. God’s saving power is demonstrated in the empty tomb from which our Saviour rose. The love and power that enable us to engage in evangelism come to us directly from the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary. There is only One who ever lives to make intercession for the world, and who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. It is from this universal command center that Christ dispenses power to break the grip of the adversary, assuring the sinner of His unwavering love and His desire and ability to save to the uttermost all who will respond to His call to come to Him.

2. Conscientiousness

Successful evangelism is a conscientiousness. After the resurrection of Jesus, several themes emerged in the New Testament community: They saw *the authority for evangelism* rooted in Christ (Matt. 28:18); *the purpose for evangelism* in making disciples (verse 19); *the method of evangelism* as volunteerism (verse 19); *the power for evangelism* in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8); *the message of evangelism* as redemption in Christ Jesus (Luke 24:46, 47); *the geographical dimensions of evangelism* as cities, states, and the countries of the globe (Acts 1:8); and *the duration of evangelism* as until the end of the age (Matt. 28:20).

The impact of these themes on the conscientiousness of the apostles as recorded in Acts is striking. Their chief preoccupation was evangelism, and it resulted from the conviction that "we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). For them evangelism was not a program but a way of life. For them each day was an opportunity to witness to the power of the crucified, risen, and soon-coming Lord. The result of the fulfillment of Christ's promise of the Holy Spirit and His commission to "go" was the birth among them of an irrepressible conscientiousness that constrained them to evangelize.

Because evangelism is God-ordained and God-inspired, it must be understood as a successful enterprise in and of itself. God has not left evangelism to chance. It works and is guaranteed to be successful when engaged in faithfully.

3. Involvement of laity

Successful evangelism is lay-centered. Evangelism can be defined as the person-to-person outreach of believers to nonbelievers with the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the act of leading those who do not believe to repentance and to acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. All too common is the notion that this work belongs to the pastor alone. The danger is greater when the pastor believes it.

This kind of thinking tends to build barriers. It creates a false dichotomy between laity and clergy. We are all the people (*laos*, from which derives "laity") of God, exercising the gifts given by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12). Every convert becomes an extension in the chain of evangelism (2 Cor. 5:17-19). As ambassadors we are called to represent Christ to the world through our particular gifts.

The fact that the pastor is called to lead does not relegate the work of evangelism exclusively to him or her. The consistent success of the South American and Inter-American divisions and the Philippines in this regard ought to underscore the point. The training of the *laos* (people)—motivating, mobilizing, and managing—is the key that unlocks the evangelistic prowess and potential of any church.

4. Three M's

Successful evangelism utilizes certain key elements. Our modern methods differ in some respects from the methods used in the first century. We have no evidence that the early evangelists pitched tents, conducted seminars, utilized sequence evangelism, or had any particular technique to reach the secular mind. Successful evangelistic methodology in any age consists of the ability to provide vision and leadership to the church in the task of evangelism. Such a leadership will motivate, mobilize, and manage every resource of the church to achieve its soul-winning objective.

Motivation for evangelism is generated through experiencing the gospel, encountering the Spirit, praying, revisiting the testing truths, having pre-meeting rallies, training so that confidence is generated, and cultivating an atmosphere of unity and expectancy.

Mobilization is achieved by planning, organizing, and staffing that includes recruiting, interviewing, and placing members according to their gifts, skills, and interests.

Management involves clarifying priorities, setting up timetables, keeping

a positive perspective, and implementing a process of evaluation for the purpose of accountability.

5. An ongoing process

Successful evangelism is not seasonal. Nowhere in Scripture is there even a hint that evangelism should be a seasonal endeavor. On the contrary, Acts 2:47 indicates that accessions to the truth occurred daily. As the church heads toward the twenty-first century, it must, if it is to remain true to the Great Commission, rescue evangelism from the realm of the "occasional" and anchor it where it belongs: in the down-to-earth, ongoing, daily life of the congregation. The very nature of the church dictates that evangelism is not something that may be turned on and off. It is a year-round way of life mandated by God to invite "whosoever will" to come into God's kingdom.

Even when a church makes plans for public evangelism, those plans should reflect a process that encompasses the entire year. Three basic phases of public evangelism, when planned and executed, can help to climatize a church to evangelism as an ongoing enterprise.

Pre-evangelism is the preparatory stage in which the emphasis is on training, teaching, motivating, mobilizing, and preparing the members spiritually.

The public meetings are the engagement stage in which the battle for souls takes place as God's Word is presented.

Post-evangelism is the stage during which the back door is effectively closed. It is the phase when bonding, nurture, and grounding take place through *spiritual guardianship and mentorship*.

This last critical phase should be seen as an ongoing process in which church members shepherd their new believing friends.

6. Faithfulness to the task

Successful evangelism is measured by faithfulness to the task. If faithfulness is measured by numbers, then Noah would probably be considered a failure. We learn from the experience

of Noah that faithful evangelism has to do with proclaiming God's message:

- boldly;
- as a witness or testimony even to those who do not accept it;
- with the full realization that sometimes those who embrace the truth may come from our own household; and
- in simple obedience to His command.

Here are a few questions that can help us to evaluate our faithfulness to the task:

Did I prepare myself faithfully for the task through fasting and praying for the church and for those who will be attending the meetings? Did I pray for the anointing of the Holy Spirit, confessing and forsaking known sin in my life and searching God's Word? Did I prepare my church members faithfully by recruiting, equipping, training, and motivating them? Were the evangelism finances expended with the utmost care and faithful stewardship? Did I ask for the best from those under my supervision? Did I stand faithfully against my detractors and critics, searching for God's guidance at every step?

If we have been faithful in the above and we have baptized only one, we still have been as faithful as if we had baptized 1,001.

7. Great results

Successful evangelism always yields great results for both the church and the unchurched. Wherever successful (faithful) evangelism is done, revival and renewal result. The members become grounded. The great wonders of Christ and the claims of truth are again rehearsed before them, bringing about deeper conviction and a reformation in the personal life.

We should not become discouraged when, having been faithful, we fall short of our own expectations. Along with this, some who may be initially reluctant to embrace the truth presented may well be convicted at some later point. The parable of the seed falling in different kinds of soil puts things in perspective for us. Inevitably, the word that we proclaim or teach falls, like the sower's

seed, on a variety of surfaces. That is why successful evangelism cannot be linked exclusively to numbers. A great part of the success is that we have simply delivered the message faithfully. Even when it comes to closing the back door, there are variables that we cannot account for. Our task is especially to care for those who are represented by the good ground, and to continue to pursue the others in the hope that the ground of their hearts

will soon be receptive to the seed.

Successful evangelism is well within the reach of every pastor. Paul's admonition to young Timothy to do the work of an evangelist is framed in a context of a call to faithfulness, consistency, and long-suffering. The evangelist who has these qualities can only succeed. ■

* Scripture passages in this article are from the Revised Standard Version.

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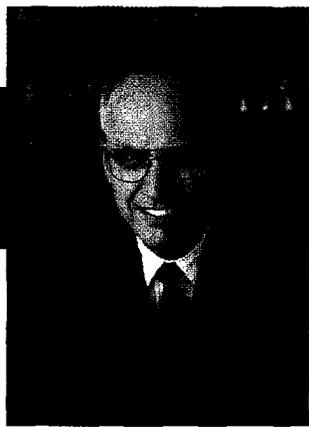
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Kenneth Searson, "and I now plan
to be an Adventist minister!"**

Im supposed to go somewhere this Friday night—but I wonder where!" Kenneth Searson, a young man in the Air Force who had left the Lord and the Adventist church years ago, was overwhelmed with this powerful impression! When Friday arrived he was let off work early for no reason. As he walked to his room in the dormitory at the Malmstrom AFB in Great Falls, Montana, his eye glanced at something posted on the wall. It was a handbill for evangelistic meetings being conducted at the Great Falls church. "Who stuck that on the wall?" he wondered. The topic that evening didn't necessarily interest Kenneth, but he still had the powerful conviction to attend. His father, Elder Wayne Searson, a minister in the Upper Columbia Conference, and his mother, Sharon Searson, also a church worker, have continued to earnestly pray for their boy through the years. "If someone would have told me last year I would be at church on Friday night rather than drinking with my friends, I would not have believed them," Kenneth said. He came to church that evening and discovered the evangelist, Dan

Bentzinger had decided to switch his topics—something he's never done before—and preached on baptism and rebaptism. That evening Kenneth made a commitment to come back to Jesus and the church by being rebaptized! His parents were overjoyed when he phoned them in another state and asked if they could come to Montana and have his father rebaptize him the last day of the crusade. The congregation wept as they witnessed a minister and his baptismal candidate, a father and son, embracing in the waters of baptism!

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE: The Gospel Goes Hi-Tech! How Technology is Revolutionizing Evangelism.



By Glenn Aufderhar, President
Adventist Media Center

Forbes AND 4-LETTER Words

It wasn't what I expected in the complimentary copy of *Forbes*: a string of four-letter words! From the brief description under the author's picture, Dr. Thomas Sowell appeared to be a rising star in the sophisticated world of high finance and academia. His richly tailored suit fit the image of one who would be listened to in the executive boardrooms of America's largest corporations. From his pedigree you wouldn't expect him to need to resort to four-letter words to emphasize his point. Yet there they were at the very end of his article—*love, duty, work* and *save*.

It was that first word in the list that caused me to read the editorial. *Work* and *save* seemed to be words readers of *Forbes* would expect, but *love*? What would a hard-nosed business journal be doing using that language? After reading it through the second time I decided *Forbes* was doing what every Adventist is commissioned to do—call the world to a more joyful and responsible way of life. Listen to his logic:

"It may be a sign of our times that everyone seems to be talking openly about sex, but we seem to be embarrassed to talk about love.

"Sex alone will not even reproduce the human race, because babies cannot survive the first week of life without incredible amounts of care...

"The shallow people...try hard to take love out of human relations...Why have there been such painful laments—in letters, literature, poetry and song...about the breakup of love affairs?

Because there are no other members of the opposite sex available? Not at all.

"Sex is almost always available, if only commercially. But love is a lot harder to find. Some people do not even try after their loved one is gone. Some give up on life itself.

"...what millions of people have done for hundreds of years gives the lie to the self-important cynics who want to reduce everything to an animal level."

Sowell concludes his section on love with a perceptive sentence. "Like morality, loyalty, honesty, respect and other immaterial things, love is one of the intangibles without which the tangibles won't work."

This editorial is only the latest in a long list of books and papers on management coming from authors who sound like they are reading from inspiration. The former vice president of AT&T, Robert Greenleaf, may have launched the surprising renaissance of spirituality among visionary business leaders two decades ago in his classic management book, *Servant Leadership*. In this book he sounds as if he understood well the deeper meaning of the sermon on the mount or had read *Desire of Ages*. His closing chapter entitled "An Inward Journey" contains this poignant assessment of the business world as he saw it. In some places does it fit our church?

"With us, sophistication, rationality, greater mastery of the immediate

environment have taken their toll in terms of a tragic separation from the opportunity for religious experience..."

While his view of a religious experience may have been expressed in terms foreign to Adventist evangelists, one cannot read his tribute to Robert Frost called *Directive*, without believing that Greenleaf enjoyed a few rays of light from "That...true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

So what does this say to us as Adventists preparing for public evangelistic crusades and NET '96? Two things:

1. There is a great thirst for, and recognition of, the value of a genuine spiritual experience. Many of the most thirsty come from the ranks of the most thoughtful and capable. They know how to influence the bottom line, transplant hearts, build skyscrapers, compose symphonies and serve the needs of the public.

They didn't become successful without learning to recognize counterfeits.

2. We who are helping to carry a small remnant of the light need the light of God's love even more than they. Our message is without equal in its beauty, logic, synthesis and integrity. But what about our church? Are we driven by the superficial, the materialistic that the thoughtful world around us is beginning to reject? Or do we as a community reflect the genuine?

The opportunity is unparalleled!



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LIVES TOUCHED

BY THE

Spirit



FEATURING Dan & Gloria Bentzinger

Evangelistic Team, Adventist Evangelistic Association, Adventist Media Center

The Amish country with its horse and buggies, tourists, and handmade quilts was the site for Bentzinger's crusade in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Having previously served that conference in administration, Bentzinger was aware of the history of the local congregation. For ten years there were no public crusades. Then a pastor who had trained in Bentzinger's field schools of evangelism came in as a guest to hold a crusade. The church was revitalized through the six-week ministry of Barry Tryon. Eighteen months later Lancaster had Media Center evangelist Leo Schreven for a wonderful crusade. This year, when Bentzinger arrived, he found a congregation that had gone through a beautiful healing process because of their new attitude to evangelism. During Bentzinger's series the congregation rejoiced as over 25 people



Theresa Ripley was invited by a work associate who got a handbill from his Adventist wife. Theresa came just to get him off of her back! Both were baptized in the group of over forty in Great Falls, Montana.

came to the Lord through baptism, rebaptism and profession of faith.

During the crusade Bentzinger conducted one of his many field schools of evangelism for Andrews University with students from Pennsylvania, Potomac, and Carolina conferences. Bentzinger says he tries to convey that evangelism is much more than a five-week reaping series. He goes through a year-long cycle of evangelism in the local church, and emphasizes the importance of



Students during Bentzinger's field school in Pennsylvania. Left to right: Samuel Pagan, David Livergood, Dan Bentzinger, Ryan Bell, Geoff Patterson, Peter Smaela. Not pictured: Mike Kim, Kleber Ceron.

being Spirit-led and filled with love—otherwise all the mechanics he teaches are useless.

One student commented: "I particularly appreciated the emphasis placed on prayer in our daily meetings. I was so uplifted during this time! If a group of members could experience what we did during those prayers they would be less likely to consider God's work a drudgery and would learn to truly love one another. Dan taught us through his own sincerity."

The Bentzingers' next crusade took them to Great Falls, Montana. The elders of the church said every facet of the crusade was Spirit-led. Months ago they prayed that God would open the doors for their church to hold evangelistic meetings. The next night at prayer meeting, they prayed God would send an

evangelist to their church. The following day the pastor received a phone call stating that Dan Bentzinger, evangelist from the Adventist Media Center, had a cancellation. "Please book him!" the elders told the pastor. "He is an answer to our prayer last night!"

Special evidences that this was God's timing confirmed and rewarded the faith of the congregation. During a church business meeting the members voted overwhelmingly to have the crusade right away. Pastor George Boundey passed out paper for pledges to help with the crusade finances. "We really need a commitment of \$5,500 from the church family tonight. Write down what you think you can give." Everyone anxiously waited as it was added up. The amount pledged was EXACTLY \$5,500! When the time came for the brochures to be mailed, the amount that had been budgeted for advertising was EXACTLY the amount it would cost to send a handbill to every home in the Great Falls area!

Pastor Boundey reflected, "Although there were reasons before the meetings to think this might not be the best time for a public evangelistic series in my church, I am convinced the Holy Spirit knew this was EXACTLY what we needed NOW!"

It was God's timing for member Al Holbrook who had a heart and lung transplant and nearly died last year. He feels God gave him this extra time so he could see his wife, two daughters, and two other family members baptized.

It was God's timing for Beau and Edna Lloyd who were going from church to church searching for truth. Smokers for 34 years, they had immediate victory over tobacco after an anointing! They are among the 40-plus baptisms, rebaptisms, and professions of faith.



Dick Clark, head elder of the Great Falls church said, "Dan and Gloria came as a direct answer to prayer over a three-day period of time. God has used this warm and loving couple to share the gospel in a mighty way!"

LIVES TOUCHED

BY THE

Spirit



FEATURING Mark & Lloyd Fox

Evangelistic Team, Adventist Evangelistic Association, Adventist Media Centre, Canada

The Canadian Adventist Media Centre welcomes Mark and Lloyd Fox as an evangelistic team. They have held forty series throughout North America and just this past year made the transition from slide projectors to computer multimedia technology. Two It Is Written programs produced for Canada feature Fox, as well as his book offers in many of the telecasts. Fox will continue some crusades in the U.S., but must understandably give priority to Canada.

The first crusade Fox conducted after joining the Canadian Media Centre was contracted in the United States. The

members' prayers in the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania church were answered in the form of eighteen beautiful people stepping out in faith for Jesus by baptism.

Ted Knauss, a tall, Harvard graduate and trial attorney for 21 years attended the meetings. "I came more out of curiosity combined with the quiet suggestions of my wife who has been a loyal Adventist for many years", shares Ted. Even though he had attended church with her sporadically for a number of years, he had never really studied the Bible or the Adventist message to any great degree.

Several factors motivated this busy lawyer to keep attending nightly. He says, "I found Mark Fox to be a compelling and engaging speaker. His humble and unassuming style, and the logic and depth of his presentations convinced me of the truth of the messages and that the Lord was speaking through him to me."

Making a decision to follow Christ did not come without struggles, but Ted was feeling a need of changes on several fronts in his personal life. "I wanted to change some of my health habits and I wanted to become a complete family

man," he shares. In the privacy of his home with Fox and the pastor, Yves Monnier, the decision was made. Ted's wife, Debbie, relates that she was in tears as the four of them knelt in their living room and with deep emotion thanked God for Ted's decision.

Months after baptism he is filled with new life and enthusiasm for the Lord. "People have commented to me that my outlook on things have changed," Ted smiles. "I've learned that everything I do is to the glory of God and to please Him. My eating habits have changed—not from any doctor's advice but through the influence of my church. I'm so much happier and more outgoing!"

Fox's next crusade was in Regina, the capital city of Saskatchewan, Canada. Despite frigid weather and the headline news of the Quebec referendum vote the attendance at the meetings was very good.



Donavan Young, Assistant Deputy Minister in the provincial government with wife Barbara, and daughters Gabrielle and Jade. They are happy new Seventh-day Adventists in Saskatchewan, Canada.

The series was held at the Center of the Arts building and accommodated 475 adults and children on opening night.

Pastor Dave Jamison encouraged Donavan Young, who is Assistant Deputy Minister for the provincial government, to attend the meetings.

Young, a former politician who served as city counselor, was strongly interested in Bible prophecy. He remembers, "I attended the first two or three and was basically hooked." His wife, Barbara, who is a music teacher, commented, "The Beast and the Mark of the Beast was amazing material to learn!"

Young is an independent thinker and is not the kind of person who can be pressured into making a decision. However, he was convicted by the evidence of truth. After struggling with questions about the Sabbath and other issues, he and his family determined they would step out in faith and are now members of the Regina Adventist church.



"I knew my precious wife and children would be with Jesus some day, and the thought of not being there with them made the decision easy," beams lawyer Ted Knauss, pictured with his family.

LIVES TOUCHED

BY THE

Spirit



FEATURING Leo & Tamara Schreven

Evangelistic Team, Adventist Evangelistic Association, Adventist Media Center

end over 40 souls were led to Christ through baptism and rebaptism.

Many assume that working in the Bible belt would be easy, however it is one of the most difficult fields of labor. Nearly everyone is religious and going to church is a cultural way of life. Almost everyone has been to a revival sometime in their life and has "been saved". When the Adventist truth is powerfully presented many see no need to accept it, since they are "already saved". When one does decide to follow truth, there is persecution from friends and family in the former church. The Schrevens witnessed this on many occasions. The church in Atlanta really stepped in to provide friendship and support...a church family committed to social and spiritual integration.

The final night of the meetings was the first game of the World Series with the Atlanta Braves. The church had just finished celebrating the baptism of many people that day, and as Leo sat in awe that night watching the tens of thousands of cheering fans celebrate the Atlanta Braves victory, he said the contrast was amazing. About 400 faithful church members compared to thousands and thousands of people,



Sheri Hubert is a friend of members Tammy and Chris Carpenter. Because they cared about her, she and her little girl came to the Atlanta meetings each evening. Sheri was baptized by Pastor Bill Levin.

sitting on cold concrete, shivering in the 39-degree weather for three hours, paying hundreds of dollars, walking miles from parked cars, wildly cheering for a few players. Leo reflected, "If God's people were as fervent about lost souls as worldly people are about chasing a baseball...what would happen?"

The Schrevens made their way several thousand miles west to Calgary, Alberta. For years the leadership in Alberta had planned a crusade that would have a major impact. Five of the area churches joined forces. With pre-work and major advertising the hall was packed with over 400 visitors opening night.

Pastors Adams, Chin, James, Perez, Wahl, and Wiebe worked incredibly hard and were thrilled as they witnessed miracle after miracle. "There have been 88 wonderful baptisms added to our five churches," exclaimed Pastor Ken Wiebe, from the Calgary Central church. Young adults from a variety of backgrounds joined the five Adventist churches in Calgary.

Marilyn Bedwell's son was baptized during Schreven's series in Victoria, British Columbia three years ago. He had been an elder in the Pentecostal church. Since his baptism he has been praying for his mom. It was a high day for him when he received a long distance phone call from his mom telling of her plans for baptism into the Adventist family!

Gerry Zimmerman looked over the brochure he received in the mail, then contacted his mom, sisters, brothers and in-laws. The whole family came ranging from grandmas down to toddlers. A dozen people in the Carlson, Dengler, Schiffner, and Zimmerman families were baptized from this one invitation!

The Olympic city of Atlanta, Georgia, has to be one of the most beautiful cities in North America. The soft southern nights were warm and balmy as the Schrevens began their crusade in the Atlanta North church.

Pastor Bill Levin worked hard to prepare the church and community in this highly affluent area. Challenges faced them as advertising handbills got lost and a major hurricane hit.

Power lines were down, closing roads and paralyzing the city for three days without electricity! In spite of all this, the members came faithfully and in the



Children in Calgary receive a poster door prize from Pastor Wiebe. Mark Finley, who came to kick off the opening night, is seated on stage, and Leo Schreven is at the microphone.

LIVES TOUCHED

BY THE

Spirit



FEATURING Lyle & Peggy Albrecht

Former Evangelistic Team, Adventist Evangelistic Association, Adventist Media Center

Elaine Murphy looked through her mail one day and saw a brochure that looked rather familiar. It was telling of Albrecht's upcoming meetings. "Even though I left the church years ago, I could tell right away it was an Adventist crusade," she recalls. She talked to her husband about attending. She had no plans of

coming back into the Adventist church...she just wanted her husband, who was raised Catholic, to hear the fundamental beliefs that were instilled in her by a godly grandmother who took all ten grandchildren to church every Sabbath. "I was the only grandchild who really wanted to go to church as time went on," she remembers.

When Elaine was baptized as a young lady her mother decided to join the church also, and has been faithful ever since. However Elaine left the church when she was 25, and actually stopped believing there was a God. "It was only during this past year that I started thinking again that God does exist, but I wasn't interested in going back to church," she says. After attending Albrecht's meetings she changed her mind! Elaine and Raul were both baptized in McMinnville, Oregon by



"We are so happy that Lyle Albrecht came to our town so we could understand the real meaning of God's love, and see the right path to take with Jesus," reflect the Murphys.

Pastor Chuck Burkeen.

Raul used to wonder why he did penance as a child. As an adult he would not claim a denomination because he was afraid of being on the wrong path to Jesus. But there's no more fear in Raul's face now! His daily life as a salesman of fine cars consists of Cadillacs and Christ! And Elaine is convinced the brochure in the mail came at just the right time! "My mother is thrilled I am reunited with the great Adventist family, and I can't wait to meet with Grandmother in heaven and tell her how Jesus gave me peace!"

The Lexington, Kentucky church started planning for their evangelistic thrust a year and a half ago by inviting the Halversens from the Adventist Media Center to hold a crusade. For a year the church bathed itself in earnest prayer and began working and planning.

On opening night Pastor Gordon Paxton and church members received their reward as over 500 people attended. Double sessions, filled to capacity, were held the first two evenings.

The presence of God's power was evident as miracles began to take place

in the city of bluegrass and thoroughbreds. Fifty-five precious souls were brought to Christ through baptism, rebaptism, and profession of faith.

During the crusade, Halversen also conducted a field school of evangelism for Andrews University teaching five students methods in soulwinning. The team reports many heartwarming experiences, one of which is the Dannenhauer family. The radio advertising prompted them to drive six hours round trip every evening from Columbus, Ohio! They were baptized at the end of the meetings.

Another miracle



Zella Price (left) and her daughter, Marsha Scalon, were baptized into the Lexington church after being members of the Church of Christ for many years. They are pictured with Steve Arnold, who was also baptized.



FEATURING Richard & Mary Halversen

Former Evangelistic Team, Adventist Evangelistic Association, Adventist Media Center

was Lo Wai Khan, a young Chinese student at the University of Kentucky who was baptized. She was befriended by a family in the church. It took courage for her to be the only one in her family to take the step from Buddhism to Adventism. This joyful congregation in the Southern Union is praising God for the outpouring of His Spirit upon the lives of men and women who now are a part of the church family!

HANDSTANDS AND THE Blessed Hope

By Gloria Bentzinger



The challenges of overseas travel aren't new to Eric Amundson. As a missionary's son, his travels with his family have taken him literally around the world. But he was excited when it was arranged for the Andrews University Gymnics—of which he is team captain—to be a part of the VOP evangelistic outreach in the Philippines.

"I love the adventure of facing challenge after challenge and never knowing if I'll make it safely to my destinations," he said before the 34-member gymnastic team flew out in December. He didn't realize he was predicting what was in store for him hours later!

When plans fell through for military air transportation from city to city, the team was put on a very old bus for their first trip. The non-stop journey was over rough roads. This was their first of many bus trips to different villages over Christmas vacation to represent the Voice of Prophecy in the Philippines. During that hard, 32-hour ride, Eric made himself a hammock on the bus by tying sheets to poles and went to sleep!

The challenges of mission and the desire to be used by God in ministry is what is prodding Eric to become a "bush doctor". Even with his



Eric Amundson

previous travels, he was shocked when he saw the people. "I saw kids there without clothes, their stomachs bloated, carrying little babies because their moms had died. Even though I've seen poverty in third world countries before, I was stunned again at the needs!"

But what touched Eric the most was the hunger for truth about God. After the Gymnics performed in the streets, they passed out sign-up cards for Bible studies with the Voice of Prophecy, along with the books *Steps to Christ* and *Desire of Ages*. "People would mob us by the hundreds after our shows to get these," he said. They distributed a total of 15,000 books during their three-week tour!

As he passed out the cards and books, Eric would look into the eyes of the Filipino person and wonder if he or she would be a part of the massive baptisms that Lonnie Melashenko would witness at the culmination of Target 50,000. Would this person really read this *Steps to Christ* that he was autographing?

The crowd left and the sun was setting. Lights started to flicker on in a small village in the Philippines. Some "homes" were literally stapled cardboard, but glowing light bulbs strung in under the cardboard walls gave even trashy shacks a homey feeling. As Eric walked along the narrow street, he peered into these tiny "homes". What he saw made up for his personal inconveniences and sacrifices.

Sitting on the floors of these shacks were people reading their *Steps to Christ* books he had autographed. In their hands were the Voice of Prophecy Bible lesson enrollment cards. Knowing that each person enrolling for lessons would be invited to the upcoming VOP crusades—Eric continued to stand there—watching—wondering. "I'll never forget some of those faces," he recalled, blinking back a tear.

Maybe the next time he'll see those faces with those inquisitive eyes will be in heaven, where walls of cardboard will be replaced with pure gold!

Target 50,000—the largest VOP campaign ever!

"These Filipino theology students who will be holding meetings for me are enthusiastic about soul-winning!" exclaimed Lonnie Melashenko (left).

"The future of the church definitely belongs to the young people in the Philippines," he continued. "My heart was lifted, and I was deeply MOVED by their dedication and exuberance about evangelism."

As Melashenko talked about the extensive evangelistic plan of Target 50,000 (celebrating VOP's 50 years of ministry in the Philippines) he stressed the vital role that youth will play. Melashenko stated that the majority of the decisions will be youth and young adults, since millions of the Philippine population are people in their teens or twenties.



"When I was with these theology students in the Philippines," Melashenko recalled, "I realized that we aren't going there to teach them anything, but rather we Americans will learn a lot about what wholehearted dedication and commitment is all about."

Target 50,000 is the largest Voice of Prophecy campaign ever undertaken with 300,000 enrolled in VOP Bible courses, 30,000 fellowship Bible study groups, 500 harvest crusades by Filipino pastors, 200 harvest crusades by Filipino lay persons, 75-150 U.S. and Canadian pastors and evangelists participating, 6 other countries sending in guest teams, 14 mass baptismal rallies resulting in 50,000 baptisms!

Melashenko is so appreciative of every single person involved in the gigantic endeavor. "What a thrill it's going to be to share in the joy of hugely successful methods of one-to-one witnessing," he exclaimed! "And I know that some of the hands I shake at the massive baptisms will be the same ones that eagerly accepted Bible enrollment cards from Eric!"

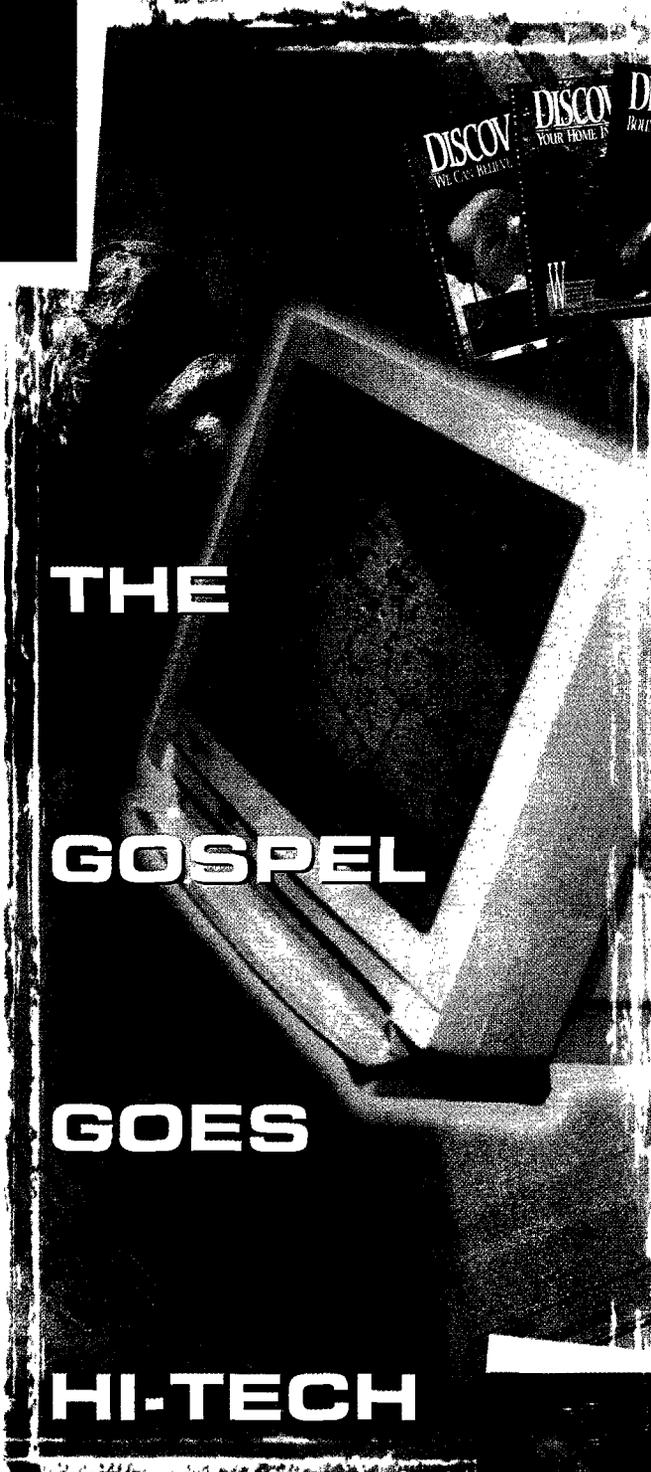


NET '96 Coordinator, Don Gray (left) is pictured with David Johns, the man behind the computerized presentations. Johns, who works for the Adventist Media Center, has made all of Gray's 35mm slides available for computer. He and designer Palmer Halvorson are also converting more slides and video footage for use during the NET '96 broadcast.

This new material will be available on CD-ROM for pastors, evangelists, and lay workers who desire to use their computer with a video projector as a tool for illustrating sermons and evangelistic presentations after the NET '96 meetings in October. Media Center evangelists Dan Bentzinger and Mark Fox are presently using much of this technology and material in their crusades.

"We are also creating computer graphics animations," says Johns. Animation differs from computerized video in that it is created by manipulating computerized graphics to do things that would be difficult to accomplish with a video camera—such as having a title flip, turn, and fly onto the screen.

Johns has also been compiling a database of every church participating in NET '96. Using computerized map programs, each church participating in the series is displayed as a red diamond. Johns can "zoom" into a region and see the surrounding cities and towns. It also allows some search capabilities. For instance, someone calling the hot-line number could give their town, state, or zip code, and be told the address and phone number of the nearest NET '96 church.



THE GOSPEL GOES HI-TECH

Johns says that this database also enables Don Gray and his team to look at a map and see which areas are not well covered so they can encourage those conferences in blank areas to sign up. "Wouldn't it be great to have a NET '96 church within 50 miles of any place in the U.S.," exclaims Johns! ■

believe that the idea of establishing hundreds of *Discover* Bible Schools across North

America to prepare for NET '96 came straight from the heart of God," shared Dan Guild, who authored the recently released *Discover* Bible lessons. "To see hundreds of churches, our Adventist media broadcasts, our

publishing houses and our medical institutions all joining hands in preparation for NET '96 is a fantastic combination that will be used by the Holy Spirit to move thousands to accept Christ and our last-day message!"

The *Discover* lessons have a fresh new look which was accomplished by using state-of-the-art computer graphics to digitally alter and enhance the photographs—giving the whole lesson series a more stylized, contemporary appearance.

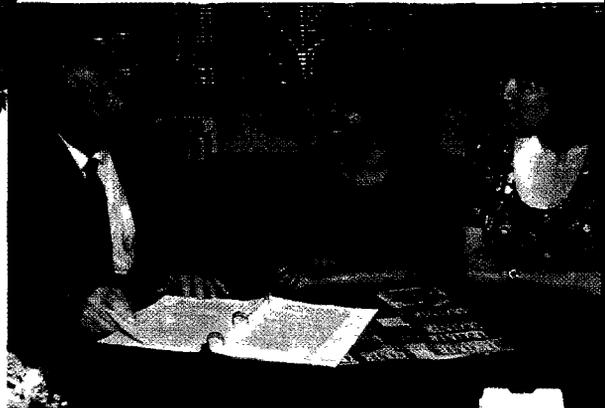
Pictured with Guild are Bible Correspondence School staff members Jan Judd (right) and Estelita Atiga. They may be reached at the numbers below for the following information.

VOICE OF PROPHECY: (805) 373-7652

- Estelita Atiga: Answers to questions about ordering supplies.
- Jan Judd: Answers to specific questions from local Bible schools' instructors and counselors.

DAN GUILD: (805) 498-6889 day & eve.

For help in setting up and operating a local Bible School.



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Blood and judgment

Clifford Goldstein

The focus of investigative judgment is on what Christ's blood has accomplished.



Clifford Goldstein is the editor of *Liberty*.

Like good Protestants, Adventists claim that they believe in justification by faith. They say that salvation is by grace alone and that works cannot save them. They believe that they are saved by Christ's substitutionary death, "the only means of atonement."¹

Yet ask what happens in the investigative judgment, and suddenly the soteriology of many members becomes more works orientated. It's no longer grace alone. The line between judgment by works and justification by faith becomes blurred, until Christ's death as "the only means of atonement" isn't quite what they believe. The substitution isn't quite complete enough.

Despite all the assertions, claims, and publications to the contrary, because of their misunderstanding of the investigative judgment, many Adventists are trapped in a salvation-by-faith-and-works model of atonement.

It has taken me 14 years to realize how prevalent this problem is.

Experience of justification

Part of the reason for my myopia about legalism in Adventism was that I had never struggled with it myself. Not only did I understand it intellectually and biblically; I experienced it as well. I had been walking through a field, praying and feeling the presence of God in a remarkable manner. Suddenly it was as if the heavens opened and a flash of God's glory burned across the sky. I dropped to my knees and cringed, because for the first time since I accepted Christ, I saw just how wretched I was in contrast to a holy

God. The overwhelming thought that consumed me was *Oh, Lord, how can You accept me?* Instantly an image of the cross flashed through my head.

I understood justification by faith. I knew all the texts in Romans. I could give Bible studies on it. Yet that day I *experienced* the great biblical truth that my only hope of salvation was rooted in what Christ did outside of me, for me, and in place of me 2,000 years ago at Calvary. I experienced the truth that no matter how sanctified and obedient I became, works—even the ones done through Christ in me—could no more justify me before God than the blood of pigs could wash away my sins. For me, justification by faith was no longer just a theological doctrine; it had become the foundation of my whole walk with Christ.

Wrong assumptions

The problem, however, was that because this understanding had become so axiomatic to my Christian experience—I assumed it was for everyone else as well. When, therefore, I preached and wrote about victory, sanctification, and biblical perfection (all of which I still believe), I assumed that everyone began with the same premise I did about justification by faith. No matter how hard I preached obedience and holy living, I thought that those listening already understood that Christ's imputed righteousness—not obedience and holy living—was the only basis of salvation. I never dreamed that I was hammering more nails in their legalistic coffins.

My first inkling that my assumption was wrong was with what I did to my

poor wife soon after our marriage. So afraid that she might get caught up in the perfidious “new theology,” I harped on the biblical truths of victory in Christ, overcoming sin, and character perfection. I never set these truths upon the foundation of justification by faith, simply because I thought she knew that basic teaching. Eventually, thinking that her salvation was based on what happened *in* her, rather than *for* her, she became discouraged, as would anyone who was looking inside themselves and what happens there for salvation.

I was concerned. We studied together Romans 3-5 and the great truth of righteousness by faith. Since then, though my wife still strives for character perfection, as all true Christians do, she places her hope of salvation in Christ’s death for her, as all true Christians must.

Blood and law

Though what my wife went through opened my eyes, something recently helped me to see the problem clearer. One pastor visiting an Adventist woman in a hospital told her that I was coming to town to preach. Her face turned red and she gasped and uttered, “Goldstein scares me—he’s trying to revive the doctrine of the investigative judgment within Adventism!”

When the pastor told me, my first thought was *What was this person’s understanding of the investigative judgment that would cause her to have such a response?* Suddenly everything that I had been hearing over the years coalesced, and I then realized that the root cause of Adventist legalism was a misunderstanding of the pre-Advent judgment.

Adventists see the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14 as the antitypical fulfillment of the Levitical Day of Atonement, and rightly so. Yet what is atonement? Is it not God’s act of saving a human being? Is it not God’s work in our behalf? “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). Is that not atonement? How is atonement achieved? It happens only one way: through blood.

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Lev. 17:11).

Thus any day dedicated totally to atonement—God’s work for us—must be very good news. How is it, then, that we have turned the antitypical day of atonement into bad news?

Because Adventists believe in obedience to the Ten Commandments, and because the Levitical Day of Atonement centered upon the room in which the Ten Commandments were kept, the tendency has been to emphasize the law more than blood. Yet in the type, everything happened with blood, not law. The mercy seat, that covered the law, was never lifted or removed on the Day of Atonement. According to Leviticus 16, the only thing that happened to the mercy seat on the Day of Atonement was that blood was sprinkled upon it (see verses 14, 15). The mercy seat always covered the law. The law, then, never comes into view, because it is the Day of *Atonement*, and only blood—not the law—atones.

The key element on the Day of Atonement was blood. “And he shall take of the *blood* of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the *blood* with his finger seven times. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his *blood* within the vail, and do with that *blood* as he did with the *blood* of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat. . . . And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the *blood* of the bullock, and of the *blood* of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the *blood* upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel” (Lev. 16:14-19).

Blood, not the law, atoned for sin, and every drop symbolized the only

blood that truly makes atonement: the blood of Christ. “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18, 19). Blood, symbol of the righteousness of Christ, is what gets the sinner through judgment.

Blood and judgment

Just as blood was the only thing that got the penitent in Israel through the earthly Day of Atonement, it is blood, Christ’s blood, that gets the penitent through the heavenly Day of Atonement. In His daily ministry, Christ as intercessor presents His own perfect life in place of the repentant sinner’s imperfect one; in the yearly, He does the same thing. Whenever the name of one of His followers appears for judgment, Christ pleads His blood, His righteousness, in their stead. It can’t be anything else, because nothing else—not even works done by Christ in us—is good enough.

“The pre-Advent judgment,” wrote Norman Gulley, “is Christ-centered and not man-centered. It is not so much what individuals have or have not done per se that is decisive. Rather it is whether they have accepted or rejected what Christ has done for them when He was judged in their place at the cross (John 12:31).”²

Ellen White understood this forensic aspect of the investigative judgment. “When in the typical service the high priest left the holy on the Day of Atonement,” she wrote, “He went in before God to present the blood of the sin offering in behalf of all Israel who truly repented of their sins. So Christ had only completed one part of His work as our intercessor, to enter upon another portion of the work, and He still *pleaded His blood* before the Father in behalf of sinners.”³

In the judgment, when names of God’s people come up, Satan accuses them before the Father. He “points to the record of their lives, to the defects

of character, the unlikeness to Christ . . . [and] to all the sins that he has tempted them to commit." What happens in response? "Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and, claiming for them forgiveness, He lifts His wounded hands before the Father and the holy angels, saying: I know them by name. I have graven them on the palms of My hands."⁴ It doesn't matter if this happens when we are alive or dead: if we are converted Christians, we are covered by Christ's blood.

What about Ellen White's statements regarding how every thought, word, and deed will be investigated? For example, this one: "Sin may be concealed, denied, covered up from father, mother, wife, children, and associates. . . . The darkness of the darkest night, the secrecy of all deceptive arts, is not sufficient to veil one thought from the knowledge of the Eternal."⁵

The Bible, of course, teaches the same thing: "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:14).

Who among us—even the most Christlike and sanctified Sabbathkeeper—could stand when every thought and secret thing is presented before God for judgment? Not one. That's why we need a substitute in the judgment. Second, which secret things, which thoughts, which evil deeds, can't be pardoned by the blood of Christ? None. For the repenting and confessing Christian, who leans totally upon the merits of Christ, everything is covered by Him who "lifts His wounded hands before the Father." That's the essence of the good news!

Judgment by works

Of course, the wonderful, liberating news of Christ as our substitute in the pre-Advent judgment *never* implies release from obedience to the law. Forensic righteousness merely frees us from the bondage and futility of trying to be saved by the law.

No matter how adamant they were about justification by faith, the New

Testament writers were just as adamant about obedience and a righteous life. "Little children," wrote John, "let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous" (1 John 3:7). "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:24, 25). "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom. 3:31).

Those under the delusion that righteousness by faith doesn't require strict obedience to God's commands will one day find themselves crushed by these words: "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity [lawlessness]" (Matt. 7:23).

Christ, our substitute in the judgment, doesn't negate a judgment by works, either. On the contrary, works show that we have a saving faith. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works" (James 2:17, 18).

Travis observes correctly: "Paul's focus on relationship to Christ is not in conflict with his affirmation of judgment according to works. For he understands people's deeds as evidence of their character, showing whether their relationship to God is fundamentally one of faith or of unbelief. . . . At the final judgment, the evidence of their deeds will confirm the reality of this relationship."⁶

Assurance and judgment

How unfortunate that for more than a century the investigative judgment has been twisted and even used as a disciplinary tool! As a result, instead of teaching the pre-Advent judgment as the climactic application of Calvary in our behalf, many Adventists have put the judgment in tension with, and even in opposition to, the cross. When salvation should have been rooted in what Christ has done for us, the

investigative judgment has been so taught that we have focused attention upon ourselves and how well we perform, a hopeless prospect for even the holiest and most sanctified Seventh-day Adventist Christian.

No wonder so many Adventists don't have assurance of salvation. Far from negating the gospel, however, the pre-Advent judgment—*when taught in relationship to the cross*—affirms that our salvation comes only from faith in what Christ has done for us, and nothing else. Too bad many Adventists have missed this crucial aspect of the plan of salvation. ■

¹ *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines* (Silver Spring, Md.: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988), p. 106.

² Norman Gulley, "Daniel's Pre-Advent Judgment in its Biblical Context," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, Autumn 1991, p. 59.

³ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 429. (Italics supplied.)

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 484.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 486.

⁶ S. H. Travis, "Judgment," in Gerald Hawthorne and Ralph Martin, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1993), p. 517.

Evangelism from the ground up

Continued from page 4

natural as breathing, but it has contributed to evangelistic staleness and inertia. This is so because it has kept out of the process the crucial contribution of the minds and hearts of the people of the local congregation who know their God and their communities.

Start, then, a creative outreach task force in your congregation (if you haven't already done so). It will take much of the weight of responsibility from you as pastor. A new enthusiasm for outreach may well stir in your heart, as well as in the hearts of your members. ■

Evangelism . . .

Continued from page 13

times during the viewing process. To begin with, develop friendships and cultivate confidence.

3. Following the tape sequence.

Normally tapes must be used in their original sequence. However, exceptions can be made. I once met a man at a garage dump who looked ill and asked him how he was. He replied, "No good; I'm dying of lung cancer." I then thought it appropriate to lend him the tape on heaven, though it was number 4 in the series. After the video gave him hope, he then watched the entire series, beginning with the first. Each successive tape builds on the information provided by the earlier tape. A progressive soul-winning strategy has been built into this sequence, and deviating from it lessens its impact. For this reason it is best not to discuss a subject unless the person has watched the video covering it.

4. Making the contacts work.

Videos can be offered to anybody—friends, business and trade people—even after a surprisingly short acquaintance. Simply say that you have enjoyed a tape on Bible prophecy and world affairs and ask if they would like to borrow it for a week. Do not inform them that you have an entire series, or they will be daunted by the thought of such a large commitment. Set a time for picking the video up and stick to that time. If you allow too much time to lapse, convictions of truth may fade before you call again, or they will become casual about viewing, not knowing when you are likely to arrive.

The second time around, ask them if they found the tape interesting. If their response is positive, offer them the next tape, briefly describing its title. If they haven't yet watched the first video, give them just one more opportunity. I have made the mistake of spending too much

time trying to support a waning interest while others looking for light have been neglected. After a few visits, once they feel comfortable with you, it is a good idea to sit with them during the viewing, particularly during decision tapes, for you can encourage them while truth is fresh in their hearts.

During the first few visits, don't get into any deep discussion with them on the topic at hand, unless they lead you into it. Just let the Holy Spirit create interest through the video at this stage. However, it is important to get some response and feedback with every visit, without giving the impression that you are pushing. Draw people out increasingly in proportion to the number of videos they have seen. The idea is to get them talking about what they have seen. Their positive reactions deepen their conviction and prepare them for the vital decisions. Hearing them talk also gives you a chance to ascertain how they feel about what they have viewed and the degree of their interest.

5. Leading to decisions. A good video series will present salvation in Jesus early, before distinctive doctrinal issues are presented. People need to give their hearts to Jesus before testing truths such as the Sabbath and tithing are presented. It is when the gospel has been presented from a few different angles and the Saviour is lifted up that hearts are drawn to Him. Wait until people have at least expressed some sort of desire to accept Jesus on a few occasions before you call for a personal verbal decision. We are reluctant to ask for decisions because we feel awkward or think we will be regarded as being too pushy. Yet asking for decisions is essential in soul winning. "When persons who are under conviction are not brought to make a decision at the earliest period possible, there is danger that the conviction will gradually fade away."¹

Decisions for Christ are made by a blend of emotion and intellect. Usually people won't respond to someone they don't know well enough to trust. Therefore it is important to build up a

natural friendship with them as they view the tapes.

6. Presenting testing truths. If, for example, you present the Sabbath to someone who hasn't yet accepted Christ, they will see it as a burden to be rejected, or they will try to keep it legalistically. The Sabbath can have a beautiful relevance only to those who have accepted Christ as Saviour and also Lord. "If persons mention the subject [Sabbath], tell them that this is not your burden now. But when they surrender . . . to God, they are then prepared."²

Cox covers the Sabbath over three programs and recommends that people not be asked to keep the Sabbath until all three programs have been viewed. Then rather than asking them directly to keep the Sabbath, it is more tactful to ask them if there would be any problem if they began keeping the Sabbath. Any difficulties expressed can then be dealt with. If they say that there is no problem, they show they are open to accepting the Sabbath, and should be encouraged to make that decision.

7. Extending church membership.

With any video series the best time to invite them to join the church, if they haven't already declared this intention, is after they have already made decisions regarding the major testing truths such as the gospel, the Sabbath, healthful living, etc. Church membership will then be a natural extension of the path they have already chosen. With the Cox series, this invitation comes after they have watched the video *Why a Church?*

The strategy for soul winning presented here is not unique to video outreach. The principles apply to all soul winning. However, applied to the professionalism of modern videos, it is an irresistible combination.

Contact your local Adventist Book Center for more information about the Cox series and other video sets available. ■

¹ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), p. 229.

² *Ibid.*, p. 228.

Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry: extension program in North America



Benjamin D. Schoun

Beginning this month, *Ministry* will feature a special column on the role and ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in the mission of the Adventist Church. The seminary is involved in the training of pastors and church leaders. The *Ministry* magazine is committed to help in the professional life of pastors and pastoral spouses. How fitting it is that the Adventist journal for clergy should open its pages to the seminary and forge a link that would strengthen the pastoral work at large.

From the early 1980s the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary has been teaching extension courses in North America. These intensive courses are taught at various locations, making it possible for ministers to study toward a seminary degree or continuing education credits even as they continue to serve. Normally the courses are conducted on the campus of an Adventist college. Two degree programs are offered: Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry (M.A.Min.) and Doctor of Ministry program. We will discuss the doctoral program in a later issue.

The design

The M.A.Min. was designed for established pastors who have been unable to finish the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree. A recent

survey indicates that 61 percent of pastors in North America do not have the M.Div., and 54 percent have no graduate degree at all in religion or ministry.

While the M.Div. provides the most complete preparation for pastoral leadership and is by North American Division policy the normal educational expectation for ordination, the M.A.Min. fills a need for those who are unable to obtain the M.Div. The evaluation responses of students in the M.A.Min. program indicate that the courses give them a stronger knowledge of the Bible, a deeper spirituality, new ideas for preaching and leadership, stronger self-confidence in their ministerial roles, and thereby greater effectiveness. An important side benefit is the personal encouragement and support that pastors feel from the fellowship and sharing with their colleagues.

The program

In order to participate in the M.A.Min. courses a person must be at least 35 years of age and ordained. Women in ministry who have the experience normally associated with ordination are welcomed. This age and ordination requirement directs younger and beginning pastors to pursue the M.Div. according to the policy mentioned above. Applicants must also have a bachelor's degree with a grade point average of at least 2.50.

Three courses are offered annually for a total of 12 credits. Pre-session assignments must be completed prior to the intensives, and post-session work is to be sent to the instructor. Under this plan the 72 credits required for the degree can be earned in a six-year cycle.

In addition to the English program there are five locations that offer a Hispanic track where all the courses are taught in Spanish. A new one-time Hispanic cycle has just begun in the Southern Union with classes held near Orlando, Florida.

The program is financially supported by the union conferences. However, there is a block of credits that must be taken in residence at the seminary for which students must pay. Some conferences and unions have continuing education policies that grant assistance for the cost of this residency work, as well as for travel, food, and lodging for the off-campus intensives.

Enrollment procedures

Individuals interested in taking any of these courses must preregister. Here is the procedure: 1. Review your qualification for participation. 2. Contact your union conference ministerial director and obtain the appropriate course requirement sheets, preregistration form, and book order form. 3. Arrange for your participation with your conference administration. 4. Send your preregistration form to the seminary. 5. Order your books. 6. Complete your preintensive assignments. 7. Come to the intensive on time. 8. Finally, complete postintensive requirements and send them to your instructor.

For specific information, please contact:

M.A.Min. secretary—Jan Higgins, phone, (616) 471-3544

M.A.Min. director—Douglas Kilcher, phone, (616) 471-3245

Seminary fax—(616) 471-6202 ■

Benjamin D. Schoun, D.Min., is the associate dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Seminary M.A.Min. Extension Courses for 1996

Atlantic Union

Hispanic M.A.Min.	May 12-16	THST674 Chr Personal Ethics	A. Dupertuis
Hispanic M.A.Min.	May 19-23	CHIS567 Hisp-Am Church Hist	A. Dupertuis
M.A.Min.	May 26-30	CHMN610 Teaching Ministry	J. Thayer
M.A.Min.	Jun 2-6	NTST630 Theol Synoptic Gospels	L. Richards

Canadian Union

Participants attend the nearest location in the U.S.

Columbia Union

M.A.Min.	Mar 17-21	CHMN664 Equipping Lay Leaders	D. Kilcher
Hispanic M.A.Min.	Mar 17-21	CHIS567 Hisp-Am Church Hist	C. Sepulveda
Hispanic M.A.Min.	Aug 4-8	CHMN525 Hisp-Am Culture	A. Valenzuela
Hispanic M.A.Min.	Aug 11-15	CHMN550 Pastoral Psychology	A. Valenzuela
M.A.Min.	Aug 25-29	CHMN505 Biblical Preaching	K. Stout
M.A.Min.	Sep 1-5	OTST520 Theol of the OT	R. Gane

Lake Union

M.A.Min.	Feb. 25-29	CHMN664 Equipping Lay Leaders	Staff
Hispanic M.A.Min.	Mar 3-7	THST636 Doct of Right by Faith	A. Dupertuis
Hispanic M.A.Min.	Jun 2-6	CHMN607 Preaching From OT	A. Valenzuela
M.A.Min.	Aug 25-29	CHMN505 Biblical Preaching	S. Vitrano
M.A.Min.	Sep 1-5	OTST520 Theol of the OT	B. Storfjell
Hispanic M.A.Min.	Dec 1-5	THST674 Christ Personal Ethics	A. Dupertuis

Mid-American Union

M.A.Min.	Mar 17-21	CHMN534 Youth Leadership	R. Wishbey
M.A.Min.	Aug 18-22	CHMN527 Ch Leadership & Admn	J. Patzer
M.A.Min.	Aug 25-29	CHIS674 Dev of SDA Theol	G. Damsteegt

North Pacific Union

M.A.Min.	Aug 18-22	MSSN615 Anthropology for Miss/Min	B. Bauer
M.A.Min.	Aug 25-29	THST636 Righteousness by Faith	P. Van Bemmelen

Pacific Union

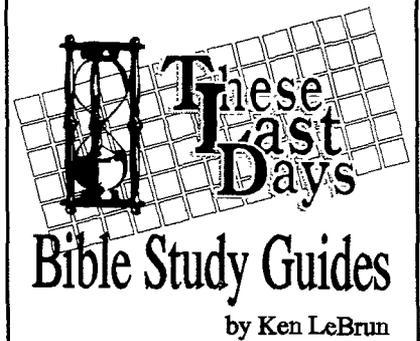
M.A.Min.	Mar 17-21	NTST646 Stud NT Exeg:Parables	R. Johnston
Hispanic M.A.Min.	Mar 17-21	NTST657 Hebrews	A. Valenzuela
Hispanic M.A.Min.	Aug 25-29	THST636 Righteousness by Faith	A. Dupertuis
M.A.Min.	Aug 25-29	CHMN524 Intro to Rel & Society	M. Kis
Hispanic M.A.Min.	Sep 1-5	OTST564 Pentateuch	A. Dupertuis
M.A.Min.	Sep 1-5	THST670 Prin of Christ Ethics	M. Kis

Southern Union

Hispanic M.A.Min.	Jun 9-13	CHMN525 Hisp-Am Culture	A. Valenzuela
Hispanic M.A.Min.	Jun 16-20	CHMN546 Marriage and Family	A. Valenzuela
M.A.Min.	Aug 25-29	CHMN555 Pastoral Counseling	J. North
M.A.Min.	Sep 1-5	CHIS673 Dev of SDA Lifestyle	G. Knight

Southwestern Union

M.A.Min.	Aug 4-8	CHMN555 Pastoral Counseling	P. Swanson
M.A.Min.	Aug 11-15	CHIS688 Contemporary Trends	W. Douglas



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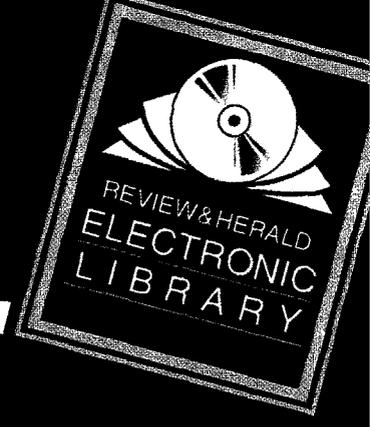
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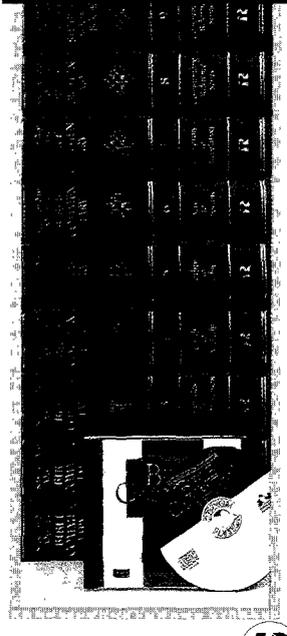
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The India Real Truth Crusade reaps good results

India Real Truth Crusade, an evangelistic partnership between the North American Division and Southern Asia Division, climaxed on December 9 with a baptism of 1,120 people on the banks of Krishna River in Vijayawada, India. Those baptized included local community leaders, business persons, laborers, mothers, fathers, children, and entire families from all walks of life.

The project started as a dream of the NAD Ministerial Association, under the direction of William Scales, Jr., and with the planning assistance of his administrative secretary, Sarojini Chedalawada, a native of India. The project goals were simple—to win souls and to help build up the churches by facilitating an evangelistic/health reaping meeting involving a cooperative effort between workers of the NAD and SUD. Vijayawada, in south India, was selected as the target area.

Armed with prayer, a clear goal, and a spiritual strategy, a team of 25 Adventists from the NAD joined local workers and members to conduct meetings simultaneously in seven centers: three in Vijayawada, and one each in Guntur, Gudivada, Mandadam, and Nuzvid. Total average nightly attendance was more than 8,000.

Prior to the meetings 70 teams of two, involving workers and laypersons, did the preparatory work. The team distributed Telugu Real Truth Bible lessons, visited an average of 700 houses a day, and gave 7,000 Bible studies in 10 days. More than 15,000 families were visited before and during the crusade.

The crusade witnessed miraculous conversions as people were physically healed, freed from debilitating habits, and loosed from Satan's control. In one area a prominent religious leader and 35 families under his charge were baptized. In two other meetings taxi drivers were baptized as a result of hearing the messages as they waited for their passengers. Still other individuals recalled first being attracted by hearing the nightly sermons in their homes via the sound system at the meetings.

The crusade health team treated more than 3,000 people. The clinics were run by the doctors, nurses, nutritionists, and other health-care professionals from NAD and SUD. Thousands were enriched as team members presented health lectures and demonstrations nightly. Numerous individuals said that their initial interest in the meetings was sparked by the health emphasis.

Three new church groups were established in Vijayawada alone. Now the challenge for the South Andhra Section is for more workers to nurture the new members and more church buildings to accommodate them. A ground-breaking ceremony on December 8 in Vijayawada promised a new church building in the near future.

The NAD team of laypersons, ministers, and health-care professionals provided not only their talents and time but also helped raise resources to make the project possible. According to M. E. Cherian, SUD president, the team from the NAD had drawn the two divisions together to accomplish the work of the church in India. The local field president, Kalapala Daniel, who coordinated on-site efforts, expressed satisfaction for the largest soul-winning campaign in his area. Although he could not be there, William Scales says that he is "particularly appreciative of Alfred McClure, president of NAD; the SUD leadership; and other presidents of conferences and institutions in the U. S., who graciously facilitated their workers' participation in the meeting. "It was the power of the Holy Spirit that brought about the encouraging results, and it is God who receives the honor for what was accomplished."—*Delbert W. Baker, Ph.D., communications coordinator, India Real Truth Crusade, Vijayawada.*



A Collection of Pastoral Wives' Favorite Recipes

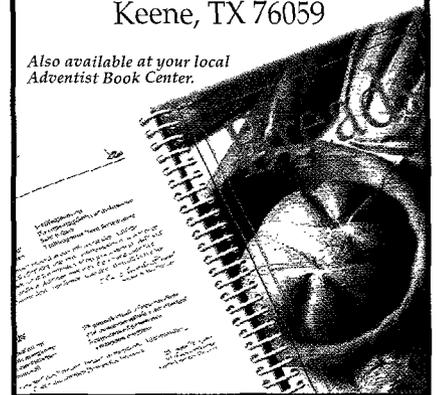
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Why plant apple trees?

Russell Burrill

As North American Division prepares for Seeds 96, a summit on church planning, it's time to consider the mission field within North America.



Russell Burrill is the director of the North American Division Evangelism Institute located in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Global Mission has captured the imagination of thousands of Adventists across North America and around the world. Hundreds of new churches have been established in hitherto unentered people groups throughout the world. Millions have heard the good news for the first time. The Great Commission mandates that we make disciples of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people (Matt. 28:18-20).

The making of disciples demands the formation of communities of faith. John declared that Christians were not only to proclaim the truth, but to create communities of faith that could foster fellowship among believers. "What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us" (1 John 1:3, NASB).

Proclamation is not an end in itself. We proclaim Christ in order to create a new community where fellowship occurs. Disciples do not live in isolation. They live in community. The Great Commission expects us to plant these communities of faith. We Seventh-day Adventists have done a fairly good job of establishing communities in every nation and tongue, but the command of Jesus pushes us even farther: the planting of faith communities among every people group on Planet Earth. The enormity of this task should overwhelm us and humble us.

A mission field in North America

While we in North America have been excited about Global Mission, we have seen our role as providers of resources—human and financial—to accomplish this task in the rest of the world. That is

certainly a vital function, but Global Mission must also be seen as a mission to the unreached people groups of North America. Many of us have made the fatal assumption that North America is a Christianized country, and therefore failed to recognize one of the greatest missionary fields at our doorsteps.

Consider the United States. Out of its population of 260 million, only about 60 million attend church regularly. This means that there are approximately 200 million unchurched people in the United States. The tragedy of this challenge is that most of us are not even aware of it. For example, I live in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Adventists who live here tend to think of this town as Adventist territory. However, facts speak otherwise. Berrien County has a population of 160,000. Seventh-day Adventists make up the third-largest denomination, with a little more than 6,000 members. Yet 120,000 people in this county do not attend any church. Thus even Berrien County is a mission field in view of the harvest that Christ has commanded us to reap.

The unreached people groups in North America include 1.5 million Hindus, 3.3 million Muslims, 8 million French-speaking people, and 35 million people with disabilities. The diversity of ethnic America demands major missionary investment in order to plant communities of faith among the unreached. This attention to ethnic groups, however, must not lead us to assume that Anglo-America has been evangelized.

Varied problems

Reaching Anglo-Americans may call for different approaches. In the past,

churches were planted primarily on the basis of geography. We studied a neighborhood, town, or city that did not have an Adventist church, and then proceeded to plant a church in that place. However, America has become more urbanized; 80 percent of the population now lives in urban areas. Church planting, therefore, can no longer be on the basis of geography alone.

Then there is the generational problem. Research indicates that if we are serious about planting new churches, we must think generationally. Our ministry should not aim at one generation. We must think and work cross-generationally. According to researcher George Barna, young people increasingly show little or no interest in the church. Many traditional churches, unable to retain a majority of their young people, are experiencing a decline in attendance.

Thinking cross-generationally means that we tailor our church programs to meet the needs of all people—young and old, families, single parents, children, etc. Our ministry needs to be inclusive enough so that each member feels a sense of belonging within the church. We cannot afford to take care of one group at the risk of alienating another.

Why plant new churches?

Some may say we have plenty of room in our existing churches. Why do we need to start new churches? The point is simple: when different people groups don't come to church, the church must go to them with a program designed to meet their needs. That is the example Jesus left for us to follow. Jesus did not simply ask for humanity to come to Him. He came to them. He took human flesh and became one with us so that He might reach us. Following this incarnational model, we need to incarnate the gospel in every cultural group in order that they might be won to Christ. The apostle Paul grasped this model when he declared that he became a Jew to the Jews, a Greek to the Greeks, in order that he might win them for Christ (1 Cor. 9:19-23). The evangelization of lost people is the reason for planting churches in all cultural groups. The church cannot be content

with what it has accomplished; it must push forward to reach the unreached.

Many of our existing churches have been unable to reach the community where they minister. We have urban churches that have not grown significantly in the past 10 years. These churches barely maintain their existing membership, occasionally taking in replacement members, but fail to reap the harvest that is out there. This may be a good reason to plant a new church, for research suggests that the best way to spur an old church into a mission mind-set is by starting a new church. A nonmissionary church cannot accomplish the mission of Christ. Church planting must be concerned not only with reaching new people groups, but also with expanding into existing people groups.

Ellen White's concern should be our challenge. She states: "The people who bear His sign are to establish churches and institutions as memorials to Him."¹ "I saw jets of light shining from cities and villages, and from the high places and the low places of the earth. God's word was obeyed, and as a result there were memorials for Him in every city and village. His truth was proclaimed throughout the world."² "The establishment of churches, the erection of meeting-houses and school-buildings, was extended from city to city, and the tithes were increasing to carry forward the work. Plants were made not only in one place, but in many places, and the Lord was working to increase His forces."³

Some may feel we cannot afford to plant a church in every city and village. Certainly not the way we currently plant churches. It costs too much to erect a building and pay a pastor. Perhaps it's time to explore new and inexpensive ways of planting churches and maintaining them. Lay leadership is the key. An awakened, trained, and involved laity can care for church growth.

Some people are fearful of church planting because they worry they will lose members to the new church. A genuine concern indeed! New churches must not be raised merely to scatter existing saints, but to reach new saints. Churches don't complain when members

transfer to another church, and so why shouldn't a congregation commission some of its members to help reach new people groups through new church planting? A church that loses its sense of mission and outreach needs to get down on its knees and repent of its selfishness.

If Seventh-day Adventists in North America take church planting seriously, we could double the number of churches we currently have and still not have completed the task assigned to us by Christ. Global Mission isn't just overseas, it is here; and the time to accomplish it is now. We cannot afford to wait any longer.

Why plant apple trees?

The title of this article asks, "Why plant apple trees?" Obviously to get the fruit—apples. But there is more to it. Bob Logan, a church planting authority, explains: "The apple is merely a package of seeds intended to produce the ultimate fruit—more apples. The body of Christ is like the apple tree—producing individual disciples and more congregations."⁴

Is your church bearing fruits, and more fruits? Are you prepared for the challenge of planting new churches?

To help you meet this challenge, the North American Division, the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, and the North American Division Evangelism Institute have banded together to conduct a church planting summit, *Seeds '96*, to be held June 12-15, 1996, on the campus of Andrews University. It is our hope that this will launch a major church planting strategy throughout North America, resulting in a multitude of new churches, as well as an opportunity for laypeople and pastors to be trained in planting new churches. For further information about the summit, call 1-800-ALL-PLNT. ■

¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 7, p. 105.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 9, pp. 28, 29.

³ ———, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1948), p. 435.

⁴ Robert E. Logan, *Beyond the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, seventh printing March 1994), p. 193.

Ministering to and through blind and deaf individuals

Larry Pitcher

Ministry is complete only when it touches everyone. That includes those with disabilities.



Larry Pitcher is president of Christian Record Services, Lincoln, Nebraska. He wrote this article with assistance from Rikki Stenbakken and Jason Welch of CRS Public Relations.

Henry Johnson was a successful businessman. He owned a well-known insurance business in the area. He was an elder in the church. He was well respected by his peers and loved by his church members. But Henry had a disability; he had lost more than 75 percent of his vision.

A few weeks after I took over as pastor of his church, he came to see me. He shared his concerns. He felt that I was not using his talents fully, perhaps because of his disability. He was right. Henry believed that he could be just as effective as anyone else. But I didn't.

After a brief discussion, I realized how I had subconsciously allowed a disability to affect my relationship with him.

You've probably not related to anyone as I did with Henry. Just the same, we all—pastors and members alike—need to take stock of how we relate to the physically disabled in our churches.

Often the unspoken notion that disability disqualifies a person for service lingers in our subconscious mind. Working with those with disabilities may require a little extra planning, but it's worth the time and effort. These people have talents and the desire to share.

Henry's vision was impaired, but he had a gift for visiting people. He was genuinely friendly and caring, and it showed. After we teamed him with a driver, he became one of our best visitors. We needed Henry!

When I realized my bias and took stock of what Henry's talents could do, it became a lot easier for me to see Henry as my colleague and a valuable

member of my ministry team. Not only could I minister to him, I could minister through him.

Ministering through those with disabilities

How? Here are five things you can do to help persons with disabilities in your congregation become your partners in ministry.

1. *Begin with an attitude change.* It may be the attitude of the disabled person or perhaps that of the congregation that needs changing. In Henry's case, it was my attitude. And once I changed my attitude, it was easier for my church members to change theirs. As they saw Henry fully participating in church duties and functions, it was easier for them to look past the disability barrier to the talents of other people with disabilities.

Sometimes it's helpful to remind ourselves that vision-impaired people can do everything but see. They can hear (very well!), they can think, and they can participate. A hearing-impaired person can do everything but hear. Changed attitudes lead to changed actions.

2. *Communicate.* Take the first step in meeting the needs of those with disabilities. Don't wait for them to come to you. It's your job to initiate communication. Don't let them feel that you don't care or that you're unapproachable. With a blind person, just sit down and talk. With a deaf person, use anything from pen and paper to an interpreter. Try every possible communication channel. Find out their needs. Make them feel an important part of the church family. Form deep, saving relationships.

3. *Listen.* Listening is an important part of communication. Get to know individuals with disabilities. Let them express their feelings. What do they really need? What can they do best? How have they ministered in the past? What can they do now? An ear lent is a friend won.

4. *Provide ministry alternatives.* Don't let stereotypes limit you. Offer a variety of ways in which your blind and deaf members can minister in and out of your church. Given opportunities, those who are deaf can surprise you at what they can do. For instance, when was the last time you asked a deaf member in your congregation to tell the children's story, the mission story, or to sing a special song? When was the last time you asked a blind person to collect the offering or lead the responsive reading? Don't just take it for granted that a deaf or blind person cannot do certain things. Ask!

5. *Assist, don't control.* Attitudes of pity or patronizing are forms of control. Disabled persons don't need them; they don't like them. Instead, ask, "What can I do for you?" Make them feel important. They want to participate in their own destiny. They are willing to have you as a coach, but they don't want you to control the process.

Meeting the special needs of those with disabilities

Our pastoral responsibility does not end with making those with disabilities our partners in ministry. We must also affirm their importance in the congregation and where necessary care for the special needs they have as members of the church family.

Needs of those who are deaf

Many of the deaf persons in our churches feel hurt, isolated, and frustrated. The reasons are many and varied. But they all point to a failure in meeting their special needs. For example, deaf persons need to "hear" the worship service. So provide an interpreter if a deaf person requests one. It may be expensive, but it is ministry par excellence. Check the phone book

for deaf organizations, state agencies for those who are deaf, and churches that have programs or interpreters for deaf persons. One of these will provide interpreters or refer you to someone who can help you.

A possible problem with interpreters is that they may not be members of the church, and hence unfamiliar with Adventist terminology and theology. Printed page can overcome this limitation. Whenever I had deaf members in my church, I usually gave them printed copies of my sermons. It may be used to clarify thoughts not completely conveyed through lipreading or translation, or may be scanned beforehand to make listening easier.

To communicate with deaf persons personally and more effectively, the obvious thing to do is to learn sign language. Consider taking a class. Pick up words and phrases from your deaf members. Get your church members excited about learning as well. Invite deaf persons to give a sign language class at the church.

For telephone conversations, ask your telephone company about their TDD (or TTY) relay service. This service converts your speech into text on the other end of the line and allows those who are deaf to type their responses. Other services available are computer accessible programs such as CompuServe (SDAs On-line) and America Online that allow real-time typed dialogues between two or more parties.

Needs of those who are blind

Mobility is perhaps one of the immediate needs of blind persons. Handicapped parking spots, for instance, are often located in very illogical places. Point out ramps to those who are blind. These ramps are often just as useful to blind persons as to those in wheelchairs. Have an assistance program to help your blind members get where they need to go—on Sabbath and during the week. Many church members would be happy to provide transportation for blind persons if they knew there was a need.

The inside layout of the church may

also be confusing. Things we take for granted are often quite hidden from those who are blind. Is it clear to your blind members where the bathrooms and telephones are? Consider placing braille signs around the church.

When all is said and done, there is one thing we cannot afford to forget: ministry needs to touch everyone, including those with disabilities. Jesus Himself defined ministry to include those with disabilities. It was said of His ministry: "The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor" (Matt. 11:5, NIV). ■

Resources for those who are disabled

- **Christian Record Services**, 4444 South 52nd Street, P.O. Box 6097, Lincoln, NE 68506. Phone, 402-488-0981; fax 402-488-7582; TDD 402-488-1902. A General Conference organization. Its services include:

For the visually impaired: free Bible studies and Sabbath school lessons in braille, in large print, and on cassette tape; national camps for blind children, cassette lending library, personal visitation and Christian magazines. The brochure *At Ease With the Blind* shows how to interact with those who are blind. Contact Art Grayman at 402-488-0981.

For the hearing-impaired: magazine and newsletter in Easy Reading (simplified English), library of videotapes in sign language, selected E. G. White books in Easy Reading, national camps for deaf children, and deaf awareness seminars. Contact Thompson Kay, 402-488-0981; TDD, 402-488-1902.

- **Office of Human Relations/North American Division**, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600. Phone, 301-680-6410; fax, 301-680-6464. Provides a video library on various facets of disabilities ministries. Contact Marialyce Fordham-Gibson, 301-680-6410.



Real life church planting

James A. Cress

Herb Larson, Jr., is an industrial design engineer, musical composer, arranger and performer, educational consultant, artist and illustrator (see our cover).

He is also a church planter.

Recently I talked with this preacher's kid about the dream-to-reality process by which he and his wife, Tamara, along with four friends, planted the Open Door Seventh-day Adventist Church in Vancouver. Herb's enthusiasm for church planting is exceeded only by his joy in his personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

But things were not always that way. Just four years ago Herb awakened one Sabbath to the reality that he did not want to go to church. Not then. Not ever! Most of his 40-something age friends had already abandoned church. Herb felt he was about to join them.

But not yet. As he prayed about his spiritual lethargy, Herb visioned a church he wished he could attend. Not knowing any that fit the description, he determined to plant one. Today as many as 200 people (about 50 more than the baptized membership) worship weekly. Here's what I learned from Herb about church planting.

Prepare thoroughly. Too many good projects fail because of unbridled enthusiasm. A project without a plan is a failure. For a full year, Herb led a group of six believers in weekly sessions of planning, praying, and visioning their new church. They checked out various worship styles, researched why members drop out, and projected what it would take to reclaim inactives.

Start fresh. This group quickly realized the futility of forcing existing congregations to change. They wanted the support of sister churches, but they hesitated to hamper revival with resistance from those who might insist that traditions were correct because "we've always done it that way!"

Earn support. Determined to stay close to denominational structure, they gained the backing of conference leaders and began a process of informing sister churches of their plans, hosting discussion sessions, and sharing their vision. They determined not to change any traditional approach to church just for the sake of being different. In fact, they selected one of their group as "Church Manual expert" to keep their church in line with established policies.

Provide quality. One common frustration expressed by former members was the "same old stuff." Herb's group covenanted that they would provide quality in every expression of worship. They regularly put 40 to 50 hours of planning into every worship service. A scheduled speaker is requested to submit a full sermon outline six weeks in advance. The message drives the theme of worship—in music, prayers, dialogues, skits, appeals, and testimonies.

Uplift Jesus. The Saviour is central. Herb and his group know the power of the name of Jesus. Their advance planning guarantees that every sermon builds a relationship with Jesus. They understand that the primary reason people drop out of church is lack of relationship with Jesus and involvement in the church.

Involve everyone. Attendees are immediately treated as members. In fact, associate membership status is officially recognized for those "regulars" who are "on the way." Anyone is welcome and all are encouraged to participate. Typically over two dozen individuals are "up front" at every worship service.

Recruit by gifts. Although they now have a full-time pastor, Open Door intentionally began as a laity-led project. Church offices are structured to the need. They diligently avoid ladder climbing, power tripping, and striving for position. Decisions are more processed than voted. The conference recruited their pastor carefully to serve more as a facilitator than as a director. The members readily embrace both the privilege and the responsibility for making their church function.

Involve community. Beyond reclaiming former members, Open Door fully understands mission. The church hosts for the public regular social, spiritual, and educational events. A recent "Festival in the Park" attracted wide media attention and good attendance. Worship services are held in a high-quality public auditorium.

Evaluate progress. The members regularly evaluate every facet of the church—even the pastor's sermons. They consistently ask, "How can we do better?" Feedback is sought and shared.

Expand by example. Others can learn from their experience at quarterly seminars that teach all areas of what this congregation has learned as they have rediscovered joy in Jesus and His church! ■

Seminar: "Care for the Dying in a Changing World"

On March 4, 1996, Loma Linda University will present "Care for the Dying in a Changing World," the first annual bioethics seminar in medicine, law, and ministry. This one-day conference is sponsored by the Center for Christian Bioethics as part of the 1996 School of Medicine annual postgraduate convention. It is open to physicians, ministers, lawyers, and other professionals.

Speakers will include H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., M.D., Ph.D., of Baylor College of Medicine; Betty Ferrell, Ph.D., of City of Hope Medical Center; Barbara Koenig, R.N., Ph.D., and Jan Gates-Williams, Ph.D., of Stanford University; Jeffrey Bounds, M.D., J.D., Robert Orr, M.D., and Gerald Winslow, Ph.D., of Loma Linda University.

They will be discussing the clinical, legal, cultural, economic, and religious considerations.

For information and an application, write to the School of Medicine Alumni Association, 11245 Anderson Street, Loma Linda, California 92354; call (909) 824-4633; or fax (909) 824-4638.

Dove Software for NET '96

NET '95 introduced technology such as satellite dishes to enhance evangelism. With NET '96, pastors can take advantage of the latest edition of computer software to care for their visitors. The most popular software program with churches and evangelists is the Dove Evangelistic Tracking System by Advanced Programming Concepts.

This system tracks sta-

tistics for each meeting including topic, total attendance, offering, etc., along with individual visitor data such as demographics, denomination, interest levels, meetings attended, and decisions made. Additionally, with this software pastors can determine which advertising techniques are working best. The system organizes visitation teams and tracks visit results. You can generate mailing labels and numerous statistical reports. For example, you can identify a specific list of people between the ages of 30 and 50 who want Bible studies. With this you can assign these interests to a specialty visitation team.

Evangelist Lyle Pollett says: "I know of no other software that can do what Dove can do. It's extremely useful." Pastor Jerry Nelson adds: "Dove literally condenses hours into minutes when handling interests."

Dove first developed its software more than 15 years ago and has evolved over the years. The system is now used by a wide variety of churches and evangelists throughout North America. You can purchase Dove software from Advanced Programming Concepts for a special NET '96 price of U.S. \$249 (regularly \$395) plus \$8.00 domestic shipping & handling. In California, add 7.25% tax. Call 916-782-4-APC or write 1107 Creek Ridge, Roseville, CA 95747. If you own a previous version of Dove, call for upgrade pricing.

Walk Around the World 2000

Would you like to assist your community in its war against drugs while witnessing to the historic stand

Adventists have taken for temperate and healthful living? Consider leading your members in "Walk Around the World 2000." An initiative from the Health and Temperance Department and the International Commission for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Dependency, this program is designed to mobilize Seventh-day Adventists to walk five miles or 10 kilometers in support of a drug-free lifestyle.

Friends and businesses will be invited to sponsor each mile or kilometer. Fifty percent of all money raised remains in the local school, church, or club for drug education purposes in the community. The other 50 percent will be disbursed nationally and internationally where economies are unable to support such a program.

For instructions and materials, contact the ICPA, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904 U.S.A. Phone, (301) 680-6719; fax, (301) 680-6090. —Reg Burgess, Silver Spring, Maryland.

Home alone vacation

It's difficult for pastors to take a vacation week at home without being called by church members, but this past year my family and I managed it. Here's how:

I explained to both churches that we would be vacationing at home, asking them not to call except for emergencies, such as a death or hospitalization. Then I left a message

something like this on our answering machine. "We are on vacation here at home. If you are calling about an emergency, by all means leave a message, and I will return your call as soon as possible. Otherwise, please leave a message and I will call you on Monday. Or you can call me back then. Thank you for your consideration, and have a blessed holiday season."

My family and I then disciplined ourselves to let the answering machine screen calls. One minor emergency arose that I solved over the phone in an hour. Other than that we had a stress-free vacation at home. I thanked my churches and told them what a nice gift they had given me. We plan to "home alone" again this spring. —Bill Peterson, Saucier, Mississippi.

\$25 for your ideas

Please send us a suggestion about how pastors can make their ministry more effective or less stressful. If we publish it, we will send you US\$25. If your idea promotes a product or service you are selling, we'll be glad to consider it for publication but won't pay you \$25! Send ideas to **Ministry, Shop Talk Editor, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.** (U.S. citizens, please include Social Security number.) Or E-mail to Martin Weber at Compu-Serve 74617,303.

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The Church in North America is on the grow!

Seeds '96

A Church Planting Summit

Seeds '96, A Church Planting Summit, will be the springboard for an aggressive NAD church planting initiative. It is an unparalleled

reaffirmation of evangelistic vision. Experienced church planters from across the US and Canada will share in

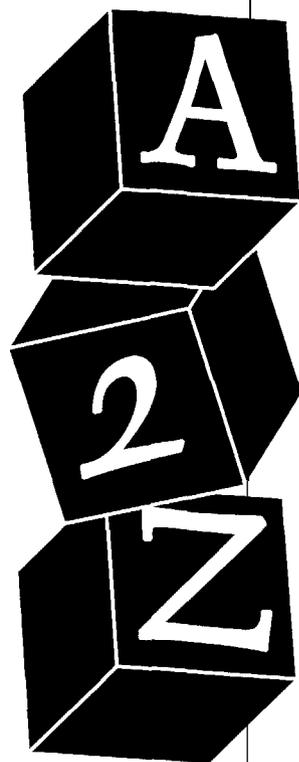
fifteen different seminars the A-to-Z's of successful church planting. Bob Logan, Vice-President for New Church Development of Church Resource Ministries and "the world's foremost authority in the field of church planting," will be the major plenary presenter.

The Summit will provide you with—

- ◆ An understanding of church planting principles
- ◆ Practical training for administrators, pastors, and laity
- ◆ *A Church Planter's Guide* and resource ideas
- ◆ Networking with other church planters and presenters
- ◆ A strategy for planting churches in your ministry area

We are excited about the prospect of establishing an increased Adventist presence in our neglected cities and among people groups that are virtually unreached. We invite you to pray for the power of the Holy Spirit in this major undertaking.

Seeds '96, A Church Planting Summit, is the beginning of a great evangelistic movement of the Holy Spirit and of God's people. We want you not only to hear about it but to *be one who makes it happen*. Don't miss out!



For further information
or a registration form,
call 1-800-ALL-PLNT
(1-800-255-7568)

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Seeds '96

A Church Planting Summit • June 12-15, 1996
at Andrews University • Berrien Springs, Michigan