The Ministry of the Elder
Here we are, standing at the door of 2008. I don’t know about you, but I am looking forward to the New Year. It isn’t that 2007 was bad; in fact, it was a great year for me for many reasons. My older son got married. I celebrated 25 years of marriage with Raquel. I wrote a book. Even so, I am looking forward to the New Year because it is an opportunity for us as a church to build on some of the things that were missed this past year.

Why is it important for the church to be successful in 2008? Because every day neighbors, family members, and friends are dying without Jesus. They are depending on us to share Jesus with them. How? Let’s look at Acts 2:42.

Make prayer a priority
When Peter preached his great sermon on the day of Pentecost, 3,000 people were converted; this was the beginning of the church. One of the things that the early church did was devote itself to prayer. For example, in Acts 6, when the church leaders were burdened with caring for the physical needs of the believers, what did they do? “But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (verse 4). The church leaders spent more time in prayer.

Prayer is one of the keys to success. Without prayer, we are without power. Jesus spent a lot of His time in ministry praying to His Father. Was Jesus too busy? Yes. He was too busy for prayer? No. Are you too busy for prayer? No, never! Our success as spiritual leaders requires us to make prayer a central part of our lives. I hope that we all will commit to making prayer a priority.

Build on the foundation of God’s Word
Look at Acts 2:42 again. It says that the church was devoting itself to the apostles’ teaching. This was the Word of God. We must be people of the Word! The Word must guide our lives and decisions. The church must be built on the foundation of the Word. The Word of God is our authority. When we step outside of it, we have no authority.

One of the keys to a successful Christian life is knowing the Word of God and putting it into practice. God gives the Word to us for our benefit. God gives us standards of conduct for our own good, not because He is a killjoy.

Build a strong sense of community
Our Acts passage says that the believers devoted themselves to fellowship. What does that mean? The word “fellowship” means to “have something in common” or “to strive for a common goal.” It also means to be one in action.

Did you know that many people start coming to church because they want to connect with other people? We need to build a strong sense of community with people when they come to our churches. We want them to belong. When they feel a sense of community, they will want to believe as we do, and they will want to behave as God wants them to.

If people feel welcome in our church, they will eventually believe and behave. I believe our church does a great job of that. Our members are wonderful and loving. Let us commit to spending more time together this year.

Have a vision for what God can do
This last key is not in the text, but I think it is very important. As you look at your life right now, what do you see?

How would you explain Jesus’ relationships with women? Why did He have only men among His 12 disciples?

Women—and women were the first to proclaim the.

These factors positioned the early Christian church as a far more egalitarian movement than previously seen.

Why does Paul seem so anti-women, particularly in the church context, with statements against women in ministry or leadership?

Do the Levitical laws about women’s monthly impurity and the husband’s right to control his wife have any relevance to this discussion?

Do the Old Testament priesthood as a type of minister in the Christian church take us straight back to the Israelites’ sanctuary and in the temple?

First, the apostle Paul—far from being a male chauvinist—has a tremendous respect for women. He leaves us with the words found in Hebrews 13:7: “Submit yourselves one to another in love.”

Next, we have to realize the cultural background of the times in which the Bible was written.

The purpose of the Fall—we should note that the purpose of the Fall—was to counter these curses by being a blessing. This is clear in the call of Abraham, the father of the people of God, in Genesis 12:1-3, where blessings are first mentioned after the curses of the Fall. As a church, we are to exemplify the original gender equality established by God at Creation, before the Fall.

The curses describe the results of sin. They are consequences, not necessarily divine commands for what we are to do, in a selfishly dominated world.

As Christians we believe God has spoken through his Word as a whole, and through specific parts of the Bible: Are women somehow precluded from ministry and leadership because of Eve’s role in the first sin or from God’s specific “curses”?

Throughout the Bible, why is God generally described as “God of man” and “God of woman” in ministry and the church? An understanding of gender relationships and God as a Father, not a God who is unknowable or inaccessible, is critical to understanding the character of God.

The New Testament of the Bible is a first-hand account of the words and actions of Jesus Christ and his service in the heavenly sanctuary.

This is crucial to the self-identity of the Seventh-day Adventist movement because of uncertainty about the exact background. Misunderstandings of Paul’s views abound, due to lack of attention to Paul’s actual statements.

The cursed languages of sin, sexuality, and power are among the most difficult sayings in the New Testament, because of the exact nature of the new Israel He was about to establish, patterned on the model of the 12 tribes of Israel, the sons of Jacob.

Jesus naturally chose male disciples as a symbol of the new Israel. He was about to establish, patterned on the model of the 12 tribes of Israel, the sons of Jacob.
that we can organise the church accordingly. The New Testament believes in organisation, but organisation is not an end in itself. In the Catholic Church, for example, the church structure and organisation is regarded as divinely ordained. But, as Adventists, we do not find that the New Testament prescribes only one type of organisation for the church. Organisation serves the message and the mission. The specific way we organise depends on the need to present the message in the best possible way—and that may change.

Further, the specific functions we attach to the various offices of the church are functions we as a corporate body have decided to delegate to these positions. They are only rarely explicitly mentioned in the New Testament. Elders are not said by way of office to possess any “teaching authority” as at times claimed. The New Testament provides no specific example of the ordination of ministers in our sense of the word, and we have no example of pastors or ministers either baptising, performing the Lord’s Supper or marrying, to mention some of today’s functions. These are functions the church delegates to certain people for the sake of order.

In short, the so-called “headship/father role of the elder” is, biblically speaking, non-existent. It is a phantom, a construct, having no textual foundation, and it is based on a Catholic presupposition of one extreme challenges and peculiar problems. He wrote one prescribed divine model of organisation. This question is addressed in several Bible passages. First Timothy 3:2 says, “A bishop (elder) then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach, and goes on to say, “Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.” Titus 1:6, 7 agrees, saying, “Appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination…” These three passages have been interpreted by some to indicate that an elder or deacon must be a married man.

The issue is not the elder or deacon’s marital status, but his moral and sexual purity. This qualification heads the list because leaders are most vulnerable in this area. Some people think that “husband of but one wife” means that deacons must be married. But that is not correct. In Greek, the phrase “husband of one wife” literally reads “one-woman man.” For a married man to be considered for a position of church leadership, he must be committed to his wife. This qualification is speaking of fidelity in marriage and sexual purity; it is not a requirement of marriage. If it were, a man would have to be married and have children, because the second half of 1 Timothy 3:12 states that he “must manage his children and his household well.” We should interpret this to mean that if a man is married, he must be faithful to his wife; if he has children, he must manage them well.

Some think this requirement excludes single men from church leadership. But if that were Paul’s intent, he would have disqualified himself (1 Cor. 7:8). A one-woman man is one totally devoted to his wife, maintaining singular devotion, affection, and sexual purity to her in both thought and deed. To violate this is to forfeit blamelessness and to no longer be “above reproach” (Titus 1:6, 7). The apostle Paul praises the state of singleness because it enables more faithful service to the Lord (1 Cor. 7:32-35). Why would Paul restrict men from church leadership positions when he believes that “an unmarried man is concerned about the Lord’s affairs, how he can please the Lord” (verse 32)? In the first nine verses of this chapter, Paul establishes that both marriage and singleness are good and right before the Lord. An elder or deacon may be either married or single, as long as he meets the qualifications of godliness as outlined in 1 Timothy and Titus.

Some others have argued that the New Testament compares the church with a family and the elders with being that elders—and ministers—have to be male. How are we to assess this argument?

The first major problem with the argument is that the New Testament texts never say so. Nowhere in the New Testament is the elder called the head. The text about headship in Ephesians 5:23 speaks about marriage—and certainly, we would not call the husband/head of his wife her “father.” Likewise, no New Testament text calls the elder “father.” Jesus as the head of the church is not compared to a father. He is our older brother and leaders of the church are rather older siblings taking responsibility. Indeed, we are advised not to call human leaders our “father” (see Matthew 23:8-10).

Second, though the whole Bible compares the people of God and His church to a family, the metaphor of the family is not used in such a consistent manner
WHAT IS PREACHING?

What is preaching all about anyway? The question has been asked again and again, and has been answered in many ways. But when you have been ordained as a local elder and you realize that one of your responsibilities is to preach a sermon, when the pastor is not present on Sabbath morning or Wednesday evening or on other occasions when preaching is called for, then quite suddenly the question is your question. Preaching becomes critically relevant for you.

To begin, let us consider the “what” of preaching. It is imperative that we do this, because our attitude toward preaching is really more important than how we preach. The “what” should cause us to take preaching more seriously and give better attention to the “how.” In Thessalonians 1, Paul makes a significant statement as to what preaching is all about: “For you remember our labor and toil, brethren; we worked night and day, that we might . . . for you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers” (1 Thes. 2:9-13, RSV, emphasis supplied).

When Paul preached the gospel, he was not preaching the word of men but the word of God. This suggests that gospel preaching not only communicates truth about God and the Christian way of life, but it is also a phenomenon, a holy event, in which the same word that is at work in the heart is heard by the believer. There is here something living and vital, something dynamic and moving. In his book The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching, Robert H. Mounce asserts that in preaching, God reveals Himself so that it can be said, “Preaching is revelation”—the revelation of God.

We may think that point needs some modification because of its relationship to the whole doctrine of revelation, but we must not lose its force with respect to the importance of preaching. Note what Ellen G. White has written in Testimonies to the Church:

“Many do not look upon preaching as Christ’s appointed means of instructing His people and therefore always to be highly prized. They do not feel that the sermon is the word of the Lord to them and estimate it by the value of the truths spoken; but they judge it as they would the speech of a lawyer at the bar—by the argumentative skill displayed and the power and beauty of the language. The minister is not infallible, but God honored him by making him His messenger. If you listen to him as though he were not commissioned from above, you will not respect his words nor receive them as the message of God. We are never to forget that Christ teaches through His servants” (5:298, 300).

Have we lost this concept of preaching? Do we still consider the sermon the “word of the Lord”? Do we believe that in preaching, Christ is teaching His people through His servants? Is the Holy Spirit present and active in the sermon? Do God and man come together? Something wonderful can happen if preaching is God’s appointed means of saving souls. Should we approach the pulpit with the expectation that it will happen?

I miss the attitude of reverence for the pulpit that I learned as a boy. I was never allowed to walk carelessly behind the pulpit, to stand in the pulpit for “the fun of it.” I was taught that it was dangerous to “fool” with sacred things, and the pulpit was one of these sacred things. It is from the pulpit that God speaks to men. It is in sermons that God and man come together.

In his book The Art of Illustrating Sermons, Ian Macpherson tells the following story, which has some bearing upon what we are considering:

“Picture an old lady living in London about the middle of last century. Her hero, we will suppose, is the Duke of Wellington, and when we first see her, she is sitting in her drawing room, a copy of his biography open in her hands. She is reading the account of the Battle of Waterloo, and as she reflects on the role the duke played in that famous engagement, and on all that the victory he then won has meant for her as an Englishwoman, she is overwhelmed with gratitude and devotion to him.

Every now and again she lifts her eyes from the page and looks up at an etching hanging on a wall of the apartment. It is a pen-and-ink drawing of Apsley House, Wellington’s London residence; and as she gazes at it, she says to herself: ‘How wonderful to think that the great duke lives there!’ Then, all at once, her reverie is broken by a sharp rap on the door. She rises to respond to it and, to forget that Christ teaches through His servants”

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As someone who works with Pastor Jan Paulsen’s “Let’s Talk” initiative for our church television channel, I hear many questions and comments about the church and its leadership. Young people complain that they are not allowed to be involved to the extent that they want to be, they worry they are not helping enough in their communities, and they wonder if their youth groups are getting the gospel foundation they need or want. They worry that when it is time for them to be leaders, they will not have the experience they need. However, I cannot remember even one email complaining that young people are not being entertained enough or that their meetings and events aren’t fun enough. Young people want and need to lead, and for that they must have more than just entertainment in their youth meetings.

So what can we do to give our young people the foundation they need to stay in church, to be active members, and to become effective leaders?

First, we have to put Christ at the front of whatever we do with young people. Yes, some kids may groan when we want to have a meaningful vespers and prayer before the Saturday-night or Wednesday-night activity. We may be afraid that they will feel we are pushing the Bible and Jesus down their throats. But isn’t learning about Jesus the whole point? Didn’t their parents send them to youth church or AY for that very reason—so that they could have a Christian experience? We cannot be afraid to give it to them. They will remember and use what they are taught. They will lead the church one day, and it’s up to us to make sure they have a strong foundation of experience and commitment to do it well.

Second, we have to get our youth involved in the life of their church—even when we think they don’t want to be. They do. At the very least, they appreciate being asked. We have to have faith that they can complete the tasks that we give them. Young people often complain that their churches do not trust them to take part in the service. When I was growing up, I always appreciated my church’s willingness to make sure that young people were involved in the different aspects of the church service and church life. We were invited to read scripture, serve as deacons, lead the song service, and pray. Even when we acted like we were too cool to be involved, we each felt appreciated and welcomed in the life of our church. This is important. If young people have invested in the life of the church, they are less likely to leave it. They will also build an amazing foundation and be able to lead the church when they become adults.

Finally, we have to get our young people involved in their local and global communities. Young people need to realize that when Christ said to “love your neighbor as yourself,” He was not just talking about the person sitting next to them in the church pew. He meant the person who cannot come to church because he or she is too ill to leave the house. He meant the people who have to sleep on the street because they cannot afford housing. He meant that everyone is our neighbor, our brother, our sister. Our duties do not encompass just church life—they also include the communities around us. When young people are involved in their church, and their church is involved in the community, they will see a direct connection between Christ’s love for them and for others. It also allows the people in the community to see Christ’s love through our young people, to experience Christ’s compassion not through words, but through actions.

The youth church experience should be fun. There is nothing wrong with Saturday night games and pizza parties. But why can’t being involved in the church and community also be fun? Why should fun in church always have to come with an exciting gimmick? Our goal as leaders is to train our young people to take part in our church. They will lead the church one day, and it’s up to us to make sure they have a strong foundation of experience and commitment to do it well.

Hironori Takahashi has been a local church elder from Yokohama in Tokyo, Japan for the last 10 years. He works as a professional architect. He is also the president of the Elders Association for the Japan Union Conference. According to him, the church in Japan is facing a difficult situation. The early evangelization focused on reaching out to individuals but neglecting the family. Although certain areas of major cities may have this tendency to individualism, in general Japanese society is a family oriented society and it is still very strong with attachment and bonding relations. He suggests approaching Japanese society with the gospel through families and also young people.
MAKING TIME
FOR THE ESSENTIAL

The word that could best describe life these days is “pressure.” We all try to overcome this modern-day problem of running against the clock in an attempt to accomplish all our tasks. And what we hear so often today is, “I don’t have time!” Lack of time ends up being an excuse for everything. King Solomon was right when he wrote, “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven” (Eccl. 3:1).

Many parents today suffer from “Weekend Parenting Syndrome.” They spend so much time at work and on necessary tasks that they rarely look after their children except on weekends. We make a big mistake when we do not invest enough time in our families, because time is everything in a relationship—with your spouse, with your children, or with God.

We need to remember this important principle: Give time to whom time is due. The problem today is that we face a chronic problem when it comes to our priorities. We establish so many objectives and goals that often we fail in what is essential.

It is important to manage our time. We can satisfy significant needs within our families when we spend time praying together, developing faith, and having family worship.

Studies have shown that only 20 percent of Christian families make a consistent time for worship in their homes. This research reflects a crisis of spiritual leadership in the home. If we do not take the responsibility for the spiritual condition of our children, who will?

Today more than ever, we should take the initiative to redirect our priorities to what is essential—raising our children “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

One of the best things we can give our children is a solid spiritual heritage. Family worship is one way to provide that. Therefore, restoring the family altar needs to be a priority at the beginning of each new year. However, investing in family worship and making this practice meaningful requires some consideration.

The first element of family worship is prayer. Teach your children how to pray spontaneously. Get a notebook and write down prayer requests and answered prayers. This educational tool will make worship time interesting and awaken the interest of your children.

The second element of family worship is the Bible. When praying, we talk to God, but as we read the Bible, we allow God to talk to us. In my family, we developed a habit of reading the Bible, memorizing texts, and marking the verses we liked most. We also varied our readings through the use of different Bible versions. This allowed us to study the Bible using a vocabulary my sons understood.

Another element of family worship is music. A great tragedy these days is that in some places, children no longer sing. Take time to learn hymns and choruses. Sing them together. Singing and praising transforms worship into a happy and interactive time.

Devotional time is the fourth element in family worship. Many books, hymnals, CDs, and illustrations are excellent tools. Most of these resources are easy to find and will help in the learning process.

A meaningful family worship should also include the following characteristics:

- Regularity: When you choose to have worship is not the most important aspect; regularity is. I know families who have worship in the morning, while others have it in the evening. The important thing is to find a time when the entire family can be together at a scheduled, regular time.
- Be brief, but don’t hurry. Some people think that family worship should last an hour and a half. This is not true. A few minutes well-used will have a powerful impact. Also, it is important to remember that children—and even adults—have short attention spans.
- Informality. Everyone participates, and everyone’s needs are met.
- Variety. Avoid dull routine. For many children and teenagers, worship is boring because it is always the same. Plan for variety, perhaps a different program for worship each day. For instance:
  - Sunday: Discuss what you learned on Sabbath.
  - Monday: Plan for the new week and put your trust in God.
  - Tuesday: Share a missionary story or a current fact that makes everyone think about the time they are living in.
  - Wednesday: Prayer day.
  - Thursday: Talk about family members and pray for them.
  - Friday: Use a Promise Box. Include preparation for Sabbath.
- Ask God to revive your family. When it happens, this revival will surely affect the church. And believe me, this starts when you and I establish a value system, a system of priorities with the clear objective of meeting Jesus soon with our families.

Raquel Arrais
General Conference Associate Women’s Ministries Director

“...For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.

(Eccl. 3:1)
HOW TO FIND SUCCESS IN 2008

Joshua 1:1-16 and Deuteronomy 34:9

Through long years of preparation, and finally a burning-bush experience, God called Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. We read in Deuteronomy 34 that at the conclusion of Moses’ life, God had finished preparing Joshua, Moses’ greatest general, to become the leader of Israel. Joshua had been faithful to God and to Moses’ leadership, and in Deuteronomy 34 and Joshua 1, we see the beginning of a new chapter (or could we say calendar?) in the history of Israel.

For 40 years Moses had led the Children of Israel. He led them through the plagues of Egypt. He led them to safety at the first Passover. He led them out of Egypt and across the Red Sea. He led them to water in the desert, to food of manna and quail. He led them to Mt. Sinai and to the law of God. For 40 years he did his best to lead his flock according to God’s will. And now Moses’ time on earth was complete. For the children of Israel, Moses’ death would mark an end of an era and signify a new beginning with a new leader. Like Israel, we stand at the brink of a new beginning, a new year, 2008.

Moses’ death was a turning point. Now God was ready for Joshua to lead the children of Israel to fulfill the covenant He had made with Abraham decades earlier: bringing the Israelites to a land of their own. He intended for them to have countries, descendants and a future in which the whole world would be blessed. God promised Joshua success. And in this section of Scripture, God tells him how to obtain success. Some people might define success as “a favorable course of termination of anything attempted; the gaining of position, wealth, fame, etc.” However, for the Christian, success means being obedient to God’s will. (Christian definitions and worldly definitions differ.) We all want to enjoy success in 2008. As we prepare for a happy new year, let us look closely at five principles for success contained in the first chapter of Joshua.

1. UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF GOD. Moses had been Israel’s faithful leader. He had been a good steward of the task God had given him. Now God tells Joshua exactly what to do: “You and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give them” (verses 1, 2). However, Joshua did not argue with God as Moses had done 40 years earlier nor did the thousands of Jews that he was to lead.

2. HAVE FAITH IN GOD’S PROMISES. Look at verses 2, 3, and 4 to see how God tells Israel and Joshua exactly what He is going to give them. A map. A global positioning system. Today some countries refuse to acknowledge God’s promise of the land God had pledged. They threaten, bargain, fight, and die in trying to destroy Israel. But God keeps His promises.

3. BE ASSURED OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD. God promised Joshua, “As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you” (verse 5). Jesus makes the same promises to Christians today. God the Holy Spirit will live in us and move in us and give us reason for being (Acts 17:29). Remember, we are to live by faith, not by feeling. We rely on God’s Word.

4. HAVE COURAGE AND ACCEPT GOD’S POWER. Years after Moses, Joshua, and other Bible patriarchs died, the examples they set continued to inspire others. Much of David’s courage came from being taught that God had blessed the obedience, commitment, and devotion of those who trusted Him. He knew that God could accomplish great things when His people relied completely on Him. This courage helped David kill a bear, a lion, and the giant Goliath. It helped him cope with the backslidden traits of King Saul. It helped David to be a good king and to seek forgiveness when he sinned. David needed this courage when his infant died and when his grown son Absalom turned against him and tried to kill him.

Before Joshua became the leader of Israel, he and Caleb served as spies, with 10 other men. But only Joshua and Caleb had faith to believe that God could fulfill His promise; the other spies were afraid of the giants in the Promised Land. What giants are you anticipating in 2008? The God who was faithful to Joshua will be faithful to you in 2008. “Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” (verse 9).

5. PAY ATTENTION AND DO EXACTLY WHAT GOD COMMANDS. “Do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go” (verse 7). In 1 John, we are reminded that if we walk in the light, we will have fellowship with Jesus, and our sins will be cleansed. Do you remember this chorus, “Trust and obey, for there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus; but trust and obey?” To be happy, we must walk with the Lord, not behind or ahead of Him; not to His right or left, but in the narrow way that leads to life. Most of our world is traveling the broad way that leads to destruction. We must live lives of holiness and carefully walk the highway of holiness. We must worship and respect God enough to pay exact attention to His plans.

CONCLUSION

In verses 16-17, we read that Joshua gave God’s message to Israel. They submitted to the will of God by following Joshua’s leadership. Joshua and his people were successful. God gave them the Promised Land. To prosper and to have success in 2008, we must submit our wills and surrender our all to God. God wants total commitment. When we give Him that, He will fill us with His Spirit (see Deuteronomy 33:9), and we will have joy as He gives us success and prosperity. I want to do God’s will in 2008. What about you?
HIDDEN SINS, DAMAGED LIVES

Joshua 7

Nobody likes problems. The problem is that problems and struggles make us more dependent on God. They force us to turn to him for guidance, for wisdom, for love, for prayer. When my body is broken by illness or injury, I ask the Lord for healing through the Body of Christ. Sometimes, I have felt like a prisoner of my own struggle. I have been reminded to turn to the Lord for relief.

On the other hand, there is also a danger in success. Success may breed carelessness, arrogance, and a spirit of complacency. The book of Joshua illustrates this truth. God had helped Israel to defeat the kings of ‘Shon and Og, established Joshua as the new leader, stepped the flow of the flood-swollen Jordan River so that the Israelites could cross on dry ground, and finally defeated the powerful city of Jericho by a miraculous lifting of its fortified walls. All of this was a sign to the nation of Israel that God was with them. One victory after another had bolstered their faith and confidence. Here is the first lesson we need to learn.

I. WE’RE EXTREMELY VULNERABLE TO TEMPTATION IN MOMENTS OF APPARENT SUCCESS.

The next city on the Israelites’ agenda was A. Joshua sent men to spy out A, and they returned with the message (7:3). Joshua was a weak city. This would be an easy battle. But look what happened. About 3,000 men came out to fight, but they were outnumbered by the army of A, who killed about 36 of them. They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries and struck them down on the slopes (7:4-5). Notice the sequence of events. The people of the heart met and became like water (verse 5). Joshua fell down and prayed to God (verse 6). Read Joshua’s prayer (verses 7-9).

Sometimes, we can be victorious over some of the strongest and most powerful temptations imaginable, but we allow the weakest, smallest, most insignificant temptations to eventually become our downfall. The defeat at A brought Israel to their knees before God. Their confidence in God, which had produced their earlier success and victory, had all too quickly turned to self-confidence.

Notice God’s reply to Joshua’s appeal (verse 10). Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? God wants you to respect his discouragement and pessimistic attitude. God had given victory after victory to the Israelites, and after one defeat, they were down on their knees. Do you know somebody like that? We need to hear God’s words to Joshua again: “Stand up! What are you doing down on your face?”

Yesterday’s victory is not an assurance of victory today but one defeat doesn’t signify the end. Get up, brush yourself off, and find the reason for the defeat. That’s what God was trying to tell Joshua. There was a reason for the defeat (verse 11). “Israel has sinned.” God doesn’t wink at sin. Sin corrupts. Jesus warned His disciples what is done in private has a public effect.

II. THE DISOBEDIENCE OF ONE INDIVIDUAL CAN HAVE A DEVASTATING EFFECT ON THE WHOLE COMMUNITY.

To uncover the identity of the one who sinned, God told Joshua to line up the people, tribe by tribe, family by family, household by household, man by man. Sanctification and purification were needed. The household of God had been dirtied, and it was time for the mess to be cleaned up.

Achan was eventually indicted as the culprit (verse 20). Achan epitomizes the dark side of every individual and every community. All of us have within us the potential to fail and fall hard. Achan admitted to having stolen three things that were supposed to have been destroyed or turned over to the Lord’s temple: a beautiful Babylonian coat, 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels.

Notice the way Achan describes the sequence of events that led up to his sin. 1. “I saw . . .” (verse 21). This is the beginning of all sin. 2. “I coveted them . . .” (verse 21). There’s no doubt that Achan didn’t need any of those things. What would he do with them? He couldn’t use them. Achan said, “I saw . . . I coveted . . . I took . . . They are hidden . . .” This is the sequence of events that we all follow when we fall into sin.

A much deeper truth about Achan’s sin is also evident: disobedience to God is a malignancy that has serious effects on the whole community of believers. Thirty-six men lost their lives because of Achan’s sin. The nation was defeated in battle with A because of Achan’s sin.

Every person wants to be successful. We often measure our success by how well we are. We measure how much success is often based on a worldly standard rather than a godly standard. Success by the world’s standard often means luxury, wealth and possessions, achievement, and fame. If we measure our lives by the world’s standards, we will have an inaccurate and incomplete view of whether or not we’re successful. God’s standard of success is nothing like the world’s standard.

God’s formula for success works for every person in every situation, whether at school, at work, with our families, or in our churches. The pathway to success cannot be traveled by anyone who does not practice God’s formula for success. These principles are found in Joshua 1:6-9.

I. BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS (VERSES 6, 7, 9)

Notice the number of times God brings this command before Joshua (vs. 6, 7, 9).

What is courage? Courage has several synonyms: bravado, valor, fearlessness, heroism, confidence, nerve.

Courage is one of the most important things we need to notice about courage. You will never witness courage in someone who is at ease. Courage is seen in the person whose back is against the wall, in the odds are against them, when the pressure is on, when the flaming arrows are close, when the pain is intense, when the battle is at hand.

We see courage in David when he walked into the Valley of Elah with his five smooth stones and smote Goliath, king of Philistine, giant of the east. We see courage in Moses who stood eye to eye with Pharaoh. We see it in Elijah when he challenged the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. Courage can only be seen in the midst of conflict and struggle.

Why did God tell Joshua that he needed to be courageous? What was Joshua going to face that was so difficult that he would need to be courageous? Besides being the leader of the nation of Israel, God had given Joshua a project to complete. His first task was to lead his army into Canaan and drive out the people who lived there. Sounds like an easy job, but remember, 40 years earlier Moses had sent 12 spies into the land of Canaan. They came back with stories of a giant nation who made them look like grasshoppers. When the people heard this, they became afraid and refused to enter the land.

There were seven nations living in Canaan, all of them larger and stronger than Israel. By human standards, Joshua was facing an uphill battle. He had every reason to turn and run. That’s why God encouraged him so many times: be strong and courageous.

Do you ever feel like you’re facing an uphill battle? Do you feel like the odds are against you? There may be hundreds of times in our lives when we’re faced with situations that, to us, seem impossible. There are outward circumstances such as illness and disabilities, broken relationships, financial hardships, the loss of a job, etc. There are many times in our lives when we need to hear God’s command to Joshua: “Be strong and courageous.” But there’s an infallible and infallible strategy to make it complete: “For the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

II. OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S COMMANDS (VERSES 7)

Notice how the Lord delivers this to Joshua: “Be careful to obey all the law . . .”

It would be convenient if we could pick and choose which of God’s principles and laws we would follow and which we would fail to obey. It would be too demanding and too hard.

The law that Joshua was given was very detailed, and God expected him to learn it, meditate on it, and apply it. We are not under that same law today, but we live by the same principles.

Jesus said that there are two commands that are most important: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. Love your neighbor as yourself. Real love is the fulfillment of the law. James called it the royal law. Whatever you call it, God’s formula for success wouldn’t be complete without it.

III. SATURATION IN GOD’S WORD (VERSE 8)

We make mistakes when we don’t read the instruction manual. That same principle holds true when it comes to the Christian walk. Many of our mistakes could have been avoided if we had saturated ourselves in God’s Word.

When we try to live without consulting God’s Word, it’s a deliberate, voluntary ignorance. But that ignorance will not stop us from suffering the consequences of being stupid. The wisdom we need is available. It’s not just about reading His Word; it’s about meditating on it and letting God’s word saturate our spirit.

God’s formula for success works, but there are no shortcuts. It requires us to be strong and courageous. It calls us to obedient to His commands. It calls us to saturate our spirit with His Word.

General Conference Ministerial Association

NOTES:

\[ \text{General Conference Ministerial Association} \]
TRUST, BUT DO YOUR HOMEWORK

There is an old Persian proverb which says, “Trust in God, but tie your camel.” It acknowledges the tension we often come up against when we talk about trust: what is God’s part and what is ours? Trust does not mean we do nothing but sit and wait for God. Let’s read the story of Joshua.

I. LIVING THE PROMISES

In Joshua 1, God made a promise to Joshua and the Israelites. He promised them victory everyplace they would go (verses 3, 6). Now, in chapter two, Joshua gets busy. He secretly sends a few people to spy out the land, and especially to look at Jericho. Did he show a lack of trust on Joshua’s part? Why didn’t he just trust God, rest on the promises, march across the river, and claim the land?

The questions become even more relevant if we look ahead to the stories of Caleb and Joshua in chapters 5 and 6, where we read the story of the fall of Jericho. Remember how the city fell into the hands of the Israelites? They took the city simply by marching around it for seven days, and then God miraculously tore down the walls when the Israelites army shouted. Why send the spies if God was going to perform a miracle?

Here is the lesson. Sometimes it is appropriate for us to get busy and do the things that make sense. We have known people who wanted to work with God and who were so dependent on Him that they would literally wake up in the morning and pray about which pair of socks to wear. They wanted to obey God, they wanted God to be in control, and so would pray even about things like socks and attempt to discern “God’s will.” Trusting God means that we wait on Him for guidance and direction and that we move in the direction He points us.

II. GOD GOES AHEAD OF US

The spies went to “the house of a prostitute,” most likely because that was a place where foreigners wouldn’t arouse a lot of suspicion and where they would be able to learn what the people were thinking. What they found there was miraculous.

Somehow, word got to the king and he sent in his henchmen. But here is where the story gets interesting. Rahab hid the spies, lied for them, sent the king’s men off on a wild goose chase, protected the spies, gave them needed information, and then provided their escape route. In return, she and her family were spared. Rahab earned a prominent place in the history of Israel and in Christianity because of her faith.

God goes ahead of us. Not only does He go ahead of us, preparing the way, preparing the hearts of people, revealing His fame and His glory, but He goes ahead of us, and we find Him in strange and unexpected places. These spies found God at work in a brothel, in the faith of a prostitute.

CONCLUSION

Matthew Henry, a famous Bible commentator, wrote that “faith in God’s promise ought not to supersede but encourage our diligence in the use of proper means.” Trusting God means waiting on Him for guidance. It also means using the minds and gifts that He has given us to head in the right direction. As long as we move in the right direction on His strength, as long as we continue to trust Him and use all of our gifts, we can be confident that we are trusting Him and walking in His power and not our own.

We are often reluctant to share our faith, feeling as if we are making a huge, risky leap into a hostile and often unresponsive place. The story of Rahab reminds us that God is already there ahead of us. As we look for opportunities to share our faith, we must realize that the Holy Spirit is already there, already working, already prodding and pursuing. We are wisest and most effective when we recognize that God is already there, and that we are to encourage what He is doing in people’s lives. Sharing our faith isn’t simply about bringing people to salvation; that is the reaping stage in the evangelism process. There are lots of steps before that, lots of contacts and words and deeds and expressions of love, and lots of things that God is doing to reveal Himself and draw people to Him.

Where has God been calling you to go? What has He been telling you to do? If you feel stuck, if you are uncertain about which direction to head or how to get started, I encourage you to remember that God goes ahead of us. He has prepared the road, and He knows where the journey is going to take you. He knows exactly what you need.

Train up a child in the way he should go, And even when he is old he will not depart from it. 

Prov. 22:6
BIBLE STUDY EMPHASIS

Every lesson in the 12-year program includes Bible study appropriate to the age of the child. Even the very youngest children learn that the Bible is God's message — how would they apply concepts to their own life. How could they use what they have learned to help others? As they grow older, they are directed to individual daily Bible study to learn more of the story or to apply concepts taught.

Every Adventist doctrine (except the 2300 days) is taught in Sabbath School lessons. These and others are taught through the Bible Study emphasis. Educational research has determined that each individual learns best through one of four particular styles of learning. Although each person may use all four of the styles, the degree of use of each depends on the individual. Children are often guided through activities that involve hearing, seeing, and doing — and require active learning. It is a means by which children (and adults) understand and apply what they have learned. The emphasis in GraceLink is placed on all three.

The four learning styles are:

- **Imaginative.** The imaginative learner asks, "Why does this happen?" The Bible Lesson section deals with stories and reinforced through activities during the Sabbath School hour. The bedrock Adventist message is taught at every level with the most effective methods of instruction. All the world's divisions followed these plans as they participated in the development of lessons. Same message — new methods.

- **Analytical.** The analytical learner asks, "What do I need to learn?" The "Applying the Lesson" section offers the opportunity to find and read the verses that provide a background for the teaching points of the lesson. This section deals with those verses about which parents and teachers are asked to make decisions — how would they apply concepts to their own life? How could they use what they have learned to help others?

- **Commonsense.** The commonsense learner asks, "How does this work in my life?" The "Sharing the Lesson" section of each lesson provides the opportunity to explore how the lesson can be applied in practical situations. Thus today's Sabbath School classes often are emotionally involved and that pleasant emotions enhance positive learning. Debriefing is essential to the teaching/learning experience each week.

- **Grace (Jesus loves me).** Grace is the demonstration of God's love for us. He sent His Son to die in our place, to redeem us, and to accept us unto Himself that we might live with Him forevermore.

FOUR DYNAMICS

The entire lesson focuses on one carefully determined objective for the day. Every lesson plan includes a section that calls for sharing what the child has learned with someone else—a friend, teacher, parent, relative, neighbor, or other person with whom the child frequently comes in contact. The child is often asked to make something or do something that reminds him or her of the lesson topic. At the most, 35 percent of what they hear, about 40 to 50 percent of what they see, and about 90 percent of what they do. The emphasis in GraceLink is placed on all three. These activities are reinforced through the debriefing process in which children are led to consider "What did you learn?" and "How do you feel about it?" What can you do about it?" This process deals with the immediate practical application of the lesson. The emphasis is on relevant, practical applications of God's Word as they use the Bible to teach the lessons. Children are often asked to share the lesson story with someone else. This makes it possible for every child to grasp the point of the lesson and to understand it in his or her own way.

The four dynamics incorporated in the GraceLink curriculum provide a balanced program and form the core of the curriculum. These are:

- **Worship (I love Jesus).** Worship is our response to God's love. Because He gave His Son to die in our place, to accept us unto Himself that we might live with Him forevermore, we worship Him. We worship Him through praise, through music, through our fellowship with others, and through our worshipful attitude. Because He gave His Son to die in our place, to accept us unto Himself that we might live with Him forevermore, we worship Him.

- **Community (We love each other).** Community involves our relationship with those around us, with our families, with our church, and with other Christians. The entire lesson is designed to tell the story of our relationship with others and to teach that we have a responsibility to love others just as we have been loved by God. Teachers and parents are encouraged to create an environment in which children feel welcome and loved. It is important that children know that they are loved and accepted by their families and their churches.

- **Service (We love you too).** Service is our outreach to others. Through our actions, we express the love we have received from God. Teachers and parents are encouraged to create an environment in which children feel welcome and loved. It is important that children know that they are loved and accepted by their families and their churches.

- **Grace (Jesus loves me).** Grace is the demonstration of God's love for us. He sent His Son to die in our place, to redeem us, and to accept us unto Himself that we might live with Him forevermore. This message is taught through the Bible Study emphasis. The entire lesson is designed to tell the story of our relationship with others and to teach that we have a responsibility to love others just as we have been loved by God. Teachers and parents are encouraged to create an environment in which children feel welcome and loved. It is important that children know that they are loved and accepted by their families and their churches.

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BIBLE PRINCIPLES

God asks the church to be a community of people sharing a common purpose and fellowship, continually growing in faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God. Paul describes the church as "... his body, the fullness of him who filleth every thing in every way" (Eph. 1:22).

The symbol of water baptism marks our entrance into the body of Christ and also marks the baptism of the Holy Spirit experienced by a new disciple. "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). The Holy Spirit is the vital life-force of the church. When you come to Christ, you are prepared by the Holy Spirit, who has already led your heart to repentance and plants us within the church. Thus, the church is a creation of the Spirit. When a church serves the world it is an expression of the love of Christ to the world. It is the body of Christ serving the world's needs and being used by the Spirit as an agency of salvation. Thus the church is a servant body. It was created for service. It serves the Lord in praise, serves one another in love, and serves the world in humility. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

A local elder is an undershepherd for the church. The elder works in close relationship with the pastor and reports to the pastor and church board. He or she is a member of the church board and is usually assigned to one or more planning groups, such as an evangelism council, worship committee, Sabbath School council, or youth ministry committee. As an extension of the pastor, an elder should be open to his counsel, sensitive to the pastor’s vision for the church, teachable, and ready to communicate with him. The relation of pastor and elders can be built up by regular weekly or monthly meetings that focus on spiritual and personal growth and the needs of the congregation.

TIME COMMITMENT

All these functions may cause you to wonder just how much time it takes to be a local elder! There obviously should be enough time committed for involvement in outreach ministries, visitation, and administration of the church. But an elder needs to be a person who can manage his time wisely and balance priorities. Generally two to four hours a week represent an appropriate commitment of time for ministry. The elder will want to maintain enough time for personal spiritual growth, family, and personal recreation in order to maintain a balanced Christian lifestyle. It is possible to be busy in the sense of the Lord that one’s own spirituality suffers! At the same time, to give less than two to four hours of ministry per week would not represent a sincere commitment to the Lord in ministry.

APPROPRIATE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

It will be helpful to review the spiritual gifts that can be employed. It include exhortation, pastor/shepherd, administration, leadership, hospitality, and extraordinary faith.

1. Exhortation is a special ability God gives some to bring encouragement and comfort to others. It is a helping and healing ministry. The literal meaning of the Greek word translated exhortation is “to call to one’s side.” In Acts 16:40 and Acts 20:1 Paul is spoken of as giving encouragement to the churches. This ministry may be exercised with the bereaved, lonely, or discouraged. It is also employed in the spiritual counseling brought to persons in the process of normal church visitation.

2. The gift of pastor/shepherd is the ability to carry a personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers and act as a shepherd, overseer, protector, and guide to the church. (Peter 5:1-5) "When he ascended on high, he... gave gifts unto men... some to be pastors." (Eph. 4:8-11) You may be surprised to realize that the professional pastor is not the only member of the church with this gift. Any church has a number of members who can employ the spiritual gift of pastor/shepherd voluntarily in the feeding, attending and nurturing of people.

3. Administration is referred to as a spiritual gift in 1 Corinthians 12:28. The Greek word for administration describes the service of directing or steering something. In Revelation 18:17 and Acts 27:11 the word is used to describe a ship master. An administrator guides the church in its progress toward its destination. The members of the church trust a person with administrative gifts to serve the church with love and selflessness while helping it accomplish its goals.

4. Leadership describes the ability to a) Help a congregation set goals in accordance with the purpose of God for the church, and b) Communicate those goals to others in such a way that they harmoniously work together to accomplish them to the glory of God. Romans 12:8 speaks of the spiritual gift of leadership, stating that leaders should exercise diligence and faith in their ministry.

5. Hospitality is an ability to provide an open house and a warm feeling to people. “Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.” Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others” (1 Peter 4:9-10). An elder should be quick to offer hospitality, not only to members of the church but to visitors and community people as well.

6. Extraordinary faith provides an elder with confidence in discerning God’s will. The special gift of faith is a specific perception of God’s will in a particular situation and extraordinary confidence that God will act on behalf of the church.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Another contribution you can make involves giving attention to the worship service of your church. Read books on worship. Rather than criticizing the services that may exist in your current worship service, together think creativitly about what you could do. Consider what activities would develop an atmosphere of praise, thanksgiving, adoration, affirmation, and fellowship in your church. Perhaps you can work on an “experimental” plan to bring improvement in the worship service. You may be surprised to discover how eager others, especially your pastor, are to improve the worship service.
Every church has a number of inactive members. An elder could begin to visit these people. You may hear a great deal of anger and bitterness expressed, but remember, their anger is at the church and not at you personally. These may be people who are hurting from some past experience in the church. By carefully listening, asking for forgiveness for the whole church, and encouraging these people, a great deal of good can be done. As long as you maintain the qualities of Christ, and simply listen, you will not hurt the person’s experience. Your friendship and caring may help the person return to an active relationship with Jesus and participation in the church.

An elder also can contribute by visiting non-members who have some interest in the church. Make a visit to the non-members in your community who have relatives in the Adventist Church. Check for names of people who may have visited the church or attended an evangelistic activity in the past year. Visit these people and invite them to return. With some training, you can learn to discern interests for Bible study. Not all elders have the gifts of evangelism and teaching, however, so you may wish to invite someone else to go with you to lead out in the Bible study.

**TRAINING**

The Holy Spirit equips a Christian disciple by bestowing spiritual gifts to accomplish ministry. But those gifts need to be developed. An elder needs to be aware of the training resources available and make use of them. The first such resource is the pastor. God places a pastor within the church to train and develop its members for ministry. The local pastor in many cases will train elders for visitation, personal Bible study, administration, and worship leadership in the context of ministry. Going two-by-two with your pastor will develop your gifts for ministry as an elder. The fellowship with your pastor while visiting members, giving Bible studies, and working on church projects together is inseparable.

Your conference probably has a training program established for elders which includes instruction in worship planning, preaching, and church administration. God has called you to minister and provided gifts to you, but your commitment to that call should include attendance at events designed to develop your gifts for His service.

There are many training seminars that offer help to an elder. Perhaps the best known is the “Calling and Caring Ministry Seminar” (Lab I). Many Adventist pastors are equipped to conduct this seminar, or your conference office can help you enroll for such training. It is an experience that will dramatically improve your skills as a listener and a visitor. This seminar is helpful not only in working with active members, but in caring for the inactive church member as well. This training is a must for every elder.

**RESOURCE MATERIALS**

You may wish to do some further reading regarding the work of the elder. If you are asked to preach — and many elders are — you may want to get some help in that area. Either of the following books would be helpful to an elder who preaches: *Preaching to the Times* by Charles E. Bradford; *Successful Lay Preaching* by Floyd Bresee. Elders should enhance their knowledge regarding administration and leadership. Two good recommendations are: *Perils of Power* by Richard Exley and *So You Want to be a Leader* by Robert Person, our beloved former General Conference president. Of course you cannot forget *Elder’s Digest, Elder’s Handbook* and *Elder’s Guide*, excellent tools that help elders to be very effective in their function.

**THE CARING CHURCH STRATEGY**

The ministry of the elder is vital to accomplish the mission of your local church.

A balanced church program is just as important as any of the individual offices or functions of the church. Your ministry is given meaning and effectiveness as you fit into the overall mission that Christ has for your congregation. The Holy Spirit calls you to teamwork and cooperation with the other leaders in your church, according to a united plan of action.

What are the essential elements of a healthy local church? There are at least four fundamental activities that must be present in any Adventist church for it to be successful:

1. **Reaching the community.** Healthy churches discover the kinds of people who live in their area and understand the needs of the people, so that they can provide activities designed to meet these needs and create a strong public awareness of the church.

2. **Winning people to Christ.** Healthy churches cooperate with the Holy Spirit in establishing meaningful relationships with those attracted to Christ, provide opportunities for them to become acquainted with His Word and His fellowship, and challenge them to become His disciples.

3. **Nurturing the members.** Healthy churches provide for the continuing spiritual growth of all their members through enthusiastic worship, interesting Bible study, supportive friendships, and opportunities for significant service.

4. **Inspiring leadership.** Healthy churches have pastoral and lay leaders who help the congregation to identify the needs in the church and the community, clarify goals, gather the necessary resources and implement effective action.

*“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people.”* — Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, page 143.

Children’s Ministries

There are two biblical concepts that are fundamental to the life of Jesus: prayer and the foundation of his mission. For Jesus, prayer was a way of life, a way of communicating with his Heavenly Father. He taught his followers to pray, and his teachings and practices have been the foundation of the church’s mission ever since. Children’s Ministries also focus on prayer, teaching children the importance of prayer and how to develop a personal relationship with God.

The Children’s Ministries Department is responsible for the spiritual development of children, providing programs that are both age-appropriate and age-specific. These programs help children grow in their faith and understanding of God’s Word. Children’s Ministries also work closely with other departments of the church to ensure that all children are being reached and included in the church’s life.

The Children’s Ministries Department also provides training and resources for church leaders, including seminars and workshops. These resources help leaders develop effective strategies for reaching children and involving them in the church’s life. Children’s Ministries also work closely with other church departments to ensure that all of the church’s educational programs are aligned with the church’s mission and values.

Children’s Ministries is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for children, where they can learn and grow in their faith. The department is dedicated to helping children understand the purposes of God and their role in fulfilling his purposes. Children’s Ministries are a vital part of the church’s life, and they play an important role in the spiritual development of children.

There are many resources available for children’s ministries, including books, videos, and websites. These resources provide guidance and support for church leaders working to develop children’s ministries in their own churches. Children’s Ministries is an excellent example of how a church can work to reach and involve children in its life.

In conclusion, Children’s Ministries is a key component of the church’s life, providing programs and resources that help children grow in their faith and understanding of God’s Word. The Children’s Ministries Department is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for children, where they can learn and grow in their faith. Children’s Ministries is an excellent example of how a church can work to reach and involve children in its life.
The art of speech: HOW TO USE YOUR VOICE

The one who accepts the position of being a mouthpiece for God should consider it highly essential to present the truth with all the grace and intelligence possible, that the truth may lose nothing in one's presentation of it to the people.

( Ellen G. White, Evangelism, p. 665. All quotations that follow in this article are from the book Evangelism)

Seventh-day Adventists believe in the gift of prophecy actively manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. We believe that through her, God gave us orientation regarding physical, mental, and spiritual health. God has a people, and this people represent His voice. If we are God's voice, we should be the most beautiful and clear voice the world could ever hear. God gave us precious writings by Ellen White regarding our voice. Let us reflect upon this advice.

Value of the voice

"The human voice is a precious gift of God; it is a power for good, and the Lord wants His servants to preserve its pathos and melody. The voice should be cultivated so as to promote its musical quality, that it may fall pleasantly upon the ear" (pp. 667, 668).

Voice is the most complex and sophisticated sound human beings can produce; we may, however, modify and control it voluntarily. We can keep our voices healthy by warming up the voice, drinking enough water, avoiding screaming and clearing our throat, and by having a diet rich in fruits, especially apples and citrus fruits.

"Some destroy the solemn impression they may have made upon the people by raising their voices to a very high pitch, and hallooing and screaming out the truth. When presented in this manner, truth loses much of its sweetness, its force, and its solemnity. But if the voice is toned right, if it has solemnity and is so modulated as to be even pathetic, it will produce a much better impression" (p. 666).

Some people have a clear understanding of the voice and its impact upon the listener. Others never think about it. However, whether we are aware of it or not, we do influence people with our voice, and we are influenced by the voice of the people with whom we come in contact. If you don't know your own voice very well, ask other people how your voice sounds, and if possible, listen to your own voice on a tape; thus you will be more familiar with it and will be aware of those aspects that need improvement.

Vocal health

"Careful attention and training should be given to the vocal organs. They are strengthened by right use, but become enfeebled if used improperly" (p. 667). Vocal health is a concept that includes a series of aspects, such as a clear and pure voice, expressed without effort and pleasing to the listener. Vocal hygiene consists of basic norms that help preserve vocal health and prevent alterations and illnesses.

"Speaking from the throat, letting the words come out from the upper extremity of the vocal organs, all the time fretting and irritating them, is not the best way to preserve health or to increase the efficiency of those organs" (p. 669).

Knowing your own voice is discovering one of the most fantastic functions of the human body.

"No matter how much knowledge you may have acquired in other lines, if you have neglected to cultivate your voice and manner of speech so that you can speak and read distinctly and intelligently, all your learning will be of but little profit; for without voice culture you cannot communicate readily and clearly that which you have learned" (p. 666).

Alexandra Sampaio is a speech therapist in Brazil
No, it's not wrong. The profession of a second marriage partner is not governed by the profession of the deceased, who knows nothing. Cautionary counsel might be given about possible behavior that might cause your own loss of respect and prestige. If a potential spouse's status might cause you embarrassment, don't marry them. If a potential spouse's status might cause you to lose self-esteem, then avoid it. A new spouse's job should never be a reason for embarrassment. Such should never be a reason for who they are rather than unfavorable comparison with who they are not.

Your questions? In areas of practices, theology, and the like, I have listed in the magazine masthead. More in premarital education, especially to young people, with the aim of avoiding sinful situations.

James A. Cress
General Conference Ministerial Secretary

We get questions! Everywhere our Ministry Association team travels we get questions, more in premarital education, especially to young people, with the aim of avoiding sinful situations. We get questions, more in premarital education, especially to young people, with the aim of avoiding sinful situations.

We do get questions! Everywhere our Ministry Association team travels we get questions, more in premarital education, especially to young people, with the aim of avoiding sinful situations.

Over the years there have been different opinions expressed by pastors and local churches of our church regarding the wearing of wedding gowns by women and the wearing of wedding rings by men and women. I am reminded of a training convention for local church leaders which I attended in West Jamaica several years ago. It is true that Jesus was present in the meeting, His resurrection was a reality. Perhaps the church should offer much more in premarital education, especially to young people, with the aim of avoiding sinful situations.

Several hundred participants, including a significant number of women elders, listened as a man from the church board conducted a training session for local church elders which I conducted in West Jamaica. Several hundred participants, including a significant number of women elders, listened as a man from the church board conducted a training session for local church elders which I conducted in West Jamaica.

He has his own business interests and has been involved mainly in business technology. He has also been a major player in the church's witness in the community. Although there are questions, often variations on the same theme. Sometimes the questions are written by individuals in search of a platform to espouse their personal views. I thought you might enjoy some of these questions, often variations on the same theme. Sometimes the questions are written by individuals in search of a platform to espouse their personal views.
IT IS EASY TO BUILD A WALL.
MORE DIFFICULT TO DESTROY IT.
EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TO BUILD A BRIDGE.
YET EASY TO DESTROY IT.
MAKE YOUR ONLINE CONNECTION FOR ETERNITY.

GiEN
GLOBAL internet
EVANGELISM NETWORK

NEXT EVENTS:
Cape Town, South Africa
February 27 to
March 2, 2008
(Regional to Africa)

Denver, CO (USA)
July 9 to 13, 2008

Montego Bay, Jamaica
May 13 to 17, 2009

The Global Internet Evangelism Network
is a community of evangelists and
technologists who are committed to
using the Internet to share the good
news of the gospel. In addition to
sharing, it is committed to discipling and
preparing people for Christ’s return.

Become involved.
PARTICIPATE.

More information: www.gien.adventist.org