GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE
From Every Nation, Kindred, Tongue and People:
Diversity and the Changing Face of Adventism
EDITORIAL

As leaders, we are responsible for the spiritual welfare of our church. It is our job to lead the members with good messages, reviving their faith and enabling them to fulfill the mission of providing spiritual support. Some churches need a spiritual revival. For them, a spiritual revival is needed when the following elements are present:

• Lack of love: When there is a lack of love and trust among those who profess to be religious.

• Sin in the church: When the church notices that its members are falling into sin and bringing dishonor to the church.

• Evil controls society: When evil triumphs over the church, producing moral and spiritual damage.

• Controversy and disharmony: When the spirit of quarreling and argument corrodes church unity.

• Spiritual lethargy: When church members are not involved in missionary programs and members’ habits.

• Worldliness: When worldly influences and their philosophies permeate church programs and members’ habits.

• Discord and division: When there is contention, jealousy, and slander among those who profess to be Christians.

• Evil controls church: When evil triumphs over the church, producing moral and spiritual damage.

A genuine spiritual revival will surely lead the church to true reform. This is accomplished through spiritual and biblical sermons and with a strategy that encourages the entire church. I believe that spiritual revival needs an urgent matter. It is the only way some of our churches will retain a commitment to the cause of God.

Being aware of these factors and looking at some of our churches, I believe that spiritual revival is an urgent matter. It is the only way these churches will retain a commitment to the cause of God. I would like to share with you an adaptation of Charles G. Finney’s list of characteristics a church needs a revival. For him, a spiritual revival begins as a personal experience of its leaders. Then the reviving influence will surely reach the entire church members. A spiritual revival never begins with the “church” but always with its leaders. We need to better administrate our time and resources so that living a genuine Christian life will be a priority, both at us personally and to our congregations.
As is the case in Australia, for example. In some countries, is ordination important or necessary to ministry? Would we be better off to stop ordaining anyone? Dedication for service, being officially shown the trust of the corporate church, the community of believers, is personally inspiring. Ordination also implies that organization would disappear, and the era of the judges would return.

Ordination does not function in a magic sense, in issue first on the agenda for the apostles. So, at times, fusing the minister with some special “power.” It would, generation what has taken God’s people generations to understand. Because it is the church of God that has appointed the minister. Whoever treasures the church will treasure its expression of confidence through ordination.

How do we balance the conflicting biblical principles involved in the call of some women to specific ministry roles with the offense this may cause to others who see this as biblically wrong? Let me answer by quoting the Swiss Reformer Zwingli who, albeit in a different context, expressed that “whoever through . . . ignorance wants to take offense without cause should not be permitted to remain in his ignorance but should be strengthened in order that he may not regard as sinful what is not sinful.”

It seems that discussion of women-in-ministry will inevitably arrive at the question of the ordination of women. If we can answer the general objections to women in ministry roles, are there further specific objections to the ordination of women? We will have a systems if we maintain or return to a Catholic view of ordination and the sacraments. It is paramount for a genuine understanding of God’s intention with these rituals. But besides that theological question, within the Adventist context we have chosen to give the ordained minister worldwide functions. This fact has been a major issue in our discussions so far. An ordained minister is allowed to baptize and conduct the Lord’s Supper everywhere in the world. Because of this, the General Conference delegates in Utrecht denied separate church divisions the right to ordain female ministers to function within their territories.

My personal opinion is that this objection could be overcome in a practical way by understanding that no minister should perform duties anywhere in the world without cooperating with appointed local leadership. I have in my ministry been asked to perform clerical duties in areas other than where I work at present, and I have been happy to do so, but never without informing and consulting with local leadership.

Some would include marriage in the rituals belonging to the ordained minister. It often is, but in a sense, marriage is a civil institution. The right to legally perform marriage is extended to the church by the government, as is the case in Australia, for example. In some countries, the local elder also shares such legal authority. In other places in the world, ministers are not allowed to carry out the legal aspect, but marriages exist nonetheless. They do not depend on ordained ministers.

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Ordination does not function in a magic sense, in issue first on the agenda for the apostles. So, at times, fusing the minister with some special “power.” It would, however, be wrong to say that it is just an appointment by the church. Such expression downgrades the value of the church. Ordination is so immensely significant exactly because it is the church of God that has appointed the minister. Whoever treasures the church will treasure its expression of confidence through ordination.

A recent statement from General Conference president Jan Paulsen on the question of ordaining women included this comment: “Although we may not see a clear biblical [reason] that ordination may not happen, there are many cultural issues that impact this decision on a local level.” At the same time, church leadership has insisted that this is a question on which the church must maintain unity. How important is worldwide uniformity on questions such as this?

Unity in the Spirit is always important, but it has two sides. We have avoided being split on the question of ordaining women; hopefully, we will manage not to be split on the question of ordination. The proclamation of the gospel is always our first priority. To achieve our divine task, it may in parts of the world be important to give full acknowledgement to female ministers preaching that message.

Do you see a way forward on this issue? Education and cultural sensitivity must go hand in hand. Theologically, we need a clearer understanding of the nature of the Protestant message regarding the authority structure of the Papacy, which in reality is the foundation for all theological objections against female participation in pastoral ministry. Further, we need to develop cultural self-consciousness, realizing more fully the biases of our own culture so as not to impose them on biblical texts or other people.
What advice would you give to a young woman who feels called to full-time ministry?

Become a minister of Christ. Preach the gospel; present the Advent message. Serve as a human being, not because you are a woman. Serve because you have been called by Jesus Christ to represent Him, not yourself.

The corporate church today provides such opportunities. Policies are in place so that female ministers may, for almost all practical purposes, share equal rights and responsibilities; although you will definitely encounter your share of human opposition, there are rich and wonderful rewards and blessings in following that call.

The corporate church needs such role models to persuade skeptics and inspire other women to serve. And in my experience, our church members in general are kind and gentle Christians who will be grateful for your contributions.

What advice would you give to a member of a congregation to whom having a woman pastor just seems wrong?

The Adventist community worldwide exceeds 20 million people. For most of us, there will, of course, be elements of the life or teachings of the church with which we agree more or less. First, I take for granted that disagreements are to be expressed with Christian kindness and courtesy. Second, I trust that we will always make an attempt to question our own presuppositions and cultural biases.

We do well in adhering to the views of the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In contrast with the prevailing Christian American culture of the time, they argued strongly for female preachers of the gospel in a series of articles in *Review and Herald* during the 1850s. And, remember, Ellen White was a woman. Would you not have liked to have, for instance, Ellen White as your pastor and preacher? I would.

Learn from the position of our pioneers regarding female preachers, and respect the decisions of the corporate church. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has voted to accept female preachers and elders. Commissioned female ministers are fully qualified to perform baptisms and other such functions. The position of the church on these issues is clear.

But more than that, the authority is the Word of God, never the preacher—whether male or female. For instance, we do not, as in some charismatic circles, submit to the authority of any leader because of his charismatic gifts and supposed direct link to God, independent of the Word. The Bible is the source of our doctrinal authority, not the role of any leader. Creating or accepting such an authoritative teaching role in the church will set aside the Bible.

Our leaders are appointed or elected by the church and, in relation to the organization, receive their authority from the church. They may be replaced, and they are replaced from time to time. The role of our leaders is not to decide the message, but rather themselves to submit to the message and to the church at large. And as we elect them, we should respect their right to exercise the authority we give them in the appropriate areas.

Let me illustrate this point by referring to one of the most exciting events during the awakenings in the 1840s. In Sweden at that time, laypeople were not allowed to preach or even gather people in homes for Bible studies. To create revival, God called children between the ages of six and ten, to preach the Word. They would read from the Bible in clear voices, in public places and in gatherings in homes, calling for conversion and commitment to Jesus, appealing for a sober life and preparation for the second coming of Jesus. Though many of these children were incarcerated and tortured, they continued their biblical preaching, led by the Holy Spirit.

If a girl at the age of six preaches truthfully from the Bible, the authority of that message stands above the authority of any elder or ordained minister if he preaches contrary to the Word of God. This is the measure by which we judge anyone who ministers or leads—regardless of gender (see Matt. 7:20).

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As a church leader, you may face tough challenges sharing God’s love with members of non-Christian religions. Scott Griswold, director of the Buddhist Study Center in Thailand, draws from his mission experience to give you practical tools for building bridges of understanding and friendship with Buddhists in your community.

Whether your community has many Buddhists or none at all, it’s likely this information will be invaluable to you soon. For Buddhists is “the integrating and identifying religion of approximately one billion people,” says Dr. Alex Smith (Evangelical Missiological Society, Spring 2000). Between 40-50 percent of Cambodia, Bhutan, Japan, Laos, Myanmar, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam are Buddhist. Smith pubs the number of Buddhists in the U.S.A. at ten million. This growth has been within the last several decades, especially among young people. Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, France, Indonesia, and Mongolia each have several hundred thousand Buddhists.

“Christians have often found it difficult to share the gospel with Buddhists,” says Griswold. Buddhists have often found it difficult to become Christians. Why? Many Buddhists come from countries where the families and societies are closely knit. A change to Christianity is often seen as a betrayal to family and country. They may view Christianity as foreign, something linked to the politics, materialism, and immorality they see in western countries. Their own spectacular temples, intricate systems of morality, and elaborate ceremonies lead Buddhists to assume that becoming a Christian would be a step down.

Buddhist beliefs about life, death, and salvation are vastly different from ours. Many times they simply don’t understand what we’re saying or find it unbelievable and irrelevant. So what can we do? We must become BRIDGE BUILDERS. Jesus gave the Holy Spirit as fully adequate for taking the gospel to the entire world, including to Buddhists (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit gives us three bridge pieces that will span the gaps and make it easier for them to experience God. These are:

• **CHARACTER BRIDGES**
• **ACTION BRIDGES**
• **WORD BRIDGES**

A transformed CHARACTER is extremely important because the focus of Buddhism is right-living, right-thinking, and the denial of desires. Buddhists must see someone living the good news they are seeking.

Compassionate ACTIONS are an important drawing factor because Buddhism is full of merit-making. When Buddhists see us caring for the poor, it will be easier for them to think our scriptures and our God have something to offer them.

Empowered by such love, our WORDS will sink into their hearts. We will learn to speak in ways that lead them simply step-by-step to greater truths.

These three bridges are not a method; they are the power of the Holy Spirit, directly tied to the fruit of the Spirit (character), the gifts of the Spirit (actions), and the tongues of the Spirit (words). As we call out to God in prayer, He will use us to make bridges directly to the hearts of Buddhists.

How can we begin building these bridges? There are four simple steps.

1. **Listen to know their beliefs and needs.**

   Listening to our Buddhist friends helps us know what is important to them and how we can meet their needs. It communicates that we value and respect them.

   Do we know what our friends believe? What do they think about God, life, death, and what comes next? Some Buddhists think more about spirits, magic, and protection than about Buddha’s teachings. Some are highly philosophical with no room for what is unseen. Others are secular, thinking only about their families, businesses, or pleasure.

   People may not want to discuss religion, but if you’re their friend, they’ll listen to your story. If you want them to understand about a living God, tell them something that happened when you asked for His help. If you want them to believe Jesus can forgive sins, talk about your struggles and the peace you found in the story of the cross. Your stories, friends’ stories, and stories from the Bible interestingly shared at the right time will never be forgotten. How much better this is than a debate in which no one is changed and someone probably becomes more closed than ever.

2. **Affirm Similarities in Values**

   Buddhists believe in the law of karma—everyone reaps the good or bad that they sow. Most are confident of an afterlife in hell or heaven for awhile and then a return to this world of suffering. Often Christians want to jump quickly into the good news of forgiveness and to truths about death and eternal life. The Buddhist is frequently confused or offended by the person’s confrontational approach.

   BUILD another piece of the BRIDGE by affirming what you hold in common. We also believe we reap what we sow. Share some of Solomon’s proverbs and Jesus’ teachings that highlight the morality we hold in common.

   We too believe in something beyond the grave, in angels, and evil spirits. Sure our understanding is different, but why not start with a friendship based on what we share. If we believe that all truth has its source in God, we don’t need to be afraid to affirm the good which Buddha taught, even while we recognize the enemy has mixed truth with error.

3. **Joyfully Share about Differences**

   People may not want to discuss religion, but if you’re their friend, they’ll listen to your story. If you want them to understand about a living God, tell them something that happened when you asked for His help. If you want them to believe Jesus can forgive sins, talk about your struggles and the peace you found in the story of the cross. Your stories, friends’ stories, and stories from the Bible interestingly shared at the right time will never be forgotten. How much better this is than a debate in which no one is changed and someone probably becomes more closed than ever.

4. **Invite them to Experience Something New**

   The BRIDGE is not finished until our Buddhist friends step into a relationship with the living God. Our job is to BUILD small steps by inviting them to try a variety of new experiences. At the right time we might be able to say:

   • “May I pray for your troubled teenager?”
   • “Would you like to try memorizing this scripture that helped my relationship with my wife?”
   • “Would you like to experience a Sabbath with my family this weekend? It’s really helped us grow closer together and has helped my stress-level too.”
   • “By praying to God every night before you go to sleep and see if it helps your fears go away.”

   • “Small steps, where God’s power can be felt, will make it easier for a Buddhist to make the full step of surrender and loyalty to God. Today God is longing to communicate His love to the many Buddhists that do not know Him as their Father. Will you join Him as a BRIDGE BUILDER?”

To learn more about ministry among Buddhists visit the web site at www.BridgeofHopeMinistry.org. There you can find such resources as the 30-Day Cycle of Prayers for Buddhists, Bible Studies for Buddhists, and more. To receive an e-mail newsletter called “Prayers Among Buddhists” write to houseofpeace@csinkinfo.com

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I HAVE BEEN BURNED AND HURT BY THE CHURCH IN THE PAST. HOW CAN I OVERCOME THIS, RENEW MY PASSION FOR CHURCH, AND REGAIN A DESIRE TO ATTEND CHURCH?

The pain caused by a church is a “silent killer.” This doesn’t mean that the hurtful words and events are invisible. It is a “silent killer” because of what it does deep in the mind, heart, and soul of the wounded. If not dealt with, the wound will destroy your future happiness, joy, and well-being. And the collateral damage always negatively affects the ministry and outreach of the church; some churches never recover. Recognize that the behavior which brought such devastation to your heart is not much different than the hurt you might encounter in the workplace, marketplace, or home. The difference is that we just don’t expect God’s people to behave like those who do not have Christ in their lives. Almost everyone agrees that church is the one place that should be safe, accepting, forgiving, and free from conflict and pain; in most churches, however, elements of strife, conflict, and hatred creep in and shatter that dream.

This happens more in some churches than in others. The spiritual health of a church’s members and the strength of its leadership determine how prevalent and to what extent divisive behavior can gain control. Out of control, it has the effect of a termite infestation that slowly but surely destroys the foundation of the congregation’s spiritual life.

If you have been hurt by the church, it is important for you to turn your focus away from the people involved and away from the church itself, trying instead to identify the root cause of your pain, turmoil, and disillusionment. Honestly identify what you are feeling. If you are like most people, you will have experienced anger, sorrow, disappointment, rejection, hurt feelings, jealousy, rejection, blame, loss, shame, embarrassment, and a feeling of being threatened or looking foolish. Find out what is at the core of your hurt—not what someone said or did to you, but what is causing your pain. Then search the Scriptures to discover what God says about what is hurting you. Using a Bible concordance, look up each word and read, think, pray, and apply the applicable texts to your life. For example, you may think that you are angry, but in reality you feel rejected. What does God say about rejection? He says, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you” (Heb. 13:5); “I have loved you with an everlasting love” (Jer. 31:3); and “Surely I am with you always” (Matt. 28:20).

After you have identified the cause of your pain, accept that God has a balm of wisdom, compassion, and love to generously apply to your wound(s). By calling on Him, your focus quickly becomes riveted on Him rather than on the event or person that hurt you. Admittedly, you may have been harmed, injured, or offended. You certainly feel it. Those are byproducts of deeper, more important realities that have derailed your passion for God, His church, and His purpose for your life. This hurt has soured your heart, and, if left unattended, will lead to bitterness that negatively affects every fiber of your soul and rob you of the chance to find fulfillment in Christ. You do not want this to happen.

How do we keep hurtful experiences from destroying us? The Bible says to “guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life” (Prov. 4:23, NLT). We guard our hearts by choosing our thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and actions. Guard your heart in this situation by refusing to rehearse what happened. Do not dwell on the people who hurt you or on the weaknesses of the church. This change of focus will take humility, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6; Prov. 3:34). It will take forgiveness and actions (Matt. 18:22; Mark 11:27; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13) with no hint of vengeance (Rom. 12:19). Above all, it will take the power of the Holy Spirit working in and through you (Eph. 3:16). Don’t blame God for how His children behave. Don’t abandon His church either. Most church members are dedicated, grace-filled, loving, and forgiving. Seek out these people. Spend time with them. If you cannot find them (and this is rare, even in the most difficult churches), find another church. The church is God’s idea, and He protects it faithfully even though He is often pained by its behavior.

Remember that an unattended wound will penetrate deep into your soul and destroy any chance of living an abundant life in Christ (John 10:10). You can have hope because you are seeking healing. It is now up to you to do the right thing and turn your focus to the place—no, the Person—who will truly transform your life above and beyond this hurt.

Jesus calls lovingly to you, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matt. 11:28-30).

General Conference Ministerial Association
This article will explore the functions of church elders from the shepherd metaphor mentioned by the apostles Peter and Paul, as well as the teaching of the New Testament regarding the nature of church elders as overseers.

Although the early church took the name “elders” from Judaism, elders in the Christian church appear to function differently than the elders of Judaism, for example, during the meeting of the elders at Ephesus and the apostle Paul, there were some specific declarations that reveal the elders’ functions: “Take heed of yourselves and all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son” (Acts 20:28).

The first instruction of the apostle was that the elders pay attention to themselves. The expression “take heed of yourself” probably suggests that an elder’s entire life was to be in harmony with the teachings contained in Scripture. Elders were local leaders of the people, so they needed to be faithful to the Lord, His Word, and His church. Indeed, Paul was warning them that a apostasy would arise even among them; therefore, they must be prepared and alert (Acts 20:29-31).

Second, they must pay attention to the flock. The text explicitly uses the word “all” before “flock” to denote the care of the whole church—the body of Christ. Elders must include all believers—families and children—in their ministry. Therefore, it implies the ministry of visitation and nurture. How did elders care for the whole congregation? Two important aspects could be considered: first, there was a plurality of elders in each local congregation (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 6, 23; 16:4, 2017; 21:18; 1 Peter 5:1, 2; 1 Tim. 3:17-19). It seems probable that the elder would have followed Paul’s example and distributed among themselves the responsibility for visiting the members. The early church developed ministries in homes. There were no church buildings; people worshipped in “house” churches. Paul declared that he taught them “in public and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance of God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:20).

The apostle Paul pointed out that elders under the direction of the Holy Spirit were to be overseers, “to care for the church of God” (Acts 20:28). The word “ overseers” suggests that elders were supervisors—or guardians—of the flock. In other words, the term is used to explain the first part of verse 28, in which Paul says, “Take heed . . . to all the flock” (Acts 20:28a). The last part of verse 28 gives insight into the responsibility of the overseers. They were to “care for the church of God which he [God] obtained with the blood of his own Son.” The overseers were responsible for caring for the souls that were redeemed by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Mark 10:45).

Elders also needed to be watchful. The apostle Paul admonished them to be alert, declaring, “After my departure, fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:29). In his epistle to the Hebrews, he reminded the members to “obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account” (Heb. 13:17). The essence of the apostle Paul’s message is: “Guard the flock—wolves are coming. Protecting the flock includes seeking the lost sheep. Elders must continually guard the congregation from false teachers and teachings. A good shepherd is always alert to danger.”

The apostle Peter also told the elders how to fulfill their ministry. “Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shamefaced gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:1-3). Three important points are mentioned here. First, the elders’ ministry had to be without compulsion; that is, their pastoral ministry would be achieved through love and tenderness, not force. Second, being an elder was not a paid position; elders needed to feel drawn to the work and be willing to spend whatever time was necessary to do it. Finally, they were to serve and tend the flock with humility, “being examples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:9). In other words, the elders should teach by example.

Elders and apostles were responsible under God and the church for the care of souls. When they fulfill their ministry, they were functioning under Christ, the “Shepherd and Guardian of your souls” (1 Peter 2:25). Apostles and elders are the overseers and shepherds of the soul in their care, just as Jesus Christ Himself is the Shepherd and Overseer of all souls.

In the Old Testament the work of the Lord is illustrated by the shepherd metaphor, Psalm 23 illustrates how elders may also function as shepherds. According to the metaphor of the “shepherd and the sheep,” elders are spiritual leaders who feed, nurture, protect, lead, and comfort the believers.

In the New Testament, Jesus cited the same principles in His discourse on the good shepherd (John 10:1-21). In this illustration, the shepherd is shown to have an intimate knowledge of each sheep (John 10:3), providing food for the sheep and leading them to good pasture (verse 8). Shepherds have a supreme responsibility to care for their sheep even at the cost of their own lives (John 10:11). Using the shepherd metaphor and the inherent functions of church elders as described by the apostle Paul (Acts 20:28), it is reasonable to describe an elder’s functions from the shepherd metaphor perspective.

Moreover, Jesus’ illustration goes beyond gentle pastoral care. Shepherds should not be afraid of confrontation (John 10:12; Acts 20:29-31), despite considerable personal cost, because ministry is a selfless sacrifice. And because there are other sheep not of the fold implies that elders will have to reach out to people who do not know the “eternal gospel” (Rev. 14:6, 7). Paul mentioned another elders’ responsibility in his letter to Timothy: “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching” (1 Tim. 5:17). The word “rule” gives the twofold meaning of those who simultaneously lead and care for souls. In addition, they were preachers and teachers of the flock.

How can churches ensure that elders fulfill their roles as presented in the Scripture? The New Testament model emphasizes church elders in their qualifications, character, and spiritual gifts. It appears that the apostles chose local leaders whose Christian character and spiritual gifts matched the function to which they were called. Moreover, it seems that the apostles followed a “training model” given by Jesus Christ because they were constantly preparing others for the work of ministry. For example, the apostle Paul recruited coworkers (Timothy and Titus), who functioned at the same level of leadership.

Noting the functions of local church elders as described in the New Testament, we see that counseling skills are important. Because elders are confronted with a variety of problems—adolescent crises, divorce, single-parent issues, family conflict, and child relationships—they need a knowledge of counseling principles. This preparation will help elders fulfill an important role of elders as shepherds.

To fulfill their teaching ministry, elders also need to be well-versed in both the content of the message (Scripture) and the method for communicating it. Therefore, they should be taught the principles of hermeneutics and exegesis in order to grasp the meaning of the Scripture. This would include a knowledge of fundamental Adventist beliefs, beliefs centered in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Another important aspect of teaching is understanding how people learn; therefore, a study of lifespan psychology and psychology of learning would be most helpful.

After planning a curriculum for training church elders and deciding who will teach, the pastor should develop an annual training calendar. The Elders’ Handbook suggests that the training curriculum include the following: church organization and administration, including spiritual gifts; church growth; care of new converts; worship leadership; giving; teaching; and the function of elder partnerships. The study of Paul’s messages gives excellent guidance as to the responsibilities and duties of elders. These insights will guide pastors as they train elders to grow and mature in their service as shepherds to the congregation.

Miguel Luna
Northern Asia-Pacific Division Ministerial Association Secretary
I. WHO IS INFECTED?

We are all infected with the disease called sin. We got this infection simply by being born. I doubt that scientists will ever find a “sin” gene, but just as your hair and eye colors are inherited, you also inherit sin. The bad news is that you can do absolutely nothing to help yourself. You can’t take penicillin or some other medicine to get rid of this infection. You can’t go to a surgeon and have him cut out the infection. As Paul says, “Consequently, the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men” (Rom. 5:18). You can’t live a holy life on your own.

Let me answer this question with another question to those of you who have children. When you had children, did you realize that there would be times when they would disappoint you? Did you realize that your children would ... your life? Did you realize they would bring you pain? Did you realize they would hurt you, that they would disobey you?

If you realized all these things, why in the world did you have children? You hoped the good times would outweigh the bad. You hoped the joy would be greater than the pain, that the obedience would be greater than the disobedience.

II. IS THERE A CURE?

Yes, there is a disease called sin. Yes, it is fatal. Yes, if left unchecked and untreated, this infection is terminal. But there is hope, and that hope is found in Jesus Christ. God can cleanse us from sin. He can change us from within. He can heal us from this infection. He can restore us to a great relationship with Him.

III. THE CURE

If God’s plan is for you to live a holy life free from sin, does that make you some kind of “super Christian”? Sometimes when we talk about holiness and sanctification, people get nervous. Holiness isn’t an abstract concept. It’s not a doctrine to be dissected in the laboratory. Holiness is simply a way of living made possible through an intimate and personal relationship with God. So when we talk about holiness, we aren’t talking about something that makes us holier than our friends. It isn’t something that makes us “super Christians.” It doesn’t change us into Christian robots incapable of doing wrong. We don’t possess holiness under our own power.

CONCLUSION

When Adam and Eve sinned, their sin was like a virus. It spread and caused a fatal infection. Sin infected their children and spread through the entire human race. We are all infected. But there is hope. There is a cure. And that cure is found in Jesus Christ. You can receive this abundant provision by God’s grace.

Ellen White says, “Let these words fill us with comfort and hope and peace. While you are worrying over the sins of others, Jesus says, ‘Turn your eyes away from these things and behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. There is a balm in Gilead; there is a Physician there. Jesus is the great Physician, and He can cure all the maladies of the soul’” (Manuscript Releases, Vol. 12, 1930).
In the Bible, the passage we are studying today, we see the nation of Israel making some fatal mistakes that we can learn much from. Sometimes it is important not to make mistakes.

First, consider the episode of the spies. The spies sent back false reports, and the people of Israel were afraid and confused. This lack of faith and trust in God's provision led to a loss of confidence in Him and a failure to trust His promises. As Christians, we need to remember that God is faithful and that He will provide for us. We should always cling to God's promises and trust in His guidance.

Second, consider the example of the Israelites in the wilderness. They complained about the food and the lack of water, and they showed a lack of faith in God's provision. This lack of faith led to a series of disastrous events, including the death of many people and the loss of leadership. As Christians today, we must be careful not to complain or lose faith in God's provision for us.

Third, consider the episode of the Israelites and the golden calf. They made an idol and worshiped it, even though God had warned them not to. This lack of obedience and respect for God's commands led to consequences and a loss of God's favor. As Christians, we must always obey God's commands and respect His authority.

Fourth, consider the episode of the Israelites and the sin of David. David was a great leader, but his affair with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah led to a series of tragic events. As Christians, we must always be aware of the dangers of sin and the importance of obedience to God's commands.

As we reflect on these examples, we can learn much about the importance of obedience, faith, and trust in God. We should always strive to make wise choices and avoid making mistakes that could lead to loss and failure. As Christians, we have the promise of forgiveness and restoration through Jesus Christ. We should always trust in His provision and guidance, and we should strive to make choices that are pleasing to Him.
I. DOUBTFUL MIND

(Luke 12:29)

When Satan questioned live in the Garden of Eden, he caused her to doubt. We read that God said to Eve, “You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die” (Gen. 3:3). But the serpent tempted Eve, saying, “You will not surely die” (verse 4).

Satan is the master liar, and he will wrestle your mind if you let him. He will distort your thoughts and destroy your confidence in God. He will try to make you think that God is against you and that all your troubles are coming from God. He wants you to think that God has let you down, that Satan is the master of the universe, and you are on your own.

II. BLINDED MIND

(2 Cor. 4:3, 4)

Satan blinds us with all kinds of lies—creation, situational ethics, cultural relativism, world religions, and so on. College-age young people are often susceptible to these lies because they have relatively little life experience and are often not very knowledgeable about the Bible. This makes them easy prey for the intellectualist offered by many secular teachers.

Sometimes people experience horrible things. Satan will suggest to them that God is to blame for not stopping these tragedies. Sin can also blind our minds to the truth of God’s Word. Each sin is like a brick in the wall between you and God. Your mind becomes blocked off from God’s truth.

The key to victory is to be willing to come to the light. Let yourself be exposed to the light of the Word of God. Then the image of God will shine on you, and faith will be given to you.

III. CLOSED MIND

(2 Tim. 3:7)

Some people spend years in school learning many unimportant things, none of which will bring lasting happiness. Because of sin, their minds are closed to the truth (John 3:20). Sadly, the picture we see is of Christ standing outside trying to offer life and grace to closed minds (Rev. 3:20).

To fully understand the truth of spiritual things, we must first come to the Savior, confessing our sins and inviting Jesus into our hearts. Then the Spirit of God will become our Teacher.

IV. RENEWED MIND

(Eph. 4:23)

Because of the infalible nature and the choices we made before we became Christians, our minds need to be renewed after we are saved. We need to surrender our minds to Christ.

On occasion I have heard it said that someone “brought a lot of baggage” into a relationship. Similarly, all of us bring baggage to our Christian walk with the Lord. The Bible says, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

We need a transformation, something only God can do. How does He do it? Paul gives us the answer: “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

V. REPROBATE MIND

(Rom. 1:28)

What is a reprobate mind? A reprobate mind has a vanishing conscience. A reprobate mind feels no regret over committed sins. A reprobate mind resents Christ and His Church. A reprobate mind lacks sensitivity to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. In other words, a reprobate mind willfully rejects the claims of Christ and the good news of the Gospel.

These people are not only headed for hell, but they will bring others with them if they do not repent.
The Communion Supper reminds us that it is by going to Calvary—the cross of Christ—that we discover and understand Jesus’ love for us. He says, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself” (John 12:32, ESV).

As we gather in front of His emblems—emblems of His dignity—our hearts have an extra reason to be won over by His love, as the centurion was won at the foot of the cross (Mark 15:39). We do not have to think toward the next time a Communion is celebrated in your community, do not take it as an arriving point but as a beginning, one that still will follow. The reconciliation with God with our faith (Luke 7:9).

The term unorthodoxy can be made by thoroughly examining the first Communion service. They were described by Paul the apostle as in 1 Corinthians 11:27 (RSV), the one-established by Jesus. The Bible says that Paul “did not partake of the sacrifice before the Lord, unless Jesus had instructed him. So Paul, as I have already mentioned, went ahead with his own meal, and one was hungry and another was drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God, and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? For I will not sing with you in praise, nor make known the work of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 11:22, 25-27, RSV).

Paul tries to correct the problem of the wrong understanding and not of the mistaken moral behaviour. We can also understand this from some verses thereafter (1 Corinthians 11:28 and 29). We understand that Paul expressed more directly, “For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body, he eats and drinks judgment on himself” (1 Corinthians 11:29, RSV).

Going back to my query, “What do we convey with the Communion Supper?” I would like to invite everyone to consider the mission of the church family to reconcile and uplift infinite mission, and to the level of awareness that allows one to receive the gift of grace. We are like the Prodigal Son, who, by recognizing the sinner to receive Him, to repent, and to be cleansed from the defilement of sin. It was because the Lord’s disciples were erring and faulty that He washed their feet. If you were a guest in Jesus’ house (Luke 7:42), you were washed your feet. If you had been identified as an unworthy manner in which they participate, then, when do we personally appear to be unworthy, in comparison with Christ? The answer seems to be “the attitude toward the table, they are not to remember and lament their shortcomings. They are not to dwell upon their past religious comings. They are not to think, “I am unworthy.” The attitude toward the table is to be one of gratitude and thanksgiving.” (Ellen G. White, Price of Apos, p. 655).
I am making the case based on the evidence of the rapid expansion of Christianity in the Southern hemisphere, a similar pattern will emerge in Adventism. The growth of the church in Africa, Latin America and Asia suggests that the centers of Adventism will no longer be Washington, D.C., Berrien Springs, Michigan, Loma Linda, California or Sydney, Australia but San Pedro, Luanda, Nairobi, Harare, Manila, and Kingston, Jamaica. And this pattern is irreversible. The implications of these global shifts are vast and challenging for Adventist mission, theology and practice. These demographic, cultural and ethnic changes will merge to create a new church that is almost unrecognizable from decades ago.

If we are predicting millennial, massive demographic and cultural shifts in the movement of Adventism on a global scale, it means that leadership and laity must be concerned with creating those structures that will allow the church to continue to thrive in its new environments. A central and critical concern is authenticity and orthodoxy in theology and doctrine. This is not an academic issue. It is a matter that demands the attention of both theoreticians and practitioners. The potential danger of “inculturalization,” that is to say, a way of transporting and transplanting Adventism in forms that are appropriate to particular cultures in order to make a decisive case for its relevance and transformative power without losing its essential teachings, is vital to our mission strategy. So the question remains:

How will we respond to this new Adventism and maintain the vitality of our unity in diversity in Christ the head and founder of the Church? How will we continue to celebrate the continuing presence and power of the Holy Spirit who is always at work in drawing men and women from every nation, kindred, tongue and people to be part of the redeemed multicultural and diverse community who will sing a new song to the Lamb (Rev. 7:9–10)?

The answers to these questions are complex and varied. They require imagination, creativity, organizational and structural reforms, cultural competence, cultural sensitivity, cultural and contextual appropriateness. These initiatives must be guided by the Holy Spirit. The purpose of this book is a modest attempt to engage in the search for answers to these complex questions and issues. It provides a window of opportunity to embrace this emerging new Adventism in all its riches of diversity and multiculturalism and to leverage it as an opportunity and a blessing to celebrate our differences and explore its vast capital for accomplishing God’s mission in the world.

In the Church’s imagination, nothing is more urgent and compelling than fulfilling the great commission. And Jesus came and spoke to them saying, “All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo I am with you always even to the end of the world” (Matt 28:18–20, The Message).

The mandate, the mission, the message and the promise are unmistakably clear. They are at the heart of the Church’s reason for existence. It is now up to us to develop strategies to make them reliable, relevant and fulfilled.

Ellen White calls our attention to a very successful strategy Jesus employed in His effort to reach those who were the objects of His missionary engagement: “Christ’s method alone will bring true success. The Savior mingled with the people as one who desired their good, He had compassion on them, ministered to their needs, then He bade them follow me.” This strategy is particularly relevant and reliable in a multicultural, multiethnic, multinational context. Like its Head and Founder, the Church must continually explore different methods and strategies to fulfill its commission in a rapidly changing world.

From Every Nation, Kindred, Tongue and People: Diversity and the Changing Face of Adventism

Part 1

Demographic shifts, cultural and ethnic diversity, globalization and the rapid expansion of the church in the Southern hemisphere strongly suggest that the future of Adventism will emerge from the developing nations. There is compelling evidence to support this position. In his carefully researched study, Philip Jenkins speculates that in 2025 there will be about 2.6 billion Christians in the world; 633 million will live in Africa; 640 million in Latin America; 460 million in Asia. Europe comes in fourth with 260 million. He states further, “Africa and Latin America would be in competition for the most Christian continent. About this date, too, another significant milestone should occur, namely, that those two continents will together account for half of the Christians on the planet.” These are figures we cannot ignore. Their implications are vast for Adventist mission, theology and practice.

As the center of gravity shifts from the North to the South, one could expect the same shifts to occur in Adventism. To reinforce his position, Jenkins cites the well-known African theologian, John Mbiti, “the centers of the church’s (the Christian church), universalities are no longer in Geneva, Rome, Athens, Paris, London, New York, but Kinshasa, Buenos Aires, Addis Ababa and Manila.”


2 John Mbiti, quoted in Kwame Bediako, Christianity in Africa (Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 154.

3 It is estimated that by 2020 there will be 50 million Adventists in the developing nations. Several million of the adults will be illiterate.

The joy of Service

I once heard a male friend of our family exclaim, “Women! Can’t live with them, can’t live without them!” I smiled at his frustration but understood what he was saying: my husband sometimes says the same thing. But having women in the church who are committed to the mission of the church is something I’m sure we can all live with. God has seen fit to allow our church to have more women than men in church membership, and this is a good thing. Women who have dedicated their lives to God and to the mission of the church, who go and tell the world about Jesus, are a blessing to every pastor and church leader.

In 1996, when I became the Women’s Ministries leader for my home union (Caribbean Union Conference, located on the island of Trinidad and Tobago), I was not sure how this department would function in the church. Our union had never had a Women’s Ministries department before, so I knew that the only way to see how this department worked would be to use my husband’s church district as my testing ground. My husband Joe was very open to this. We tested our ideas in one of the local churches where we worshipped and worked, and I discovered that women could support the work of church pastors, elders, and other leaders in many ways:

1. Women are called to serve in the communities.
2. Women can assist with visitation of members.
3. Women are natural caregivers and caretakers.
4. Women have hearts that respond to others in need.
5. Women believe in the power of prayer.

How do I know this? Let me share with you a few excerpts from page 463 of the book Evangelism, a compilation of quotes by Ellen G. White. These words have given me a vision and purpose for my sisters around the world.

“The Lord has a work for women as well as for men. They may take their places in His work at this crisis, and He will work through them. If they are imbued with a sense of their duty, and labor under the influence of the Holy Spirit, they will have just the self-possession required for this time. The Savior will reflect upon these self-sacrificing women the light of His countenance, and will give them a power that exceeds that of men. They can do in families a work that men cannot do, a work that reaches the inner life. They can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach. Their labor is needed” (Review and Herald, Aug. 26, 1902).

In the various lines of home missionary work, the modest, intelligent woman may use her powers to the very highest account. Who can have so deep a love for the souls of men and women for whom Christ has died as those who are partakers of His grace? Who can represent the truth and the example of Christ better than Christian women who themselves are practicing the truth?” (Review and Herald, Dec. 10, 1914).

What words of encouragement, not only for my sisters, but for all leaders in the church! The work is too great for any one person or group to complete. God understands this, and He has provided the leaders of His church with an army of talented, spirit-filled, self-sacrificing women to help complete this work. Women are supremely well-qualified to serve in many endeavors of the church. For example, they are capable of nurturing our sisters in the church and the community. They can empower our sisters to become stronger women of God in the areas of Bible study, prayer, and personal growth.

I am not sure what Women’s Ministries looks like in your church, but if it does not include the characteristics described here, we are depending on you to share this vision with the sisters in your local church and help them to re-focus their vision on the things that God has called them to do.

Women’s Ministries is here to hold up your arms and support your work, just as Caleb and Aaron did for Moses. As we look with eager eyes for the return of our Savior, Jesus Christ, let us work together and share the joy of winning souls for our Lord.

Heather-Dawn Small
General Conference Women’s Ministries Director
IDEAS TO STRENGTHEN THE SPRING BAPTISM

A Special Feast:

In March of 1963, Pastor Ademar Quint performed the first youth baptism in Rio de Janeiro. It was called the "spring baptism" even though it was not spring in Brazil; the program was so named because it involved youth who had surrendered themselves to Jesus. That year, 48 youth were baptized.

The following spring, more youth were baptized. Other churches began holding similar events. Gradually, in many places, these events became the major baptismal feast of the year.

This spring we celebrate the forty-fifth anniversary of this baptismal feast and offer some suggestions on ways to make this celebration special.

GET THE YOUTH INVOLVED. The youth evangelism calendar peaks with the spring baptism. It is a great celebration. Each field should prepare orientation materials and promote this special event. The youth and other church members should be challenged to prepare the candidates for this feast.

PLAN A SPECIAL CEREMONY. The baptismal ceremony needs to be one of the best events in the church; there needs to be a feeling of celebration. The event needs to reflect the joy of Heaven felt when a sinner repents. Spring baptism provides the perfect reason to celebrate.

1. Organize the program in advance. Meet with the pastor and others who are involved to plan the event, assign tasks, and choose special guests.

2. Write down the order of the program and give a copy to everyone involved.

3. Prepare nice decorations. The beauty of the church reveals the atmosphere of celebration and makes the environment more pleasing. Take advantage of the season and use lots of flowers and colors, specially around the baptistry.

4. Organize the candidates’ procession. Baptismal candidates may walk down the center aisle as their names are called. You may want to show a photo or a small video of each candidate, mentioning his or her name, age, what he or she likes most about church, the name of the person from whom he or she received Bible studies, etc.

5. Mention the members who prepared the candidates for baptism. These individuals may walk down the aisle beside “their” candidates. This gives recognition to these soul-winners and encourages others to follow their example.

6. Plan a special sermon. The pastor may illustrate the sermon with the stories or experiences of some of those who are being baptized.

7. Make a meaningful occasion. The pastor may call each candidate by name as he or she enters the baptistry, or a young person might announce the name of the person being baptized.

8. Make a call, perhaps just before the last person is baptized. The conversion story of the one being baptized might be used as a call, or the person being baptized may make the call with the pastor.

9. Plan a ceremony to introduce the new members to the congregation. This could take place right after the baptismal ceremony, or, if you want to avoid having a very lengthy program, plan another meeting on a different day, which will give new members another opportunity to invite their friends.

10. Prepare special music. What hymns will be sung during the baptism? Who is going to coordinate the music? There should be no improvisation. Special music should be prepared in advance. Invite good singers. Remember to choose a special appeal song that is solemn and touching.

11. Make a good promotion. Seek creative ways to inform and motivate the church. Many people who are giving Bible studies will be encouraged to prepare their candidates or to invite friends to the ceremony. The Youth Ministries leader of each field or union may prepare promotional posters for the church and invitations to be given to the candidate’s friends.

PREPARE THE YOUTH. Find out which boys and girls are old enough to be baptized. They might belong to the Pathfinder Club, attend the junior or teen Sabbath school classes, go to the local church school, be part of the church families, participate in small groups, or be members of the youth Bible study class. This baptism is special for them. Ellen White says, “As the Holy Spirit moves upon the hearts of the children, co-operate with His work. Teach them that the Saviour is calling them, that nothing can afford Him greater joy than for them to give themselves to Him in the bloom and freshness of their years.” (Evangelism, p. 580).

Some people may question the appropriate age for baptism. The youth should not be forced in this matter, and they shouldn’t be encouraged to be baptized if they are not yet ready. Two aspects need to be considered:

1. Bible knowledge. Youth should not be baptized simply because their parents are Seventh-day Adventists; they should study the Bible for themselves. They do not need to reach the knowledge level of the adults, but they need to know, accept, and live the basic practical teachings of the Bible. Those who do not come from Christian families should receive special orientation.

2. Maturity. Youth need to understand what is involved in their decision, and they need to make a commitment to Christ. Younger children often have a great knowledge of the Bible, but that is not enough. They need to understand what their decision to be baptized means. In this situation, Ellen White’s counsel is very clear. There is no specific age for baptism. Children should be encouraged to be baptized, but they need to be evaluated within their personal reality. She says, “Children of eight, ten, or twelve years are old enough to be addressed on the subject of personal religion. Do not teach your children with reference to some future period when they shall be old enough to repent and believe the truth. If properly instructed, very young children may have correct views of their state as sinners and of the way of salvation through Christ.” (Child Guidance, p. 490, 491).

It is important to remember that one baptism can generate other baptisms. If you invest in the spring baptismal feast, you will be preparing new candidates for the next baptism. Join the other church elders and challenge the church to work, pray for decisions, and prepare a beautiful feast. After all, this is the reason why God’s church exists in the world: to win people for the kingdom of Heaven.
CULTIVATE YOUR VOICE

I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak
(Exod. 4:12)

When we accept an invitation to speak for God, we assume a great responsibility. When we speak for God, we must use a soft and gentle voice and speak in a clear and distinct manner. God expects us to honor Him in all aspects of our lives. That is why He enables and guides us in the correct use of the voice.

As Ellen White reminds us, “The science of reading correctly and with the proper emphasis is of highest value. No matter how much knowledge you may have acquired . . . if you have neglected to cultivate your voice . . . all your learning will be of but little profit” (Evangelism, p. 666).

TIPS TO PRESERVE YOUR VOICE

Here are several pointers that will help you present God’s messages in a pleasing and effective manner:

• Speak with moderate intensity. Speaking too loudly can irritate your listeners and perhaps also damage your vocal chords.

• Articulate words accurately but do not exaggerate the movements of your mouth. Clear articulation helps people understand the message and reduces the strain on your vocal chords.

• Explore different intonations. Try speaking loudly and softly. If possible, imitate the voice you are representing, but do not go beyond your limits. A change of intonation reduces the probability of vocal weariness.

• Use a microphone whenever possible, but be careful not to put it too close to or too far from your mouth.

• Always ask for feedback regarding the volume of your voice. A sound that is too loud or too soft may puzzle or annoy your listeners.

VOCAL WARM-UP AND VOCAL COOL-DOWN

It is common for the voice to sound lower or hoarse in the morning due to the long period of vocal rest. To warm it up, do some vocal exercises such as the following:

• Produce the sound “trrrrrr” (vibrating the tip of your tongue) or the sound “brmmm” (vibrating your lips). There is no need to apply strength when making these sounds.

• Avoid speaking right after ending a sermon or lecture. Being silent right after the constant use of your voice is a way to let your vocal chords cool down.

• Produce the sound of the letter “M” as you chew on an apple. This movement, associated with the astringent action of the fruit, will prepare your voice for speech.

• Breathe correctly. Let air go in through your nostrils, expanding your lungs and going out of your mouth, as you empty your lungs completely.

• Relax your shoulders and neck, making very slow rotational movements (three times on each side).

When you are in front of the congregation, don’t worry about anything except being a speaker. Try to avoid being tied to your notes. Let yourself be used by God and believe what He says: “I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak” (Exod. 4:12).

Alexandra Sampaio
Speech therapist in Belo Horizonte, Brazil

THE ELDER AND THE SABBATH SCHOOL

If the church were to depend entirely upon the efforts of the elders to win souls, the task at times would seem almost hopeless. However, this is not the case in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The church is so organized that it gives the elders many helpers. Every department of the church exists for the purpose of winning souls. Each adds its contribution to the total church program and the building up of God’s kingdom upon the earth.

The Sabbath School is especially conducive to winning souls. The leaders of the local congregation should recognize this and capitalize on the various facets of the Sabbath School to enlarge the church membership. It has often been said that the Sabbath School is the church at study. But it is more than this. It can be, and many times is, a baptismal class and an introduction to a more personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It is common knowledge that in the fast growing divisions in the world the Sabbath School membership exceeds that of the church. It was my privilege to serve overseas for one term of service. In one place the baptized church membership was fifteen, but the Sabbath School membership was two hundred. What a glorious opportunity existed there for the winning of souls to Jesus!

It goes without saying that the elders should attend the Sabbath School. Because most of our churches are not large, the elders can greet the members as they arrive. This gives the members an opportunity to introduce the elders visitors they may bring with them. Knowing who is present will help to guide the elder in his sermon, and greeting the visitors as they arrive will give the elder an opportunity to invite them to be in his Sabbath School class. The fact that the elder is there to welcome them shows the members that he is interested in the Sabbath School.
Another avenue of soul winning in the Sabbath School is the Vacation Bible School. To most people their children are their dearest possessions. If an interest is taken, they will take time to see if they can get that interest to help the Sabbath School, and thereby to Christ. Perhaps the Sabbath School could have in its meetings the names of adults that have children who are graduates of the Vacation Bible School. This will enable the church to keep in contact with the parents of these children and to keep them interested in the Sabbath School, as well as the Vacation Bible School. The Sabbath School can also make use of the children in advertising the meetings. The children can pass out invitations and can tell people that they have been at the Vacation Bible School and are anxious to see what they can do for the Sabbath School.

Some, who once considered the Sabbath School to be a dull and uninteresting place, have been changed by experience in the Vacation Bible School. They have seen the possibilities of the Sabbath School and have become interested in it. Others have been attracted to the Sabbath School by the interest of their children, and have become regular attenders at the meetings. Still others have been attracted by the interest of other members of the church, and have become regular attenders at the meetings. In each case, the interest of the children has been the starting point.

The parents of these children are often the first to realize the value of the Sabbath School. They see that the children are learning the Bible and are being prepared for life. They also see the value of the Sabbath School as a place of worship and as a place of learning. They are often willing to support the Sabbath School, and to help the parents of the children by supplying them with information and by assisting them in the work of the Sabbath School.

The children also benefit from the Sabbath School. They are learning the Bible, and are being prepared for life. They are also learning how to work together, and are being taught to love the Lord and his people. They are also learning the importance of prayer and of reading the Bible, and are being taught to pray and to read the Bible.

In summary, the Vacation Bible School is an effective way of winning souls for Christ. It is a way of reaching the parents of the children, and of reaching the children themselves. It is a way of bringing the children into the Sabbath School, and of keeping them interested in it.

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When evaluating your congregation, one often overlooked group is your single members. These people are often the ones to reap the benefits of your efforts in winning souls for Christ. While some single members may have given up on the idea of marriage and family, others are still striving for that goal. These single members are also often the ones to spread the word about your congregation to their friends and family. They can act as a sort of informal advertisement for your church, and can help to attract new members.

Some single members are also often the ones to act as leaders in your congregation. They can be the ones to lead prayer meetings, to teach Sunday school classes, or to serve as deacons. These single members can be a great asset to your congregation, and can help to strengthen it.

In conclusion, single members are often the ones to reap the benefits of your efforts in winning souls for Christ. They can act as a sort of informal advertisement for your church, and can help to attract new members. They can also be a great asset to your congregation, and can help to strengthen it.

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The elders are a vital part of the Sabbath School, and should be involved in its planning and direction. They can guide the members in setting goals and in carrying them out. They can also guide the members in making decisions, and in carrying them out. The elders can also help the members in their spiritual growth, and in their development as leaders.

When the elders are involved in the Sabbath School, the meetings are more likely to be effective. The elders can help to set goals, and can help the members to achieve them. They can also help the members to understand the Bible, and to apply its teachings to their lives. The elders can also help the members to grow spiritually, and to become effective leaders.

In conclusion, the elders are a vital part of the Sabbath School, and should be involved in its planning and direction. They can guide the members in setting goals and in carrying them out. They can also guide the members in making decisions, and in carrying them out. The elders can also help the members in their spiritual growth, and in their development as leaders.

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The church leaders should be concerned with the single members of their congregation. These are often the ones to benefit the most from the church, and to be the most active in its activities. The leaders should also be concerned with the single members of other churches, and should work to bring them to our church. This will increase the number of single members in our church, and will strengthen our church.
IT IS EASY TO BUILD A WALL.
MORE DIFFICULT TO DESTROY IT.
EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TO BUILD A BRIDGE.
YET EASY TO DESTROY IT.
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