

Ministry

International Journal for Pastors

October 1997

VULNERABLE

Are Pastors
Vulnerable?

5

Clergy and violence

The cost and cautions of ministering in urban settings

Victor Cooper

9

Revival through the youth

Harnessing the energy and the commitment of the young

Gary Burns

12

Pastoral relocation: problems and promises

A model for pastoral fulfillment and field development

Raymond S. Edwards

14

Journeying through misunderstanding

What should a pastor do when communication breaks down?

Alger Keough

18

Utrecht: a "providential" detour?

Looking to the world of the New Testament church for guidance in processing the puzzling questions faced by the contemporary church

Alden Thompson

22

Buying a new computer

Basic guidelines for choosing the purchase of a personal computer

Ralph Blodgett

26

Breaking bread and the Sabbath

Does Acts 20:7 contain the seeds for changing the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday?

George E. Rice

3 Letters

4 Editorial

28 Pastor's Pastor

30 Resources

Ministry

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Outreach in the Hindu context

In the article "Outreach in the Hindu Context" (June 1967), what struck me were the examples the author gave of those who successfully reached the Indian people with the gospel: Roberto de Nobili, Joseph Constantius Beschi, William Carey. Why did he fail to mention a Seventh-day Adventist in this list? Is it because we have not yet learned the value of incarnational ministry or was this just an oversight?

Dr. Moses outlined important principles. Do we have people willing and able to implement those principles? If not, why not? This would provide for an interesting follow-up article. Implementation seems to be our greatest challenge for India.—*J. David Newman, assistant professor of religion, Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.*

● The article on the outreach to Hindus speaks of the work of William Carey and some Catholic missionaries. The work of these men was outstanding and they did penetrate the Hindu psyche, but the picture of their success also reveals their shortcomings. History bears witness that some of these same missionaries compromised the gospel essentials in the name of contextualization. The result has been a weak church.

In Adventist history too, some of our early pioneers (Willmott, James, Robinson, Lowry, Loasby, to name a few) tried to reach the Hindu mind. While their measure of success may not be quantified in large numbers, they did leave an example of "singing the Lord's song in a strange land" without compromise. As then, so today, the challenge continues: it's easy to talk of contextualized ministry, but not easy to implement, particularly in religious systems that are well structured ethically, logically, and philosophically. As one involved in evangelism in India and as an Indian, I only know how true and relevant Paul's conclusion is: the cross shall ever be a scandal and a foolishness. It is only the power of the Holy Spirit that can turn the scandal to a sanctifying power. One thing we can do is not to

boast how great Christianity is, but present living models of what the cross can accomplish.—*John M. Fowler, Silver Spring, Maryland.*

Understanding Israel in prophecy

I was disappointed at *Ministry's* choice in publishing Hans LaRondelle's "Israel in Prophecy" (June 1997), not because I expected anything different from LaRondelle, whose biases are well known, but because I hoped *Ministry* would have by now grown out of repeating worn-out views simply because they have been around for a long time and would have assumed the status of Adventist tradition.

Although well-crafted, the author's argument is built around the supersessionist position (replacement theology), originated with the anti-Semitic early Church Fathers and now repudiated by the same Roman Catholic Church that gave it birth.

LaRondelle's use of Matthew 21:43, pulled out of context to prove the rejection of the Jewish people as God's chosen, is disingenuous. Anyone reading the full text of the parable will be able to grasp that (1) the statement was addressed to the leaders who questioned Jesus' authority; (2) their dispossession was to occur "when the lord of the vineyard comes" (verse 40), not the son whom they had killed (see verse 39), and therefore at the last judgment, not before.

Romans 11 aside, it is sufficient to focus our attention on Paul's statement in Ephesians 3:6: "Through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel [not a *New Israel* to replace the *Old*], members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus" (NIV).

Rather than being the remnant of Israel's *qahal*, the (Christian) *ekklesia* will itself be subject to the same purifying process from which a remnant will emerge to enter the kingdom, as the messages to the seven churches in Revelation show.—*Albert P. Wellington, Ph.D., Interlaken, New York.*

● Dr. LaRondelle responds: *Albert Wellington is incorrect in stating that the*

view of the church as the new Israel is a worn-out idea of the Adventist tradition. It is the clear teaching of the entire New Testament, as is recognized by many skilled exegetes in their professional commentaries. The apostolic church saw itself as the legitimate continuation of true Israel of God, as is apparent in Matthew 16:16-18; Luke 12:32; 1 Peter 2:9, 10; Galatians 3:26-29; 6:15; and Revelation 1:6; 5:10. Incorrect also is the assertion that the Roman Catholic Church has repudiated its doctrine that the church is the new Israel of God (see the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," Chapter II, section 9, in The Documents of the Vatican II., ed. W. M. Abbott, S.J. [New York: Guild Press, 1966]). What some Roman Catholic theologians here or there may state does not necessarily represent the doctrine of their church.

Regarding Matthew 21:43, this solemn judgment of the removal of the theocracy from the Jewish leadership did not have to wait till the Second Advent. Jesus' announced judgment on Jerusalem in Matthew 23:27-38 and 24:15-20, 34 shows clearly that God's judgment on the Jewish nation was for Jesus' contemporary generation. In Luke 12:32 we hear from Christ who are the new inheritors and when they will receive their new responsibilities. It may be helpful to state that my article does not defend a wholesale "replacement" theory of Israel by the church, as is hastily assumed. My conviction is rather that the church is the true Israel of God, because it includes all Christ-believing Israelites and Gentiles (see Gal. 6:15, 16). The apostolic church only replaced the Jewish nation as a theocracy. The new covenant has replaced the old covenant (Heb. 8:13; 10:9)! That is the unambiguous teaching of Paul in Romans 11, where he compares the church of Christ with the continuation of the one cultivated olive tree (verse 17). Regarding Ephesians 3:6, Paul declares that the "body" of Christ includes, without difference, all Gentile and Jewish Christians, so that all are "joint-heirs" and a "joint-body" and "joint-sharers of the promise in Christ." Ephesians 3:6 does not even mention the name Israel in the original text, the basis for a responsible exegesis. ■



Recently I have been repeatedly challenged by a rather penetrating question. At first the question seems elementary, but the

more one allows it to probe not only the mind but the heart, the more meaningful and fundamental one finds it to be. The question is: What is it in my life that has the most influence in determining my attitudes and personal behaviors?

The question has a way of throwing itself down at the feet of Christian conscience like the proverbial gauntlet. It becomes particularly potent when we look to the insistent squeeze of what is customary in the collective thinking of the surrounding culture and realize how definitive the voices of that culture are in our lives. For me the question takes on the gauntlet's confrontational character when I realize that I have, in a given situation, bypassed not only the normative voice of Scripture, but also the call of the Christ of Scripture, to follow some politically correct form of thinking or acting.

Many voices

For sincere Christians it is disconcerting to realize that much of the time we do this without realizing that we are doing it. There are so many voices these days. In our high-tech, communication-crazed culture these voices are so persuasive and heard so dominantly that we hardly listen to the voice of the living Christ. For example, it is difficult to assess how authoritative a particular attitude or behavior becomes simply because we have observed it repeatedly on television.

Consider another more subtle voice: the voice of religion, even our own religion. Is it possible for the church's own voice to become the one that decides questions of personal attitude and behavior rather than the voice of the living Christ of the Bible within the life of the church?

Or take the issues of nationality, race, tribe, culture, and ethnic heritage as they meet and mingle in the global (or local)

How definitive do we allow Scripture to be?

W I L L E V A

churches of today. As we read the New Testament carefully, and take in the spirit of Jesus, the challenge of these issues to Christianity and to Adventism becomes clear. This, in itself, is no great revelation to us. But the question is How definitively do we allow the life and being of Christ to be in the way we handle our differences when it comes to these challenges?

I must confess that it seems to me that we have not allowed the unique principles of the New Testament to inform us in many of the ways we have chosen to deal with the divisions that face us nationally, racially, and ethnically. Instead, to a significant extent we have embraced the prevailing political correctnesses and many of the attitudes of our cultures, some of which only exacerbate our prides, prejudices, and divisions. The incredibly potent principles of Christian fellowship are left largely unrecognized, unvalued, and unused.

One such New Testament principle consists of only two words. Yet those two words form the New Testament Magna Carta of human relationships. They have the power to transform a community of faith. The two words are the ones Paul used so much in facing uncannily similar challenges to ours: "In Christ."

The Magna Carta of Christian fellowship

Well known, but not well utilized, are the community-forming attitude and outlook inherent in the concept behind these two words. It is an utterly inspiring concept or principle that cries out to condition our behavior and action.

In more complete terms Paul expressed it this way: "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one *in Christ*" (Gal. 3:26-28, NIV). Too bad these words may fall on our ears with a certain triteness, because we know they are absolutely revolutionary when they get through to the heart. They possess the power to bring release from the dead-end attitudes and methodologies that are so much a part of the stock-in-trade philosophies and attitudes of our cultures.

It is illuminating to notice what drove Paul into these arenas. On one side of his culture was what might be described as the "liberal" outlook and attitudes of the Romans toward the Jews. On the other were the classically cramped conservative attitudes depicted in the outlook of the Jewish pharisee toward Gentiles in general.

Roundly rejecting traditionally prized aspects of his Jewish pharisaism, Paul said, "If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. . . . I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ" (Phil. 3:4-9, NIV).

Here is a completely unique and distinctive way of defining interpersonal relationships and the value I place upon my fellow human beings. Here the usual divisive definers of human distinctiveness and behavior are all unceremoniously ditched by Paul. Religiosity, orthodoxy, nationality, race, tribe, and behavioral circumspection are all dumped as the supernal wonder of Christ becomes for Paul the ultimate definer. ■

CLERGY AND VIOLENCE

Three clergy persons became victims of violence within a 24-hour period in different parts of the United Kingdom.



Victor Cooper is a retired minister living in Bracknell, Berkshire, England.

Christopher Gray, 32-year-old minister of St. Margaret's Church, Anfield, Liverpool, was stabbed to death outside his house at about 1:00 in the morning. The assailant, Terence Storey, a known drug addict released from jail eight months earlier, had been visiting Mr. Gray (by appointment) for advice and counseling.

With a promising future in the Church of England, Gray was described as "one of the ablest priests of his generation." A brilliant scholar, he had achieved the rare distinction of a double first-class degree "with congratulations" at University College, Oxford. He spoke nine or ten languages. Gray was known by his parishioners as a harmless, innocent, and good man. Detective Chief Inspector Elmore Davies said he was the victim of a merciless and unprovoked attack.¹

The same day, August 13, 1996, Anthony Couchman, vicar of St. Barnabas's, Walthamstow, was assaulted when he answered the door. After forcing an entry, the attacker, Ahmed el Gammal, left the minister with a broken nose and further facial injuries.

A third priest, Nduna Mpunzi, minister of St. Mary's, Walsall, was struck after midnight with an axelike weapon as he gave marriage counseling to his 57-year-old assailant. He suffered a fractured skull and has been operated on in Birmingham.

Reactions to violence

Britain is considered one of the safest countries in Europe. But these three assaults highlighted clergy vulnerability and drew

swift reaction in the press from church leaders and religious correspondents.

Some believed there was a danger the church would have to pull out of rough inner-city areas unless security improved. However, the bishop of Liverpool pointed out that Gray represented a center of resistance to violence and despair. "All clergy have people come to talk. It is part of our tradition. We try to help in any way we can." The church, said the bishop of Barking, would not be put off by incidents of violence and would "stay in the city."²

Adrian Hastings speculated about Gray: "Perhaps his image of the priesthood was almost too medieval to exist in our time, medieval in the absoluteness of self-surrender he called for."³ But *The Times*, which devoted its lead editorial to the tragedy, observed that Gray was motivated by the Anglo-Catholic tradition of ministry to the poor: "His sacrifice should inspire his countrymen as he was inspired by the priests who went before him, never to turn in despair from those who reject what is right."⁴

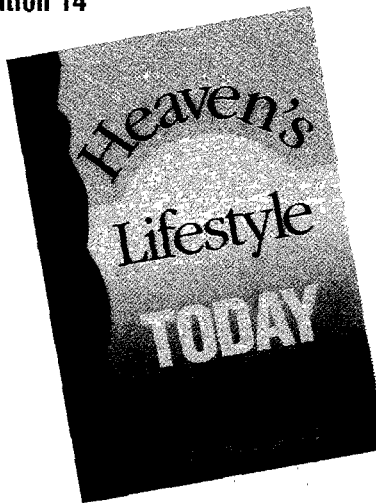
Clifford Longley commented in *The Daily Telegraph*: "Good city priests . . . want the Church to make God visibly present in the lives of the urban English poor. What use God makes of this is not up to them, nor will they ever know. The imperative is to be there, regardless of the consequences, and when called upon, even to die there. It is not something the modern world finds easy to understand. That too is part of the point of it."⁵

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In *The Independent* Margaret Atkins also valued obedience in the tradition of the martyrs: "Christian love is shaped by obedience, and fortified by courage. These are unfashionable virtues. . . . For most of us, heroic obedience will remain an ideal to challenge us rather than an example for us to follow. But in another sense men and women like Christopher Gray can comfort us. For they point to the places that seem most desolate, most dangerous, most God-forsaken; and they show us that Christ himself is there."⁶

The archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. George Carey, found little to amuse him when he visited one of his vicars who had been burglarized 80 times during the past seven years, in spite of the fact that his church played a major part in a crime-prevention initiative.

The archbishop reminded listeners to his Prison Reform Trust address that crime in Britain is on the increase. The prison population is 54,000 and rising, and so are the charges to society, each inmate costing taxpayers between \$25,000 and \$61,000.

The archbishop admitted he was not hopeful about many young offenders he met at a remand center but added, "As a Christian I cannot accept that people are irredeemable." He called for society to address

the fundamental relational issue: "How may all those involved with the young—parents, schools, and churches—combine in creating conditions that will reduce crime?"

Threat to clergy

Crime, drugs, schizophrenia, mental disorders, and societal conditions are a threat to clergy of all denominations. Seventh-day Adventist ministers in Britain have been attacked, received death threats, and suffered abuse and aberrant behavior. At the church's headquarters building in Watford, Hertfordshire, significant security measures control entry by visitors, restrictions that were expanded after an attack on the property by an allegedly aggrieved party. Now, during the week as I write this, thieves have broken in and stolen office equipment on three occasions.

In numerous countries Christian ministers have been mugged, wounded, or killed. Some clergy employ a security bodyguard. Lack of religious liberty on the one hand and antisocial behavior on the other leave clerics exposed.

It is only human to avoid or limit such peril. Fear may even cause pastors and church members to withdraw from the possibility of inner-city conflict. But Christian

ministry necessitates involvement, sacrifice, and renunciation. The situation of the disadvantaged in our great cities constitutes a potent challenge to all Christians.

Members of one suburban church elected to spend a weekend in Bermondsey, London, to sample life in the city. They talked with people in betting shops, a hostel for the homeless, and local housing estates. They took lunch in a cockney "pie and mash" cafe and returned home with a surfeit of information for discussion and prayer back at their own church hall. One reported, "Until you immerse yourself in an inner-city area, the issues which local people have to live with, day in, day out, go completely unnoticed."

Precautions ministers can take

Measures suggested in Britain include: fixing spy-holes in the front door; installing video-entry phones, security mirrors, panic buttons, an alarm system; having a dog; keeping a record of visits; avoiding isolated or unfamiliar places for counseling and late-night appointments; working out escape routes and a strategy for getting assistance; meeting callers known to be violent in a police station; always staying closer to the door than the visitor; making sure you are not alone when counseling—and that your counselee knows you are not alone in the house; carefully noting body language and tone of voice.

But many clergy consider the notion of having somebody in the parsonage every time a person calls to talk impractical and impossible. And the police say they do not always respond to ringing alarm bells.

Some ministers learn techniques for diverting immoderate emotions, pacifying tempers, and giving reassurance. They learn to detect the physical and psychological factors that tilt the scales from anger to violence; they realize it may not be wise to intervene in a row or prevent the theft of church property.

Trained and skilled counselors avoid telling people what to do. They abstain from offering solutions, preferring to act as catalysts, guiding and enabling their counsees to explore viable alternatives. They often help a person take a small step so that confidence is gained to make larger decisions later.

Inexperienced or untrained mentors, weak in interpersonal relationships, often present people with decisions they are un-

able or unwilling to make. This tactic, sometimes indulged in by overzealous ministers and evangelists, inevitably creates animosity, which may lead to violence. Clergy are wise to recognize their limitations and refer complex problems to other specialists and agencies.

Christian ministry is costly

The church's representatives have always been a magnet for itinerant troublemakers. Prophets from Jeremiah to Paul ministered amid tears and terror (Jer. 20:7-11; Acts 20:17-35). Jesus was a target for attack on several occasions. Many of His followers—persons of conscience—have been butchered because their beliefs or activities caused anger. Christians have been shot, axed in cold blood, crucified, burned, smoked to death in caves, put into a sack and thrown into a river, tied to a stake in front of the incoming tide, gassed, tortured, poisoned, left to die without food and water, and in a thousand heinous ways treated worse than animals. People of faith have been massacred singly and in groups, regardless of age, sex, or cul-

ture, often only because they held slight differences of belief from their persecutors. The failure of Christians to love other Christians who hold variant views has often turned to shocking hatred and violence over two millennia. We all have a lot to learn here.

Devoted clergy will always be at risk. Female clergy are additionally vulnerable, and a family forms a further area of concern. As the good Samaritan helped the robber's victim on the Jericho road regardless of the risk of further attack from the bandits, so with comparable courage today's dedicated clergy accept the hazards associated with their calling.

Christopher Gray once said of his work as minister and evangelism adviser, "There are risks, but we're not in it for a good pension and a safe life. . . . If you want to keep your life, you will lose it." In a recent published essay Gray wrote that clergy must "be like Christ in the faithful service of their flocks, even to the point of sacrificing their own lives."⁷

Lord Runcie, former archbishop of Canterbury, gave a similar description of can-

didates needed for clergy-in-training: "Increasingly we look for people of character to undertake such a vocation. We look first for faith, for evidence of a life of prayer, because prayer is required of a pastor both to sustain the loneliness of the job and as a sign of the way he is pointing out to others. We look for commitment to people, to console the strong and the weak, the gifted and the deprived. We look for a willingness to live sacrificially: to choose the less attractive job . . . to work long hours without obvious reward. We look for those who inspire without being domineering, whose model is that of the Good Shepherd, rather than the successful graduate of the management training school."⁸

¹ *The [London] Times*, Aug. 8, 1996.

² *Church Times*, Aug. 16, 1996.

³ *The Guardian*, Aug. 15, 1996.

⁴ *The Times*, Aug. 15, 1996.

⁵ Quoted in *Church Times*, Aug. 23, 1996.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *The Guardian*, Aug. 8, 1996; also Guiver, "Who Is the Priest?" *The Fire and the Clay* (1993).

⁸ *The Times*, Aug. 15, 1996.

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STEPS TO ACTION

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1

Call your local conference or union PARL director IMMEDIATELY.

2

Let your member know that the local church PARL department is ready to help.

3

If a member tells you of a Sabbath employment problem, document the following:

- Member's name, address, and phone number.
- Employer's name, address, and phone number.
- Name of person who has authority to resolve the problem for the employer.
- The nature of the problem and whether it is reoccurring or a single incident.
- Whether the member belongs to a union and if the union is supportive of our position.
- The nature of the job, the shift worked, and if the member has any suggestions of how accommodation can be achieved.
- Schedule a time when the PARL director can talk to the member.

4

Don't make promises to your church member that cannot be fulfilled.

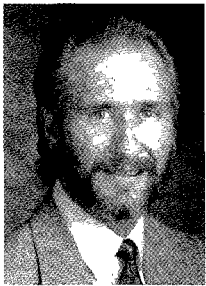
5

Counsel your member to maintain an attitude of compliance with and respect for authority as far as possible, without violating his or her conscience.

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REVIVAL THROUGH THE YOUTH

When I was a teen, I lived with an urgency that Jesus would come before I finished academy—certainly before I had a chance to marry. So I remember wondering why the school administration was planting little trees around the new academy building.



Gary Burns is the pastor of the Dakota Adventist Academy church, Bismarck, North Dakota.

After all, Jesus would come long before those trees amounted to anything—right? Well, last year I returned with my wife and three children to my class's twenty-fifth annual reunion. Our class wanted to put in a special memorial garden for one of our classmates. We talked about removing some of the more imposing and aggressive trees and relandscaping.

My generation hasn't made much progress toward our goal—hasn't even come close to finishing the work. If anything, we've set it back a few years. We are highly critical of church leaders and think we have all the answers. The word "commitment" seems to be missing from our vocabulary, and we're supposed to be the army of young *Hebrew worthies* to proclaim the third angel's message and endure the time of trouble?

Yet just when things may look impossible, we have reason to hope. Dwight Nelson, senior pastor of Pioneer Memorial church at Andrews University, has concluded from his generational study that today's generation has more in common with the generation of the disciples than any other in history.¹ When Jesus chose the disciples, it was they and others who accepted Him who became the new church. They changed the world.

The call of Jesus is as fresh to my generation as it was to the disciples. I've changed my attitude toward today's youth. Even though they feel they are a disenfranchised generation craving intimacy and authentic relationships, they are ready for something meaningful and real. That's why today's teenagers are responding to Christ and His call to discipleship in a way that astounds many of us in youth ministry. Could it be that today's generation is "ripe for harvesting" (John 4:35)?* Could it be that Paul had today's generation in mind when prophetically he spoke of a harvest in "the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him" (Eph. 1:10)? "If there ever was a generation in our history ripe and ready for the healing power of the greatest relational truth about God ever revealed, it is this one!"²

In tune with Dwight Nelson's optimistic hope is the realistic description Mike Stevenson, a former General Conference youth leader, gave of a youth revival that took place some 25 years ago: "I had become more and more excited about what was happening. For me it was definitely a springtime in the fall! . . . Revivals were taking place! . . . Prayer groups were springing up all over the [Andrews University] residence

G A R Y B U R N S

halls. . . Victories too numerous to mention, and miracles of varying degrees, continued to take place. . . 'It's unbelievable, it's wonderful!' These youth so recently 'turned off' regarding God and the church invaded the [Sligo church] platform. With the Word of God in their hands they poured out testimonies of praise. . . Now with faces aglow these victorious young people stepped up to give further invitations to the members of this large church. The testimonies continued until 2:30 p.m. . . The broadening out of this revival and reformation is taking place. Groups of [AU] students have visited every academy and church in driving distance. . . Almost everywhere they go revivals begin.²³

These words could well have been written about the movement of God's Spirit among teenagers today.

My first encounter

My first real encounter with this latest phenomenon in youth ministry took place at Wewoka Woods, in Oklahoma, the later part of 1995. Gary Parks, of Paradise, California, and I had been asked to lead a group of 65 teens in prayer, fellowship, Bible study, and ministry—the four basic food groups for spiritual growth. Neither one of us was prepared for what we experienced that weekend. Peter Neri, of Cedar Lake, Michigan, was also to be with us but was delayed. He sent ahead a few of his teens, who led the group in a season of prayer Friday night that lasted two hours and 25 minutes. The only thing we had done so far that weekend was pray, yet conversions took place, attitudes were transformed, sins were confessed. Teens from thousands of miles apart who didn't know one another were united in Christ—something we did not anticipate.

We spent the following two days in small groups. We encountered God through new dimensions of prayer, experienced the joy and excitement of the Discovery⁴ method of Bible study, and developed skills in ministry. Teenagers, ignited with the power of the Holy Spirit, returned from a day of ministry in Oklahoma City as amazed as the disciples in Luke 10:17, 18. The next week they went to Ozark Academy in Arkansas to lead out a Teen Prayer Conference for nearly 400 teens from across the North American Division, Mexico, and England. The spark that ignited the teens at Wewoka grew into a blaze at Ozark.

Since then teens excited about prayer, fellowship, Bible study, and ministry have spread the fire across this land and across the seas. Adventists in New York, California, Hawaii, Pennsylvania, Alaska, Michigan, North Dakota, Missouri, Ohio, India, England, and Iceland, to name a few, are experiencing revival as they share their love for Christ, the power of prayer, and their love for the Bible.

As in 1970, this revival is both infectious and simultaneous. Not only is the revival spreading as teens take their faith on the road, but revivals are taking place simultaneously in isolated places. This cannot be the result of one person, a group, or a new program. It is the work of God in response to the prayers of His people.

A slowness to accept

Yet there has been some hesitation, some slowness to accept what God can do through youth revival. Why? I was part of the revival of the seventies, and from my experience then I'd suggest three possible reasons.

Resistance. During the seventies, many parents, church members, and leaders were skeptical and critical of the revival, and feared fanaticism. Some felt threatened by a lack of control and the possibility for extremism. The seventies were a troubled time in the U.S., and student uprisings and unrest were the norm. Some church leaders tried to forbid an impromptu divisionwide gathering of college students at Camp Berkshire in upstate New York. Remember Woodstock?

To some of us it appeared that the long-term response of the church was to "rope this thing in and get it under control." We have an inherent desire to control and an innate fear of the uncontrollable.

Discouragement. It doesn't take much to put out a new flame. We went out believing that people would be eager to respond to what we had found. We discovered that some were wondering what it was all about and why they should get so excited about something known for years. Others did not approve of long hair or guitars. I remember how I felt when I was asked to leave a church. Others were uncomfortable with the use of *The Living Bible* and the familiar way in which we addressed our newfound Saviour.

The debate as to the authenticity of the revival escalated. To quote Mike Stevenson, "It is tactless, yes, criminal, to say to a teen-

ager who is reading the Bible and praying for the first time that his revival is of Satan. This has happened."²⁵ Many of us became defensive of our experience and skeptical of anyone who did not share our enthusiasm or approve our methods. Wrong attitudes were an effective means of dousing the flames of revival.

The cost of discipleship. As with the disciples, the cost of discipleship for some of us was too high. Not many of us were willing to make the personal long-term sacrificial commitments and reforms necessary.

A pastor's guide for teens in revival

James Edwin Orr, an observer of spiritual revivals, says that no revival has ever taken place without united, sustained prayer.⁶ In 1966, four years before the revival hit our college campuses, Robert Pierson, then president of the General Conference, made a call for revival and reformation. Since 1988 prayer ministry has been an active force in the North American Division. More than anything else, the revival we are seeing in our young people is a result of the united and sustained prayers of God's people.

Matt Lee, a teen from Paradise, California, has put it well: "We [the teens] have the ideas, the enthusiasm, and the energy. You [the adults] have the wisdom, the experience, and the resources. You need us and we need you. Together we can finish the work as we unite in the power of the Holy Spirit."²⁷

Here's a list of guidelines for pastor-youth team effort for authentic revival.

1. *Begin a life of sustained intercessory prayer.* Pray to find out what God is doing in the lives of your young people. Join Him in accomplishing His purpose in their lives. God is able to do things in response to prayer that He would not do if we did not pray. Intercessory prayer unleashes God's power in another person's life.

2. *Listen to your teens.* They need understanding far more than criticism. When you listen to them, you are telling them that you value them and care for them. You will also begin to discover how you should pray for them.

3. *Clear a path.* As Robert Folkenberg, president of the General Conference, once said, we need to "get out of the way." Do what you can in your field to provide opportunities for, and take some risks with,

your youth. Give them responsibility and authority. Entrust them to the Holy Spirit. What would happen if the church let the youth and young adults of today blaze a trail of faith, hope, and adventure for God as it did in the 1840s and 1850s?

4. *Create opportunities for ministry.* Take a group of youth with you to visit those who need pastoral care—the lonely, the discouraged, the sick, the grieving, as well as the workers and warriors who may benefit from prayer support for their ministries. Allow your teens to put their hands on the people and pray for them. I have yet to witness a negative experience.

5. *Focus on Scripture.* Provide a time and place for teens to discover the Bible. With just a few hours of training in the Discovery Bible study method, your teens can lead one another and the rest of your congregation in a life-changing experience in God's Word. A description of the Discovery Bible study method is available through the North American Division Prayer Ministries office.

6. *Dream big.* "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher

than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:9). Do not limit God with small ideas. Allow Him to speak through your youth. God loves to do the impossible with the unlikely. There's no better way for His love and power to be revealed.

7. *Expand their horizons.* Let the youth look beyond themselves. Let them share with others what God is doing in their lives. Let them involve others in prayer, fellowship, Bible study, and ministry. You will see in them the greatest spiritual growth.⁸

8. *Work behind the scenes.* This requires a special discipline and a secure ego! When teens lead out, you will see great results. As a minister, I now have a new policy: don't leave home without the youth. In fact, I often send teens to do what I've been asked to do.

9. *Give guidance by modeling.* Don't lecture. Don't preach. Take advantage of teachable moments that occur as you work with youth in ministry. Allow experience to be the catalyst for honest inquiry as you debrief with them.

10. *Cast a vision.* Take off after it. Invite others to follow. ■

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

¹ Dwight K. Nelson, in an introduction to a sermon series on Generation X, Pioneer Memorial church, Berrien Springs, Michigan, October 8, 1994.

² Dwight K. Nelson, "Lord of Generation X, Church of the Baby Busters," *Adventist Review*, Sept. 28, 1995, pp. 13-16.

³ Michael Stevenson, "Revival Fires on the Campus," *The Ministry*, February 1971, pp. 6-9.

⁴ The Discovery method of Bible study has been adapted from Oletta Ward, *The Joy of Discovery in Bible Study* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1975), by Gary Parks, Paradise, California.

⁵ Stevenson, p. 9.

⁶ See J. Edwin Orr, *The Flaming Tongue: The Impact of Twentieth Century Revivals* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1973); *The Fervent Prayer: The Worldwide Impact of the Great Awakening of 1858* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974).

⁷ Lee made this appeal at the North American Division year-end meetings in Battle Creek on Thursday, Oct. 12, 1995.

⁸ See Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), p. 80; *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1952), pp. 268-271.

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PASTORAL RELOCATION: PROBLEMS AND PROMISES

It doesn't matter where. It doesn't matter who. Any pastoral reassignment is sure to produce suspense and speculation. Why? Is it because of the stress associated with relocation? Is it because relocations may affect the destiny of a pastor?



Raymond Edwards has been a pastor in the South Caribbean Conference and is presently studying at Columbia University in New York.

Is it because relocation provides the thrill of newness or escape from “tormenters”? Or is it because relocation offers an opportunity for reflection on the fruitfulness or failures of ministry?

There may be some truth in all of the above. But by far the most salutary value of pastoral relocation is its potential for field development and mission accomplishment.

Reassignment models

Over the years I have watched more than a few conference administrations reorder pastor/district assignments into what they consider significantly better matchups. Some of these changes have been very successful, while others have produced serious failure. Most fall somewhere in between, with a possible tilt toward the lower end of the scale. The lessons to be drawn are interesting and can be relevant and useful in developing a more conscious mission focus. While we do not have an abundance of empirical data for the rationale behind pastor/church reshuffling, anecdotal evidence points to an observable pattern behind these

reassignments. We shall note four such patterns and propose a fifth one.

1. *The prestige factor.* This model scales churches and assumes that churches have a qualitative rank based on demographic factors—socioeconomic and education levels of members, size and aesthetics of buildings, financial advantage to conference, and urban/suburban/rural location. The pastoral staff is similarly ranked according to their perceived qualities such as educational levels, mannerisms, dress, and diction. Assignments are perceived to be made on a matching and sliding prestige/persona scale factor. This model reserves the most “prestigious” church for the pastor thought to possess preeminent personality traits and skills, while the “least among the brethren” are assigned an outlying post. A fellow minister once remarked, “Where you are assigned is the most accurate evaluative statement you could ever hope for. What administration thinks of you as a person tells when transfer time comes.”

2. *The reward/punishment factor.* To rank churches, this model uses a scale based on

RAYMOND S. EDWARDS

membership, edifice, finance, and location. The pastoral appointment, however, is based on administrative favor or disfavor. The “choicest morsels” go to “administration’s kin,” while frustrating assignments go to the least favored. A recently relocated pastor comments: “I know the president doesn’t like me. This move is because I’m one of those on his blacklist.”

Another factor in this model is administrative trust. Influential and pivotal churches are assigned to ministers who are considered loyal and could be relied upon to provide support on critical and expedient occasions.

3. *The rightness of fit factor.* This model tries to achieve congruency between peculiar church cultures and dominant personal characteristics of ministers. The model hopes to achieve a fitness between church climate and the minister’s personality, thus promoting smoothness of organizational operation.

4. *The human relations factor.* This model is multidimensional. Factored into the placement decision are logistics such as home ownership sites, spouse’s job, children’s school needs, pastor’s age versus geographic terrain, etc. This model somewhat follows the corporate dictum that organizational health is correlated to worker comfort.

Analyzing the models

Understandably, there are advantages and circumstances that may be advanced to justify preference of one model over another. There is also sufficient evidence to suggest that the relatively short tenures of Adventist ministers yield more, or at least equally, advantageous tradeoffs when compared to longer tenures. So the issue is not whether reshuffling pastors is healthy to our churches or not. Rather the more basic questions are: What determining mind-set best helps or most hurts the church and its mission when it comes to pastoral placements? Under what conditions can greater benefits be achieved from pastoral reassignment?

The prevalence of the prestige model, in which the gifted pastor receives the elite pulpit, may be a primary contributor to thwarting field development. Weaker churches have been far too long neglected and underdeveloped. As a result, the weaker they become, the less attractive they are and the less talented pastor they receive. The result is a vicious circle: an underachieving pastor

is banished to a weak church, only to land with a ready-made recipe for further church underdevelopment—a sign of organizational dysfunction.

Whereas strong and efficient churches may not necessarily be better off by prestige placement practices, weaker churches tend to rely heavily on the minister for their developmental needs, and are usually worse off by the absence of skilled and motivated leadership.

Where the pastoral relocation mirrors reward/punishment or administrative favor/disfavor, a natural spinoff will be lobbying and placating, plotting, and politicking for positions, accompanied by professional undermining and subterfuge. An inevitable result of this model is an unhealthy organizational climate, with its loss of camaraderie, confidence, morale, and motivation. In addition, there is the incalculable damage to the sacredness and primacy of *the call* and to the *ordination rite*. Working under this model subjects pastors to spiritual, professional, and psychological harm, and diverts their essential energies away from the mission of the church and into institutional politics.

The rightness of fit model may be beneficial in fitting the pastor to the needs of the church, but it is often insufficient for proactive growth outcomes. The human relations model, while caring for pastoral stress, spouse’s job, and children’s needs, raises questions about the biblical legacy of altruism in ministry.

In view of the insufficiency of the four models discussed thus far, we need to ask the question Is there not another overarching ingredient or principle that ought to inform the pastoral placement dynamic and thus ease the dilemma?

Ability/need model

May I suggest a model that takes into account a comprehensive field plan/view for development and that incorporates a purposeful analytical review of *ministerial abilities* and *observed locational needs*.

This model must be differentiated from the rightness of fit model. With the latter there is a conscious emphasis on matching church climate with pastoral behavior traits, the idea being to reduce friction and organizational stress. The ability/need model, however, emphasizes matching pastoral ability with loca-

tion needs in a proactive developmental sense. Interestingly, matching pastoral leadership ability with purposefully identified church growth needs will in the long run better serve to reduce church climate problems, as social problems themselves are often vents for unproductive matchups in the first place.

Thus the determining principle behind pastoral placements ought to be one factor and one only—the *empowering of each church to fulfill the mission of the gospel in its locality*. If our missiology must remain the driving force behind our existence, underdeveloped and impotent churches cannot complete that mission. They will remain stymied unless assigned someone who can adequately assist them in growing and functioning.

The undergirding theological basis for this *need/ability* approach is Paul’s comparison of the church to the body (Eph. 4). Just as every part of the body is important for its function and mission, so it is in the church—all churches are important for the development and fulfillment of the mission of the entire body of Christ. If a conference assigns its premier ministers to the accomplished churches, it defeats the divinely expressed rationale behind giving the most careful attention and consideration to where they are most needed. Where this *need/ability* model or *field development outlook* guides pastoral assignment, the gifted and adroit ministers will be assigned to the undeveloped areas possessing the most critical needs. Such an undertaking will narrow the gap between the growing and the impoverished churches within any given conference/mission field. Gifted Pauls must still go and help underdeveloped Macedonias (Acts 16:7-10).

Conclusion

Pastoral placement practices ought to reflect the mission-driven beliefs and commitment of the church. Any consideration that impedes this sacred ideal frustrates the Adventist concept of finishing the work. If we are interested in finishing the work, and if we want to use pastoral appointments to empower the local church for that purpose, let us adopt the need/ability model. Ministerial worth measured on field development accomplishments rather than on occupancy of an elite pulpit could be the pathway toward organizational health, church empowerment, and mission accomplishment. ■

JOURNEYING THROUGH MISUNDERSTANDING

The church leaders sat in my office discussing their area of ministry. Several items had been processed when the request was made. “We would like to redecorate one of the rooms, and are asking for your permission.”



Alger Keough is senior pastor of the Hinsdale Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hinsdale, Illinois.

The request was neither unusual nor new. But the church leaders who made the request considered it of high priority, while I gave it a low priority.

Normal church process required the involvement and approval of the facilities committee, finance committee, and church board. Matters could be expedited, however, if the details were handled beforehand. So I met with my leaders and suggested: “Why not prepare a proposal with details on cost, color, and carpet quality? I’ll present it to the staff for approval and have it reviewed informally by some volunteers who help with decorating issues.” To make everything clear, I asked the leaders three times if they understood everything involved and whether they had any further questions.

I congratulated myself on a brilliant solution to what could have been a difficult matter to process. The leaders got

what they wanted—the redecorating of the room.

The situation

But I was in for a shock. Two weeks later I received a copy of a letter one of the leaders (call her Betty) had written to the finance committee chair. She would have no part with the renovation of the room, because I obviously did not trust her judgment. Instead I trusted others to make the final decisions.

Everything I had attempted to avoid happened. What was worse, Betty was not even willing to communicate directly with me, but sought a third-party forum. She had totally misunderstood me. I thought I had been very affirming of the abilities and judgments of my leaders. I had “empowered” them, as pastors are encouraged to do. But I discovered that “managing people is like herding cats.”¹

The issues

I also discovered that my integrity was under attack. So what was I to do? Of course, there were the usual emotional responses, but they led nowhere. So I forced myself to look objectively at the issues. The result was some startling pointers.

Be accountable. I am responsible only for my words, actions, and decisions. To psychoanalyze other persons is a futile exercise. My pastoral counseling training never included that level of expertise. On the other hand, I do believe it is appropriate to take time to understand others, particularly the generational, cultural, and gender factors that affect interpersonal relationships and understanding.

Follow biblical counsel. The biblical method of relating to others is to treat others "as I would want to be treated." To me this principle is foundational, in both personal and professional relationships. Too many Christians think of this as a nice, but not practical, idea. So they tend to excuse their errors and see themselves as doing the best they can under the circumstances; they pardon their own sin.

The Bible also admonishes us to "judge not." When there is no judgment, who is at fault is not an issue. So I did not waste any energy, emotional or otherwise, on pinning down the blame for what had gone wrong. It happened. Period. I decided to follow Jesus' method outlined in Matthew 18.

Adhere to your values. In dealing with the renovation issue, I had violated two of my personal values. First, authenticity. Instead of being up-front with my ideas, I tried to be clever and political. Betty is a very intuitive person; she thought I was not being genuine. I was responsible for raising red flags in her mind. Warren Bennis states, "To be authentic is literally to be your own author . . ., to discover your native energies and desires, and then to find your own way of acting on them. . . . When you write your own life, you play the game that is natural for you to play. You keep covenant with your own promise."² I had broken my promise to be authentic.

Second, there is the value of compassion. By politicizing the situation, I neglected to understand the real motivation of the leaders who wanted the renovation. Betty saw it as her "duty" to work for the church and preferred a style of being on a "team." But my instincts stressed "individuality."³ We were approaching the tasks from totally different perspectives. I failed to understand her. No wonder she misunderstood me!

Appreciate differences in perspective. Betty and other leaders were doing their

How shall we
improve interpersonal
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honest best to accomplish their responsibilities. Their "piece of the pie" was the whole pie as they saw it. That was because they did not see the rest of the church's ministry. Instead of being authentic and bringing them on board with all that was going on in the rest of the church, I left them ignorant and isolated. I played down to them. I did not communicate effectively. I did not understand the difference in perspectives.

The resolution

What should I do? Where should I go? First I turned to the Lord. I prayed for two

things: for wisdom to know how to bring about effective changes without hurting positive working relationships, and for an opportunity to speak with Betty.

The opportunity came.

As Betty and I sat in my office, I turned to the value of authenticity. I accepted my responsibility. I admitted that so far, I had not been an effective communicator. I shared with Betty what I really wanted. I let her know my dreams for the church, my hopes and desires. I painted the big picture of how I saw the church, and where it needed to be going. I gave her copies of documents on which the board of elders and church board were working. There were illustrations of how we could accomplish our goals.

Betty began to want what I wanted. The paradigms shifted, or at least focused. The values and goals were nearly the same.

Misunderstanding and conflict are in the past now. Betty and I have a healthy working relationship. Working with the pastoral staff, she is involved in a new ministry of care—sending cards to the bereaved, notes of encouragement to the despondent, birthday cards, congratulations, whatever is needed to support the members of the congregation. She prepares everything, has the pastors sign the cards and add a short personal note, and then she mails them.

Effective communication skills

Most misunderstandings in pastoral relationships come as a result of poor communication. "The problem stems from two sources: one is being human; and the other is forgetting that others are human too."⁴ Emotions and prior experiences affect our understanding of each other. While we may guess at how a person might respond in any given interchange, let's face it: humans are unpredictable.

So how shall we improve interpersonal communications and reduce misunderstandings? Helping others express themselves is a first step.⁵ Guessing at what others are thinking or understanding is usually ineffective.

After a worship service the pastor's

Continuing education exercise

Reflection exercises:

1. Make a short list of your personal values. Focus. Be succinct. Authenticity includes individuality as well as honesty.
2. Spend an hour watching two of your favorite television situation comedies. Videotape the hour. Then watch the episodes a second and third time, analyzing the nonverbal communication (tone, body language, etc.).
3. Take an hour with your spouse. No interruptions. Ask him or her to critique lovingly your communication style. Express yourself. Accept yourself. Make a list of no more than three areas in which you will make a conscious effort to improve your communication skills. Journal the experiences that follow.
4. Make a list of scriptural texts that define how we should relate to one another. Choose three that speak to your personal interactions with others. Consciously live by the principles each day.
5. Attend a board meeting that another person is chairing. Take notes. Observe the participation by the various age groups present. How do the perspectives of each generation differ? What are the common values? How are the outcomes of the meeting affected by the representation level from each age group?

Suggested reading:

- Bennis, Warren. *Managing People Is Like Herding Cats*. Provo, Utah: Executive Excellence Publishing, 1997. An excellent look at leadership issues, with implications for pastoral leadership and communication.
- Nirenberg, Jesse S. *Getting Through to People*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963. Detailed and practical guide for effective communication.
- Smith, J. Walker, and Ann Clurman. *Rocking the Ages*. New York: Harper Business, 1997. Fascinating descriptions of generational distinctions and how they affect communication.
- Tannen, Deborah. *That's Not What I Meant!* New York: Ballantine Books, 1986. Easy reading on how conversational style makes or breaks relationships.

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wife was in conversation with another woman. The conversation was lengthy, and the pastor had another appointment that had to be met. Not wanting to interrupt, but needing to let his wife know that he was leaving, the pastor stopped just long enough to whisper the information to his wife. He then quickly left the room. The other woman remarked that the pastor seemed indifferent to her, since he had neglected to greet her. The pastor's wife, knowing better how her husband functioned, was able to clear up the communication error. Respect for privacy had been interpreted as indifference! If the woman had never expressed herself, but had kept her thoughts to herself, the error would not have been corrected.

The second step is to encourage people to be aware of their own feelings.⁶ During a premarital counseling session one young woman was placing her future husband high on a pedestal. Discussion revealed why. Her mother was always critical of her father. The young woman was unconsciously reacting to her parents' relationship and allowed her feelings to alter her perceptions of her future husband. Identifying her own feelings helped her gain perspective and accept her man for what he really was.

Step three is to accept emotions without being critical of them.⁷ Once a person has expressed emotions, to give any judgment, criticism, or snide comment would instantly be interpreted as an attack, causing the person to retreat.

This is a time to graciously apply the ■ golden rule.

¹ Warren Bennis, *Managing People Is Like Herding Cats* (Provo, Utah: Executive Excellence Publishing, 1997).

² *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³ J. Walker Smith and Ann Clurman, *Rocking the Ages* (New York: Harper Business, 1997), p. 9.

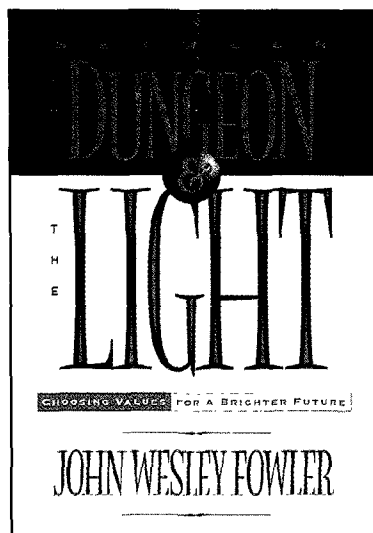
⁴ Jesse S. Nirenberg, *Getting Through to People* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

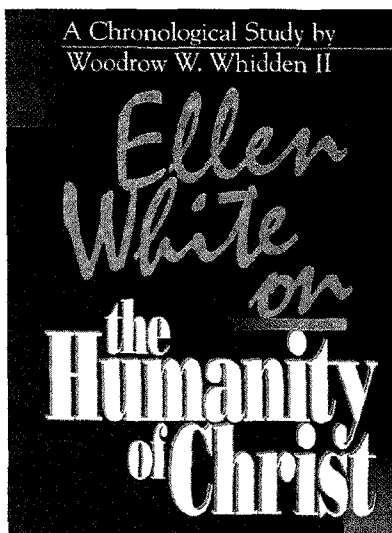
⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

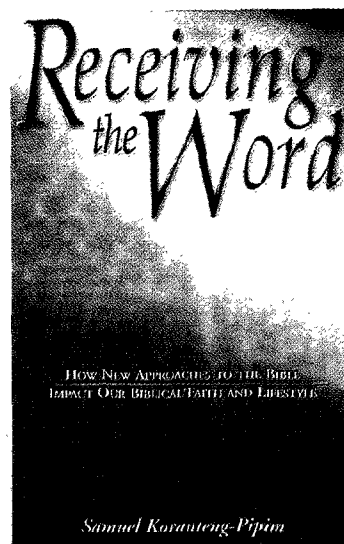
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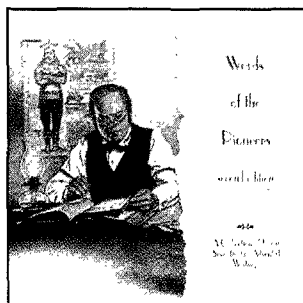
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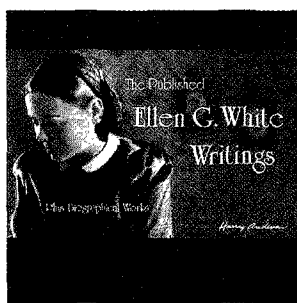


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UTRECHT: A “PROVIDENTIAL” DETOUR?

In the April 1995 issue of *Ministry* Andrew Bates suggested that the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 could be a biblical key to the women’s ordination dilemma: If Jerusalem could make circumcision optional for Gentiles, Adventists could make women’s ordination optional by division.



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Utrecht voted no, however, and now five crucial questions rise before us. Two focus on Bible study: (1) How does the biblical world address our world? and (2) Do we decide biblical “truth” by vote? Two other questions address our worries and fears: (3) Will the church splinter? (4) Where is the leading of “providence” in all this? And then the last question is simply practical: (5) Where do we go from here?

I will address each question briefly, arguing that the Utrecht vote and its implementation is a “providential” detour, a temporary road leading us to address the real issue, ordination. I will conclude with practical suggestions as to where we might go from here.

1. Jerusalem and Utrecht

In its handling of the circumcision issue, the Jerusalem Council illustrates an important truth: unity through diversity of practice. The parallel between Jerusalem and Utrecht is only partial, however, because their boundaries were clear; ours are not.

The Jew-Gentile distinction defined the

solution to the circumcision issue. The solution forced no one to change their accepted practice, just their perspective. Jews could circumcise if they wished, and Gentiles had a choice. The Spirit simply had to impress the believers that allowing this diversity would keep the church unified. Easy . . .

By contrast, in our time, the ordination issue seems to be an uncharted jungle. Gender, education, and socioeconomic status offer no clear boundaries, and good people on both sides of the issue quote Scripture. Culture plays a role, of course. But sincere Adventists are found on both sides.

Another issue addressed in Acts 15, that of food offered to idols, more closely parallels our ordination dilemma. Though Acts does not emphasize the dissension over food in the early church, 1 Corinthians certainly does (see 1 Cor. 8 and 10). Boundaries were not defined, and the issue touched both practice and perspective. Jerusalem did not solve the food problem then any more than Utrecht has solved the ordination issue now. In this respect, their dilemma and ours are remarkably similar.

A L D E N T H O M P S O N

2. Voting on the “truth”?

What happens when we face a dilemma such as the ordination of women? Do Adventists determine “truth” by ballot? No. But we do vote on boundaries within which we agree to live. The church needs a solid foundation and clear boundaries if we are to fulfill our mission. And we have just such a foundation, for the genius of Adventism has been its grip on “the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12), the heart of the covenant used when we first organized as a church.¹

Adventism involves much more, to be sure; but we have resisted a fixed formula, preferring the Bible as our “only creed.” That principle is clearly laid down in the first line of the current expression of our fundamental beliefs, right where it belongs—“Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.”

But all-or-nothing thinking has always threatened us with its eagerness to nail down every detail. In 1888, for example, one brother exclaimed that changing our view of Galatians would jettison everything, leaving “nothing to our faith.” Ellen White called his statement “not true,” “extravagant,” “exaggerated,” and even declared that the matter he was so concerned about was not a “vital question.”²

In 1892 she spoke more generally, saying that the unity of the church could not depend on “viewing every text of Scripture in the very same light.” Voting on such matters might “conceal” discord, but couldn’t “quench” it. The secret is supreme love for God and each other, for then “labored efforts to be in unity” are not needed, and “oneness in Christ” is the “natural result.”³

In short, Utrecht calls us not to close our Bibles, but to open them and continue to seek God’s will for His people.

3. The splintering of Adventism?

Some have found that the current discussions over ordination could splinter the church. But if we will temper our rhetoric in light of the biblical vision, the Spirit can point us to a better way. The God who delivered slaves from Egypt and captives from Babylon speaks to us today by His Son, calling Jew and Greek, bond and free, male and female to oneness in Him (Gal. 3:28).

But how can that happen after Utrecht? I believe there is a way of maintaining our unity that does not involve ordaining women. The Utrecht vote could turn out to be a “providential” detour leading us to find that way. Let me explain.

4. “Providential” detour?

Attempting to interpret God’s hand in history may sometimes set believers at odds with one another. The two polar positions are clear and consistent: A hands-on Providence plans everything in detail; a hands-off Providence lets the world take its own course.

The hands-off position is rooted more in modern rationalism than in Scripture, though Scripture does teach that human

In short,

Utrecht calls us not to close our Bibles, but to open them and continue to seek God’s will for His people.

beings are free to turn from God’s will. Are errors and evil, then, part of God’s will? The various translations of Romans 8:28 reflect uncertainty on that point. The hands-on bent of the KJV and NRSV (“all things work together for good”) softens in the NASB, where it says God “causes all things to work together,” and the NIV, which translates it, “in all things God works for the good,” implying that God steps in after the fact to bring good out of evil.

The NASB and NIV more readily suggest a “providential” detour: God allows human beings to make a mess, to go down a rough, temporary road. He then works in and through that temporary mess for good. Key Bible stories illustrate the point:

Joseph: Joseph interpreted his brothers’ act of betrayal as a “providential” detour: “You tried to harm me, but God made it turn out for the best” (Gen. 50:20, CEV).

Israel’s defeat: In the gruesome story of the dismembered concubine (Judges 19-21),

Israel suffered two bitter defeats when they confronted the Benjaminites *before* seeking the Lord (cf. 20:8-25). Only when they sought the Lord *first, before massing for battle* (verses 26-28), did God give them victory. The second defeat is so amazing that several modern translations (e.g., NRSV, REB, NAB, New Jerusalem) switch verses 22 and 23 (with no manuscript support!) to provide a more “logical” flow. But the original text is clear: a “providential” detour led wayward humans to turn to the good.

Paul, Barnabas, and Mark: When Paul and Barnabas quarreled over Mark’s fitness for service, Paul chose Silas as a companion while Barnabas took Mark. A “providential” response to Paul’s (sinful?) stubbornness spawned two missionary teams instead of one (Acts 15:36-41) and reclaimed Mark as a worker, finally convincing even Paul (cf. 2 Tim. 4:11).

Adventism too knows about “providential” detours:

Great disappointment: In the disappointment, God transformed an early faulty interpretation into a settled conviction of the nearness of the Advent and the reality of Christ’s heavenly ministry.

Shut door: The erroneous belief that the door of mercy was shut to any who had not entered it during those early days of our movement was a “providential” reprieve for the “little flock,” allowing them time to settle in to the truths God was actually calling them to preach.

In short, a “providential” detour at Utrecht is in good company.

But what mistake triggered the detour, and how do we put it right? I believe we erred by focusing on the ordination of women rather than on the question of ordination itself. I will address that broader issue as a first step toward proposing a plan for the future.

5. Where Do We Go From Here?

Although Acts 15 strikingly illustrates the unity that can be achieved in and through diversity, we cannot expect it to answer all our questions on something that was not even on the agenda of the Jerusalem Council, namely, the issue of ordination. But that is the issue for us, and we must ask what the Bible teaches about ordination itself.

That is not the easiest question to answer, for as we search and study, we also have to

grapple with our own history, feelings, and practice and assess how other churches may have influenced on the matter of ordination.

The “highest” view of ordination is found in Roman Catholicism, where it is a sacrament (not just a symbol) and is seen as communicating “grace” to those who receive it. Someone in authority passes on that authority, a process the Roman Catholic tradition traces back to the moment when Christ gave Peter the keys of the kingdom. Even when Protestants deny the sacramental status of ordination (as in Adventism), the Catholic tradition lingers on if those in authority appear in some way to pass on their authority to others through ordination.

The New Testament teaching on leadership includes the idea of the priesthood of *all* believers, not just a special class of ordained men who pass their authority on to others. Let’s look at some key passages, beginning with Acts 13:1-3, one of the few texts describing how the church recognizes God’s call to service.

Acts 13:1-3. At the Spirit’s command, the believers in Antioch consecrated Barnabas and Saul for a special work. But the description of the believers’ role is tantalizingly brief: “And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away” (verse 3).

Instead of human leaders serving as channels of God’s call and authority, the Spirit gave the “call.” Then the church, apparently as a whole, recognized the call by the laying on of hands, thus commissioning their leaders. The church also illustrated the Protestant principle of “the priesthood of all the believers,” a phrase rooted in 1 Peter 2, where an unrestricted “royal priesthood” refers to “a holy nation, His own special people” (verse 9, NKJV), that is, all members of the body of Christ.

As a result of the Incarnation, New Testament leaders are much less “authoritarian” than those in the Old. Paul, for example, could confront Peter “to his face” (Gal. 2:11, NIV), an act that might have cost him his life in Joshua’s day (cf. Joshua 1:18). The lively give and take at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) would have been rather more subdued with Joshua in charge.

Why the difference? Because Jesus transformed notions of authority. The next two passages show how.

Matthew 20:20-28. When the mother of James and John requested leadership positions for her sons, Jesus said that only Gentiles exercise “authority” over others. “To be great in my kingdom,” He told His disciples, “be a servant” (verse 26). Jesus’ kingdom was marked by an upside-down equality, not by the exercise of authority of one believer over another.

Matthew 23:8-12. The love of position was not just a Gentile disease. In His woes on the Pharisees, Jesus noted the craving for honors and titles (verses 5-7). But the disciples themselves were all on level ground, with just one “teacher” above them (verse 8, NRSV). The law of His kingdom is simple: “The greatest among you will be your servant” (verse 11, NIV, NRSV).

Yet the New Testament still preserves the idea of a hierarchy of church leadership. In 1 Corinthians 12:28, for example, the first three “gifts” are ranked by number: apostles, prophets, and teachers. But all the gifts are necessary for a healthy body. And to make sure that no one misunderstands how the hierarchy of position should function, Paul concludes the chapter with a call to “eagerly desire the *greater* gifts” (verse 31, NIV), the gifts spelled out in chapter 13, not as gifts of rank, but as gifts of the mind and heart: faith, hope, and love.

The crucial point is that the superiority of faith, hope, and love has nothing to do with rank or position, even if believers are tempted to equate high position with great holiness. If those called or elected to high office are presumed to be more faithful, more righteous, more loving, and thus holier and nearer to God, it is only a small step to a person or organization that claims to speak infallibly for God!

Though Adventists have never gone that far in reverencing their leaders, even the tendency to do so troubled Ellen White.⁴ She declared that “high position does not give to the character Christian virtues.”⁵ One hears echoes of the famous saying of her contemporary, Lord Acton (1834-1902): “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

If power is dangerous when put into human hands, it is even more so when claimed in the name of God. Men in high position are the very ones “who are in danger of considering a position of responsibility as evi-

dence of God’s special power.”⁶ Position does not make “men of infallible judgment.”⁷ If a leader feels “he is invested with authority to make his will the ruling power, the best and only safe course is to remove him, lest great harm be done and he lose his own soul and imperil the souls of others.”⁸

Yes, followers are at risk as well as leaders. In 1907 Ellen White said it was “a greater danger” for believers to “depend on the mind of certain leading workers” than it was for the leader himself to suppose he was “capable of planning and devising for all branches of the work.”⁹

More broadly based input in the decision-making process, however, should not automatically imply that the participants are better or wiser. C. S. Lewis argued that human wickedness is a more powerful argument for democracy than human goodness; crooked people dare not give absolute power to one crook! Even John Calvin declared that because “of the devices and defects of men,” several rulers are preferable, each checking the excesses of the other.¹⁰ Presbyterian church polity addresses that danger by distinguishing “ruling” elders (laity!) from the “teaching” elders (clergy!), a safeguard against the tendency of the teaching office to rule inappropriately.

In the work of the church, then, the healthy interaction recorded in Acts 15 is essential and is rooted in the view of leadership implied in Acts 13, where the whole church recognizes the call of the Spirit and the believers lay their hands on the leaders.

Neglecting this interactive model of church leadership poses real dangers for the church. Ellen White warned that the tendency simply to accept the proposals of leaders has meant the approval of many matters that “involved far more than was anticipated and far more than those who voted would have been willing to assent to had they taken time to consider the question from all sides.”¹¹

Any view of ordination that assumes greater holiness for the ordained hinders believers from fulfilling their spiritual duty to their leaders. Ellen White gives a startling glimpse of the ideal when she describes how a younger worker should relate to his superior: “He must not lose his identity in the one who is instructing him, so that he dare not exercise his own judgment, but does

what he is told, irrespective of his own understanding of what is right and wrong." If his supervisor departs from the right, the younger worker should not go to "some outside party," but to his superior in office, "freely expressing his mind. Thus the learner may be a blessing to the teacher."¹²

This is a New Testament view of "authority," one that allows, indeed mandates, Paul's confrontation with Peter. Interestingly enough, Ellen White does not use the word "authority" in this quotation, nor does the word appear anywhere in its three-page context in *Gospel Workers*, "Young Ministers to Labor With Older Ministers." Teaching, helping, respecting, honoring, training, strengthening are all there—but not authority.¹³ In the New Testament model, authority simply isn't an issue.

6. A Proposal

In conclusion, I would like to suggest some steps for finding common ground. None of the suggestions below are new, but they do seek to link biblical principles with practical realities. The underlying theme is that Jesus is the head of the church for all believers, and that by the laying on of hands, the church recognizes the Spirit's call, a call to any member of the body of Christ, Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female. Everything we do should reflect that equality of call.

A common credential. Credentials identify those whom the church trusts. For Adventists, issuing credentials was the first step toward organization, coming a full decade before the General Conference was organized in 1863. Let conferences issue credentials as they do at present, but let these be a *common* credential knowing no gender, economic, or other improper boundary. Those wishing to retain their former credential may do so. But current workers may choose the new, and workers newly employed will also receive the new.

A common laying on of hands. Let pastors, elders, and laity share in the laying on of hands in recognition of God's call to service. Credentials should come from the conference, and the laying on of hands should happen locally, following the model of Acts 13. Such a plan would not perpetuate that view of ordination that allows only ordained clergy to place hands on those who are set apart for ministry.

A new vocabulary. The word "ordination" has been tarnished by debate and practice. The word may be innocent when used for local elders and deacons. But for pastors, it now implies nonbiblical barriers and practices. So let us speak of "credential" or "license" for the document issued by the conferences, and "commissioning" or "dedication" for the laying on of hands.

Maybe, in time, when the meaning of the laying on of hands is perfectly clear, we can return to the language of ordination. Until then, careful language would remind us and the world what it means to follow Jesus.

Recovering and practicing the New Testament teaching on ministry and leadership has been an urgent need in Adventism for some time. Through the "providential" detour of the Utrecht vote, God has opened a day of opportunity for us. By His grace we can do what needs to be done. We may begin by initiating a comprehensive study of the whole concept of ordination in Scripture. ■

¹ "We, the undersigned, hereby associate ourselves together, as a church, taking the name, Seventh-day Adventists, covenanting to keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus Christ" *Review and Herald* 18:148, Oct. 8, 1861, in "Covenant, Church," *SDA Encyclopedia*, (1996), vol. 10, p. 416.

² Ellen G. White manuscript 24, 1888, in *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1987), Ellen G. White manuscript 24, 1888, in vol. 1, p. 220.

³ Ellen G. White manuscript 24, 1888, in *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1987), vol. 1, p. 220.

⁴ Three sections in *Testimonies to Ministers* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1923, 1944, 1962) are particularly forceful in warning of the dangers of the abuse of power: No. 11 "To Brethren in Responsible Positions," pp. 279-304; No. 13 "Conference Officials," pp. 319-346; No. 14 "Appeals for Truth and Loyalty," pp. 347-391.

⁵ *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1948), (Oct. 3, 1907).

⁶ *Testimonies to Ministers*, vol. 9, p. 277.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 347, (Mar. 8, 1895).

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 362 (September 1895).

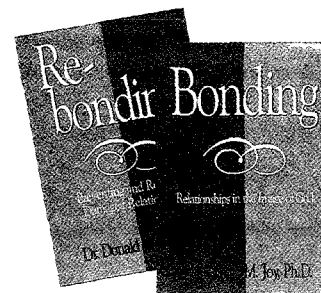
⁹ *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 277.

¹⁰ C. S. Lewis, "Membership," in *Weight of Glory* (New York: Collier Books, Macmillan, 1980), pp. 113, 114; John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book IV, chap. xx, sec. 8, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), vol. 2, p. 657.

¹¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 278.

¹² *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1915, 1948), pp. 102, 103.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-103.



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BUYING A NEW COMPUTER

If you are planning to buy a computer, you probably are asking yourself: Which do I buy? Which company is safe? What can I afford? If you go to a computer retail chain, you will find different stores recommending different machines.



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Unfortunately, large computer retail outlets with hundreds of stores around the country purchase computer models by the thousands at sharply discounted prices. They instruct their salespersons to “push” these models so they can sell off their inventory. So the typical computer salespersons are often thinking more about their pocketbook than about yours.

So if you are looking for a new computer:

1. *Be cautious.* Do not take everything a salesperson says as “the gospel truth.” You want to avoid costly mistakes.

2. *Be informed.* Computers are a specialized technology. Learn the meaning of the basic terms associated with this technology before you visit the computer store so you can intelligently compare different models and decide which one is the best bargain for you.

This article provides you a broad overview of the dozen or so key words used to describe computers. With that you should be able to evaluate which models are genuine bargains and which ones represent outdated technology.

The components of a computer

A computer is comprised of eight basic items—a metal chassis that houses the CPU (Central Processing Unit, or brain), a monitor, a keyboard, a hard drive to store programmed files, a mouse, a modem, a CD-ROM, plus a sound card and speakers for multimedia.

Collectively these items are known as *hardware*. Hardware refers to the equipment on which computer programs will run. In addition to hardware, computers also need *software*. Software is what makes the computer do things—calculate numbers, process words, create and edit graphic images, build newsletters, or manage church mailing lists. Software comes on 3.5-inch diskettes or CD-ROMs.

Understanding computer speed

Computers come in two major categories—the IBM-compatible Windows PCs and Macintosh computers. Since new Macintosh sales amount to less than 5 percent of the U.S. business market, this article is limited to the Windows-only category.

In comparing the performance of different models of computers, the most valuable benchmark is *clock speed*. Computer clock speed is measured in units called megahertz (MHz), or millions of instructions per second (MIPS). Within the DOS/Windows environment computers evolved in seven basic configurations (see Illustration 1).

Within each of these seven basic computer families are subgroups that run at different clock speeds. The higher the clock speed within each family of computers, the faster the computer can process instructions and reformat documents. Currently, for example, Pentiums come in 100, 120, 133, 150, 166, 180, and 200 MHz subgroups. Pentium

IIs, introduced in May 1997, come as 230, 266, and 300 MHz machines.

A Pentium, for example, at 112 MIPS, will run circles around an 80486 PC (only 56 MIPS), and a Pentium Pro can process data at 250 million instructions per second—five times faster than an 80486 DX2/66. The Pentium Pro contains 5.5 million transistors built into the tiny CPU.

But MHz is only one way of evaluating a computer. The *amount* of information the computer can process at one time is even more important than the speed it uses to process that information. Just as a 16-lane freeway can process twice as many cars as an eight-lane freeway, a Pentium CPU uses 64 lanes of traffic (called *bits*) outside the CPU to move data, rather than the 32 bits that the 80386 and 80486 machines use. (In fact, the slowest Pentium is 800 times faster than the 8088 CPU in the original IBM PC.)

In most cases you will want either a tower or minitower case, rather than a desktop model (that commits you to the small 14-inch monitor). And if you can plug the monitor into the back of the case, you will need only one switch to turn on the system.

CPU summary

Unless you anticipate working with unusually large documents on a regular basis, or creating numerous graphic images, or networking computers (running several machines from one computer), most offices will *not* require the faster Pentium II computers. In fact, right now the mid-speed Pentium PCs (133-166 MHz) are becoming real bargains.

If you are purchasing new equipment for a church or home office, ignore anything slower than a Pentium, no matter how attractive the price. Many new programs simply do not run well on the 386 or 486 models. All major companies have stopped selling the 486s. Your safest choice today for a stand-alone conference, church, or home office computer is a midlevel (133-166 MHz) or upper-level (200 MHz) Pentium. Remember that the difference in cost between a 166 and 200 MHz computer can be as little as \$200 in the United States.

One more tip: the 133 and 166 CPUs use a motherboard that is 10 percent faster than a 120 and 150 CPU (66 MHz compared to 60 MHz). So if the price is close, choose the

133 or 166 MHz over the 120 and 150 MHz CPU Pentiums.

Also remember that computers do not wear out like a set of tires on a car. There is no elephants' graveyard of discarded machines, no secret dumping ground for useless computers. A typical PC purchased today could have a life expectancy approaching a decade or more. Therefore, considering the potential life expectancy of a computer, upgradeability and quality of the unit should weigh more than the initial price when selecting among different models.

Computer memory

Computer memory, known as random access memory (RAM), is the electrical circuits in which the computer stores program codes from the hard drive and data that the user has typed from a keyboard. It is the computer's work space, where text, equations, numbers, poetry, or graphical images are stored while they are displayed on the screen.

Today virtually all machines are sold with either 16 or 32 MB (megabytes) of system memory. For Windows 3.1 or Windows 95, this is standard. Avoid purchasing a bargain machine with only 8 MB of RAM—especially if you plan to use more than one program at a time. Increase system memory to 32 MB if you are running a Windows 95 operating system or working with 24-bit color images and other large files, or if you keep several large applications open at one time. Remember, the least-expensive time to add memory is when you first purchase your PC.

Will that be cache (or credit)?

Computer advertisements talk about *cache*. Cache is simply a special section of ultrafast memory where information recently retrieved from the hard disk, CD-ROM, and from slower RAM is stored for immediate reuse (thus saving the time needed to go to the hard drive or RAM to locate that same information again). In word processing, for example, this can make spell-checking operate significantly faster.

For optimal performance you want your PC to come with either 256K or 512K of L2 (Level 2) cache. And the very best cache is called *pipeline burst cache*, which is about 10 percent faster than regular cache.

What about MMX (short for Multi-Media Extensions)? The newer CPUs have

Illustration 1

Computer Family	Date	MIPS
8088/8086	1981	.33
80286	1984	1.2
80386	1986	8
80486	1989	54
Pentium (80586)	1993	112
Pentium Pro	1995	250
Pentium II	1997	400

added multimedia activities (video, audio, etc.) into the CPU itself, which speeds up these types of PC operations.

Selecting a proper monitor

Look at three things when evaluating one monitor over another: screen size, pixels, and dot pitch.

Size. Monitors are grouped into four basic sizes: 14-inch, 15-inch, 17-inch, and 19-inch to 21-inch screens. The 14-inch (measured diagonally) models are found only on the cheapest PCs and should be avoided. The 15-inch monitor is now considered entry level size, and the 17-inch models are rapidly becoming the business standard. For desktop publishing you *really* need a 20-inch or 21-inch model that generally costs \$2,000 or more. Again, the least expensive time to upgrade a monitor is when you first purchase a system.

When comparing typical advertisements for computer systems, pay particular attention to whether the price includes a monitor. (Some store ads exclude the monitor to make the price look attractive.)

Pixels. Color monitors come in different types—identifiable by the number of picture elements (called *pixels*) projected on the glass horizontally and vertically. Generally speaking, the more pixels your screen supports, the sharper and better-looking the text and graphics will appear on the monitor. Except for laptops, avoid the regular VGA (640 x 480 pixels) screens. An absolute *minimum* for Windows is 800 x 600 pixels (256 colors). But monitors that can project 1,024 by 768 pixels or 1,280 by 1,024 pixels are better yet. The number of colors displayed at these pixel settings is determined by the amount of RAM on the video card. Two MB of video card RAM is considered normal, unless you plan to work with graphic images. Then you will want four MB of video RAM.

Because the quality of the video board can hold back the overall performance of

the PC, you will want one that is as fast as possible. The 64-bit video card is fairly standard. But some machines offer a 128-bit video card, for faster work with graphic images.

Dot pitch. In addition to the size, a second way to compare one monitor with another is the *dot pitch* of a monitor. Dot pitch, measured in millimeters (mm.), refers to the spacing between pixels on the screen. A smaller-numbered dot pitch is better, because the color dots on the screen are closer

together and form a tighter, sharper image—both with words and graphic images. In other words, a monitor with 0.26-mm. dot pitch is superior and easier on the eyes than a monitor with 0.28-mm. or 0.33-mm. dot pitch.

Choosing the right keyboard

If you have visited one or more computer showrooms, you already know that keyboards come in two basic configurations—the standard straight keyboard with 12

function keys stretched across the top in a single horizontal row, and the newer split ergonomic keyboard with two halves adjusted to fit the hands better. The standard model is called the 101-key enhanced keyboard. Some keyboards have a 130-key configuration.

If you don't mind the couple of weeks it will take to adjust to the new feel, you may want to try the Microsoft Natural Keyboard that costs about \$85 in the U.S. But if you have to work between two machines frequently, one at the office and one at home, you may not want two radically different keyboards.

Picking the right hard disk

Pay particular attention to the size and speed of the hard disk that comes with your machine.

Disk size. A hard disk is measured in *megabytes* (MB) of file storage space. One megabyte of disk space will hold about 700 pages of single-spaced WordPerfect text.

Today 2-gigabyte (equal to 2,000 MB) hard disks are considered normal for internal storage on a new PC. Some PC programs, such as CorelDRAW, need 40 MB of disk space just for a single program. A gigabyte (GB) represents the equivalent of five 200 MB hard drives. You may not need it today, but in two or three years you will be thankful you have it. If you plan to work with graphic images, don't consider anything smaller than a 4.0 GB hard drive.

Disk speed. Speed of a hard disk is typically measured by its *access time*. Average access time indicates how long it takes the drive to find a section of data on the disk. Hard disk access times generally range somewhere between 18 *milliseconds* (ms.) for old drives to 8 ms. for the fastest new drives. All other things being equal, the smaller the access time number (8 ms., 9 ms., or 10 ms.), the better the hard disk.

Disk type. If you plan to add a second hard drive to an existing machine, be sure to check your manual to see if the drive is a SCSI—(small computer system interface; pronounced *scuzzy*); or IDE—integrated device electronics (including Enhanced IDE). You cannot mix and match these drives on the same connector card. A few years ago all the larger drives were SCSI drives. That is no longer true. IDE and EIDE

Create Memorable Dedications

With this Baby Dedication Kit by Kay Kuzma, you can use your computer to create personalized baby dedication services in a short time.



Memorable Baby Dedications

This sourcebook contains 24 sample baby dedication services and hundreds of ideas for making the event special for the family. Free accompanying disk includes all three books in the series. Can be used in Windows 3.1 or Windows 95. Paperback. US\$29.99, Cdn\$43.49.

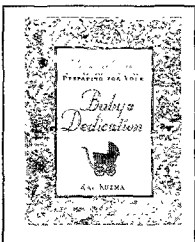
In Praise of Children

A delightful treasury of poems and quotes about children. Ideal for reading at Christian baby dedications, Sabbath school and church programs honoring Mother's Day and Father's Day, and other family-oriented celebrations. Hardcover. US\$19.99, Cdn\$28.99.



Preparing for Your Baby's Dedication

This guide for parents includes dozens of ideas for creating memorable baby dedications, summaries of different service types to choose from, and advice for helping parents prepare personally for raising children for God. Paperback. US\$9.99, Cdn\$14.49.



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are generally less expensive than SCSI drives. Tests show no significant performance difference between matched EIDE and SCSI-2 drives.

Selecting the right modem

More than one third of American homes (38 percent) now have a computer, and within four years that figure is likely to rise to 50 percent. Of the homes with a computer 25 percent are connected to one of the online services such as CompuServe, America Online, or Prodigy. These three services not only provide access to online magazines and newspapers (270 for CompuServe, 100 for America Online), but also let their users access the Internet—a connection of some 50,000 large computers around the world. Or you can purchase private packages that provide 30 or 50 hours of Internet access every month for a flat rate.

For accessing online services or the Internet, you will need a *modem* (short for *modulator-demodulator*). A modem is a device that links your computer with a telephone for communication with other computers in a distant location. Digital information from your computer is broken down by a modem into pulses that can be transmitted on an ordinary phone line and reassembled on the other end into recognizable computer data.

Also, if you plan to do any kind of publishing, such as a church newsletter or weekly bulletin, you can use a modem to transfer files to a professional typographer, who can output your files on a typesetting machine at resolutions up to 2,540 dpi (dots per inch). This is eight times the resolution of the standard laserjet, which prints at 600 dpi.

With access to typesetting services you can produce documents of ultimate quality—almost equal to those produced in any book or magazine. All you do is print a proof of your pages on a laserjet, send the file via your modem to a typesetter, and receive back by mail an exact duplicate of your laser-printed page—with a very high quality.

Obviously, a modem is necessary, because you cannot physically link computers in two different states with a wire, nor can you easily exchange disks between two computers separated by 3,000 miles.

When it comes to modems, modem

Continued on page 27

Introduce New Members to Ellen White



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Illustration 2

	Entry Level	Mainstream	Top Level
Price	\$1,450	\$2,199	\$2,999
Processor/CPU	133 MHz Pentium	200 MHz Pentium w/MMX	266 MHz Pentium II w/MMX
Memory/RAM	16 MB	32 MB	32-64 MB
Hard Disk	2.0 GB	2.5 GB	3.0-5.0 GB
Monitor	15-inch (1,024 x 768)	17-inch (1,024 x 768)	17-inch (1,024 x 768)
Graphic Memory	2 MB VRAM	2 MB VRAM	4MB VRAM
Modem	28.8 modem/fax	33.6 modem/fax	56 modem/fax
CD-ROM	16x-speed	16x-speed	24x-speed
Sound Card	16-bit basic	16- or 32-bit	32-bit wavetable
Speakers	low price	2-piece	3-piece w/woofer
Warranty: parts/labor	1 year/1 year	3 years/1 year	3 years/3 years
On-site Service	1 year	1 year	3 years

Based on mail order from Computer Shopper magazine. Local store prices may be higher.

BREAKING BREAD AND THE SABBATH

As a young pastor I had numerous discussions with non-Adventist clergy about the seventh-day Sabbath. In the course of defending Sunday, these pastors would inevitably appeal to Acts 20: 7 for support.



George E. Rice, Ph.D., is the pastor of Triadelphia Seventh-day Adventist Church, Columbia, Maryland.

“On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and he prolonged his speech until midnight.”* This passage, they said, supports Sunday as the Lord’s day on two accounts: (1) Paul and the Christians in Troas had gathered on the first day of the week to celebrate the Eucharist, as is apparent in the words “to break bread”; and (2) Paul was preaching to the assembled believers.

Remembering the discussions of earlier years, I tried to take another look at this text. More recently, however, New Testament scholars have used Acts 20:7 to show that the seeds of changing the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday can be found in the teaching and practice of Paul, while the actual change occurred in the second century.

Syntax of the passage

The two key points of syntax that help our understanding of this verse are a purpose infinitive (*klasai*) and a causal participle (*mellon*). First, the causal participle. The text says that Paul talked with the people “intending to depart on the morrow.” The word “intending” (*mellon*) is a causal participle that gives reason for Paul’s preaching because he was about to depart. No other

reason is given for this sermon, and to impose the change of the Sabbath as the reason Paul preached is to violate the text.

The purpose infinitive *klasai* (to break) gives insight into the reason that the church in Troas convened on that particular first day of the week. They gathered for the purpose of breaking bread. In the New Testament 15 texts speak of the act of breaking bread. Five of them deal directly with the Eucharist (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:24). As for the remaining 10 references, commentators generally agree that nine of them have at least a symbolic connection to the Eucharist meal (Matt. 14:19; 15:36; Mark 8:6, 19; Luke 24:30; Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11). Because of its context, Acts 27:35 is spared from a Eucharistic interpretation.

Breaking bread in the early church

Those who relate the above passages from Acts (except for Acts 27:35) with the Eucharist point to the first appearance of “breaking of bread” (Acts 2:42) as a precedent for understanding the remaining passages. Let us examine the verse: “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” The presence of one comma in the RSV that divides the four ac-

GEORGE E. RICE

tivities of these early Christians into two groups leads the reader to think that teaching and fellowship belong together and that the breaking of bread and prayer belong together. Thus it would be easy to think of the two latter activities as involving the worship experience of the community—the Eucharist and prayers—and the teaching and fellowship as the evangelistic outreach. The KJV, however, divides these four activities into three groups by the use of commas: “the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

The usage of punctuation marks by editors or translators changes the understanding of a text. To Adventists the most striking example of this is Luke 23:43: “And he said to him, ‘Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.’” We recognize that the multitude of scriptural passages that present death as a sleep argue against placing a comma after “you.” Similarly, placement of commas in Acts 2:42 can also confuse its meaning. If the commas are removed from that verse, a chiasm immediately appears to clarify the meaning of the breaking of bread in the early church: (a) teaching; (b) fellowship; (b’) breaking bread; and (a’) prayer.

The apostles’ teaching and prayer (a and a’) were the spiritual activities of the early church, while fellowship and breaking bread were the social activities. Thus Acts 2:42 introduces the support system adopted within the early church after the Day of Pentecost to care for both the spiritual and social needs of new converts.

At the end of Acts 2 we find additional evidence that the breaking of bread relates to social activities, not the Eucharist: “And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts” (Acts 2:46). Obviously breaking bread together was simply sharing a common meal.

Conclusion

Although non-Sabbatarian scholars use Acts 20:7 to defend Sunday as the Lord’s day, the internal evidence of the text does not support such usage. The breaking of bread in Acts 2:42 is a common meal, part of the social support system for converts of the early church. Acts 2:46 and 27:35 also deal with common meals. Based on the weight

of evidence found throughout Acts, the breaking of bread in Acts 20:7, 11 must likewise represent a social event—actually on a Saturday night—with no connection to the Eucharist. There is no support for Sunday observance. ■

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

Buying a new computer

continued from p. 25

speed is the most important element. Today a 33.6 (V.34) data/fax modem is becoming standard. A 28.8 kbps modem (one that transmits 28.8 kilobits of information per second) can transmit data twice as fast as the older 14.4 kbps modems. Most modems today also include the ability to send and receive faxes with your PC.

Illustration 2 (p. 25) shows three basic types of Windows computers and what hardware features you might expect to find at each level.

PC World recently did a survey of its readers on the reliability of hardware and quality of customer service. According to the results of this survey, the most reliable computers with the best service are sold by Micron, Compaq, Digital, NCR, Dell, and Hewlett-Packard. (However, based on his own experience with Dell, the author cannot recommend that company for service.) If you want to be safe, look for a computer that comes from one of these manufacturers. (Packard Bell, a popular machine at discount stores, was in the Not Recommended group.)

So if you have not purchased a new computer yet, and need one, this is the year to do it. Prices have dropped dramatically during the past 12 months—system RAM is as low as \$5 per MB, hard disk prices have dropped to an unheard-of 10 cents per MB (or \$200 for a 2-gig hard drive). And Pentium Pro CPUs have dropped 60 percent in price in less than a year, from \$1,325 per CPU to only \$562 per CPU—in lots of 1,000.

Believe it or not, by waiting until now, you have already made the smartest decision in buying a new PC. Today you can purchase far more computer and spend far less money than at any time in PC history. ■



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Are you trustworthy? Recently I sat down with a group of colleagues to discuss how to build trust. We divided our work

into two topics: the qualities of a trustworthy individual and the qualities of a trustworthy organization. Characteristics that we believe are hallmarks of a trustworthy church leader include:

Authenticity. What you see is what you get. Trustworthy leaders live what they profess. Although they are not perfect, nor do they claim to be, there is little dissonance between what the leader proclaims and how the leader interacts with his or her family, colleagues, congregation, and community.

Keeping promises. A trustworthy leader's word is better than a contract. Such leaders may make few promises, but fulfillment and follow-through are assured. Trustworthy individuals do not lead followers to conclude that benefits will accrue from the relationship that cannot be sustained at a later time.

Maintaining confidentiality. Trustworthy leaders keep their word, and they keep your confidences. The higher the trustworthiness, the greater the assurance that entrusted information will be completely protected. With the exception of behavior that endangers another individual, trustworthy leaders reveal nothing that has been reported to them by those who expect their confidence to be protected.

Wisdom. Leaders whose counsel is derived from experience will be trusted by those who follow their leadership. Discretion that weighs the difference between the genuine and spurious, along with providing guidance based on sound judgment, builds confidence in followers.

Vulnerability. Followers want their leaders to be accessible in more than appearances. Leaders who are comfortable with self-disclosure about their own struggles and challenges will inspire their

Whom do you trust?

JAMES A. CRESS

followers to press on when difficult times come. On the other hand, those who try to maintain a facade of invulnerability will be considered phony.

Conveying trust in return for trust. One of the most effective ways to elicit trust from followers is to entrust them to act in a trustworthy manner. While a leader needs to make some decisions, many options need to be delegated to followers to train and empower their own progress. Furthermore, leaders who refuse to second-guess their followers—even when they make a nonessential mistake—will increase their own trust along with enhancing the capabilities of those whom they are training.

Avoiding hasty judgments. A leader who acts deliberately after weighing all relevant facts and who avoids rash actions

Leaders
should clearly and
completely love that which
they are leading.

based on faulty or incomplete information will garner a great harvest of trust. Sometimes quick actions are necessary, but more often a few days invested in reflection or fact-finding will only strengthen and affirm the ultimate conclusion.

Providing all needed and relevant information. Trustworthy leaders trust others. Recognizing that knowledge is power, they share all relevant information, and thus engender trust in themselves.

Full disclosure and open discussion build an atmosphere of trust and generate widespread support for the decisions that are implemented.

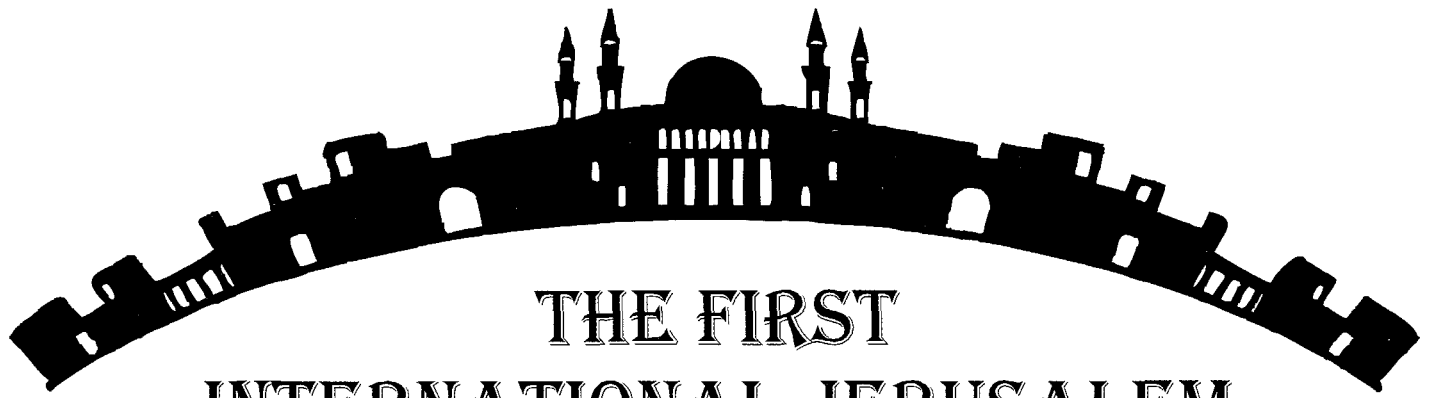
Qualifications. Followers want their leaders to possess both academic and practical expertise. While educational degrees do not guarantee wisdom, a know-nothing attitude that mocks scholarship says more about the lack of the critic than about the formal process of preparation for excellence. A trustworthy leader will prepare professionally and strive for ongoing growth through continuing education and varied experiences.

Loving the church. Leaders should clearly and completely love that which they are leading. The best interest and confidence in the ultimate triumph of God's love will permeate both the atmosphere and the actions of trustworthy leaders. Their consistent question must be "What is more important for God's cause?" rather than "What is more important for me?"

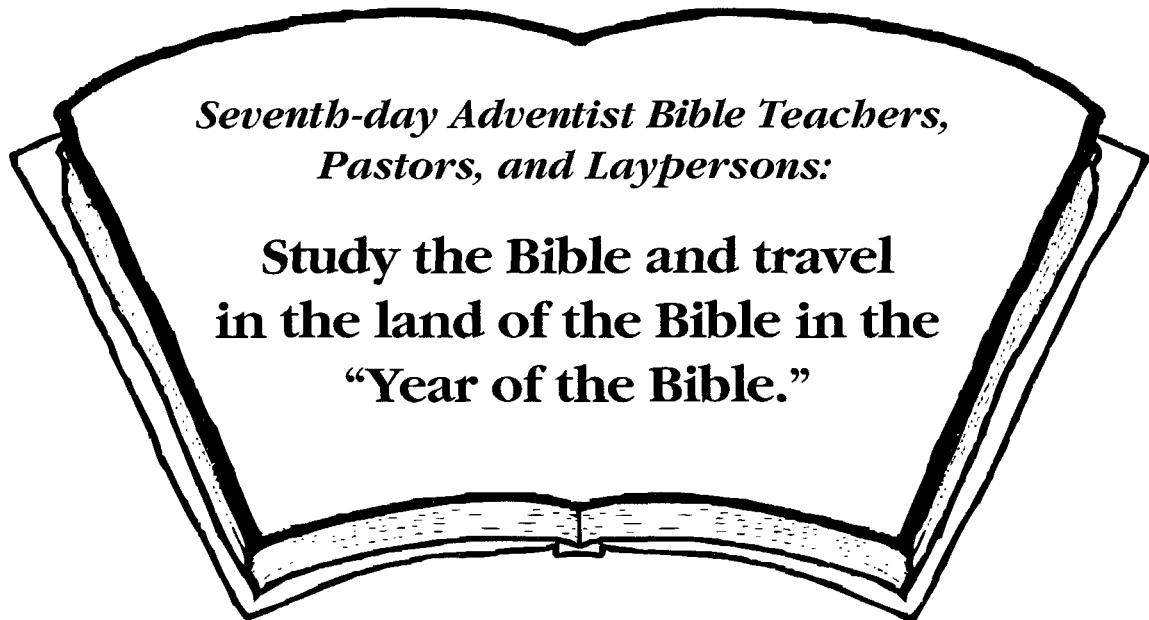
Associating with those who are to trust. When Jesus wanted to train the 12 disciples, He chose to spend time with them. His leadership lessons were conveyed more through fellowship and reflection than through didactic instruction. Thus when Jesus was ready to commission the disciples into their own active ministry, they were able to "do what He had done" because they had been with Him when He had done it.

Listening actively. Perhaps nothing builds trust more readily than leaders who carefully listen to the ideas and opinions of their followers and who demonstrate confidence in this process by paraphrased feedback and eventual utilization of good suggestions.

Believing people are more important than agendas. All leaders want to see their own ideas implemented. Trustworthy leaders demonstrate that their followers are as important as any agenda item and thus ensure the loyalty and active participation of their followers in the implementation of what they wish to accomplish. ■



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BOOKS

It's My Choice, Junior Baptismal Guide, by Steve Case. Review and Herald Pub. Assn., Hagerstown, Md., 1996.

The book has many strengths. It has youth paraphrasing Scripture as an important way to help them understand the message. It has a worksheet that zeros in on personal commitment. It includes a Family Talk Back Sheet for each lesson to help make the topic relevant today. And it involves the parents in the study.

But the biggest plus is the teacher's manual. It is organized and easy to use, full of detail and yet easily adaptable to one's teaching style. The illustrations, explanations, and discussion guides reach the young person. It makes sense!—Norma S. Osborn, youth pastor, Sligo Church, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Timeless Healing: The Power and Biology of Belief, by Herbert Benson, M.D., with Marg Stark. Scribner, New York, 1996, 339 pp.

At the crossroads of medicine and theology, where clergy and health professionals meet people in crisis, few

books guide and inform helpers as Herbert Benson's *Timeless Healing*. Benson, a physician, views mind, soul, and body as inseparable. He details neural and immune events comprising remembered wellness, remembered threat, and relaxation responses—each a type of belief. Benson suggests that people are “wired for God” genetically and that “faith in an invincible and infallible force” carries healing power and is the “only long-term solace.” Benson identifies hymns, prayers, and meditation on God's love as powerful catalysts to physiological healing and shows how to use them with patients. The author lists numerous studies of how spirituality affects health.—Carol June Hooker, R.N., M.S., parish nurse, Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church, Takoma Park, Maryland.

SHOPTALK

Church officers' dedication and commitment day

As a spiritual leader of my congregation, I find it extremely significant to have an annual day of commitment at the beginning of the year in which the whole congregation gets involved in dedicating the new church officers.

On this day all church officers elected for the year are prayed for, and they take the following pledge:

1. I believe the work I have been assigned is the work of God, and it is my duty by the power of God to do my best to glorify God and edify the church.

2. I do surrender my life now to be used by God as His instrument in His work, supporting His work by my spiritual gifts, materials, and time.

3. It is my duty to respect, unite, and support fellow workers, praying for them as we work for the common goal of fulfilling the gospel commission.

4. It is my duty to report progress, success, and plans of the work I have been entrusted.—Daniel Kiptoo Bett, pastor, South-Rift Mission church, Kericho, Kenya.

Next Step youth ministry

Next Step youth ministry is holding training seminars in more than 15 North American locations this autumn.

This marks the third year that youth and young adult ministries consultants have packaged a practical one-day training seminar for youth, young adult, and early teen leaders. Many conference youth directors have made this their annual training event for their volunteers. For \$39 participants receive a host of program ideas and materials, training for implementation, and networking with others in their area.

To find out where the closest seminar will be for you and/or your youth leaders, call 1-800-440-1670, or E-mail 74617.335@CompuServe.com, or contact your conference youth director.

Magabook

Want to get the children involved in your church program? Do you have families who are behind in their school tuition payments or who can't afford to send their children to church school?

Last summer in St. Louis we ran a student literature evangelism program (called Magabook) for our kids 10 years of age and older that really helped our church school families and had many “up” sides to it.

Starting with six children (never more than nine at once) ages 10-13 going out just 10-12 evening hours a week, the group sold more than \$10,000 worth of health, message, and children's books in 10 weeks! They averaged better than \$10 per hour in scholarships earned (more than \$6,000 combined)! The youngest sold more than \$2,000 worth of books and earned \$1,300, which more than paid for the entire school year.

Some obvious benefits: 1. Parents were better able to afford Christian education. One family with a child in college, one in academy, and one in grade school said they could not have made it financially without the more than \$900 their 11-year-old earned. 2. Students learned valuable

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business and people skills. 3. Many seeds of truth were sown. Names from the sales receipts were kept in a database, enabling the students to call back later and give NET '96 invitations to those who had purchased the *Great Controversy* and other message books from them.

You could do this where you live, no matter how small your school, or whether or not you have one! It really works! For further information, call Pastor Doug Woods at 319-584-0827.

A Communion experience with a difference

We transformed our church balcony into an upper room experience. Prior to the Communion service, groups rotated through Sabbath School rooms to discuss and meditate on different objects of the Crucifixion: hammer, wood, and nails, a game of dice, purple cloth, vinegar, thorns, etc. Elders guided the groups with Scripture texts and thought questions. We concluded the evening with a simple agape supper—and a thank-you to all the helpers!—Ingo Sorke, pastor, Highland Hills SDA Church, San Antonio, Texas.

Bible instructor training course

One of the most effective methods you can use to revitalize a dying church or to enhance a growing church is to involve the laity in a meaningful witnessing program. I have found the Bible instructor training course to be an invaluable aid in preparing my congregation for active participation in Bible study. This flexible teaching resource, complete with well-designed teacher and student manuals, uses a very simple approach to empower the congregation to give Bible studies to friends and family—our best candidates for church membership. It is inspirational and practical, Christ-centered, and emphasizes “sharing” rather than “converting.” It is designed for five one-hour sessions to be used in a small-group setting, such as a Sabbath school class.

I used these materials in my church with a class size of six. After the fourth

session this small group was giving more than 50 active Bible studies! Some of those receiving Bible studies have now been baptized, and others are attending church on Sabbath morning. It has added a new spark of life to our growing congregation.

To order the teacher's manual, send \$25, along with your name and address, to: The Bible Instructor's Training Class, P.O. Box 1527, Elizabeth City, North Carolina 27909; or call 919-264-4428.—John Seaman, pastor, Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

REPORT

Conversion through literature evangelism

I am a pastor in charge of nine churches and three Sabbath schools. Before joining the ministry, I worked as a student literature evangelist in Nairobi.

One day I visited the family of Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Sang. Mr. Nelson and his wife, Christine, were devout members of a church that ridiculed their brother, Mr. Serrem, for becoming a Seventh-day Adventist.

During my visit Mr. Nelson ordered *Family Matters*, which he declined on delivery because of financial problems. However, he took *In Search of the Treasure of Faith* because (1) it was cheaper and (2) he had an interest in knowing Islamic beliefs. After he paid for it, I offered a prayer and left.

After a year in college I went back to Nairobi, only to discover that Mr. and Mrs. Nelson were Sabbathkeepers and in a baptismal class. In my joy I went to congratulate them for their decision, and Mr. Nelson delightedly narrated the story of how he found the truth of the Sabbath in that book, which led to the conversion of the whole family. They have both been baptized and received into the Upper Kabete Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nairobi. May God be praised for His intervention!—Kennedy Rubansi Arisa, pastor, Nyamira Conference, Kenya, Africa. ■

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