SEEDS

YOU CAN HAVE A GROWING CHURCH
Ministers too expensive?
Dr. Van Dolson in his article "The Adventist Church in the Eighties" (April, 1978) makes a very important point when he writes, "When mention is made of the paid clergy pricing itself out of the market, I believe it already has, but we just haven't recognized this fact yet." Agreed, the clergy as a group of ordained persons in a religious structure is an expensive group. But I noticed the author carefully uses the word "clergy" rather than "pastors." All pastors are clergy, but not all clergy are pastors.

It is refreshing to read that someone is addressing what has become a significant problem in the pastoral ministry—the great brain drain. Our church has so many available positions for clergy in administrative and institutional settings that we are pulling our most competent pastors out of the parish and putting them into other areas. Often these positions are nonproductive in the sense that these people become resource users rather than direct resource producers. The parish taken as a whole is the most consistently good investment the church can make. The clergy may be pricing themselves out of the market, but the vast majority of us in the pastoral ministry are responsible for producing many more tithe dollars than we are paid.

Lawrence G. Downing
Carlisle, Pennsylvania

Second law of thermodynamics
William Watts in the June, 1978, MINISTRY presents a number of suggestions that deserve intensive consideration by proponents of Biblical creationism. The position taken by Dr. Watts with respect to second-law-of-thermodynamics arguments against evolution is correct if the designation second law of thermodynamics is restricted to its historical development in relation to heat engines and the transfer of thermal energy. But the broad philosophical generalizations regarding energy transfer, probability, information exchange, and common sense that include the earlier statements of the second law and that are now commonly referred to by the designation second law of thermodynamics do, in my opinion, provide one of the strongest arguments against evolutionary models for the origin of life and the development of major kinds of organisms from simpler ancestors.

R. H. Brown, director
Geoscience Research Institute
Michigan

Progressive leadership
I'm proud of your excellent magazine and your PREACH program. It is gratifying to have progressive church leadership willing to invest in long-term goals. The results should be impressive.

Ralph H. Ruckle, M.D.
Portland, Tennessee

Most important?
MINISTRY is one of the most important magazines our church publishes, and for me, one of the most interesting. The PREACH project makes MINISTRY quite possibly the most important single publication our church has.

William E. Garber, chairman
Communication Department
Andrews University
Berrien Springs, Michigan

Un-Biblical traditions
I wish to express my appreciation for the excellent article you published recently on the difference between Protestant and Catholic concepts of grace and salvation. Dr. Dederen has introduced us to a vital subject that every Adventist minister should thoroughly understand. How can we give a clear message to the world if we ourselves are cherishing un-Biblical traditions?

Alan Crandall
Loma Linda, California

Don't have to know everything
The Hewitt Research Foundation wants to express gratitude for the article "Let the Laity Do Their Work!" in the April, 1978, MINISTRY. Our recent study on lay church management, which formed one of the bases for the 1976 Annual Council actions, supports the author's suggestion that our pastors need not think that they must know everything when they go into a pastorate, and that many things can, with careful planning, be delegated to laymen. In fact, generally laymen respect those pastors who acknowledge their limitations.

Raymond S. Moore, president
Hewitt Research Foundation
Michigan

Keep them coming
As president of the Tri-Town Ministerial Association, I have opportunity to rub shoulders with all the clergy in our area. The recent issues of MINISTRY have been much appreciated by these men. Keep them coming.

Randall L. Murphy
Pastor, Cicero, Indiana

Top-notch and climbing
Keep up the good work with the MINISTRY. It's top-notch and climbing. A magazine any of us can be proud of!

Jerry Gladson
Southern Missionary College
Cicero, Indiana

Vital truths
Thanks for your especially good article in the April, 1978, MINISTRY on the nature of Christ. The article by Ellen White on the primacy of justification was very much appreciated also. We pray that you will continue to share these vital truths with us in the field. How much we need this emphasis in the church that is charged with preaching the everlasting gospel!

Richard Dickinson, pastor
Cincinnati SDA Church
Ohio

Deeply impressed
I was deeply impressed by your item on the nature of Christ in the MINISTRY of April, 1978. The last paragraph was outstanding. You are doing a good work.

Edwin R. Thiele
Porterville, California
4 You Can Have a Growing Church! Strategic planning is one of the keys to developing a growing church, maintains Bruce Johnston. Vision alone is not enough; methods by themselves are insufficient. But strategy connects the vision with the methods to make the dream come true.

7 The Preacher and His Preaching. Ellen G. White. This letter, dealing with effective preaching, contains counsel just as timely today as when it was written over ninety years ago.


12 Why Not Make Pastoral Prayers Pastoral? Francis F. Bush. Although second in importance only to the sermon, the pastoral prayer is probably the part of the worship service that receives the least amount of thought and preparation.

14 Ask the Editor. J. R. Spangler.

18 Altar Calls That Alter. L. Calvin Osborn.

19 Rearranging Life's Building Blocks. George T. Javor. How should a Christian relate to the implications of science's new ability to combine genes from different living organisms?

21 Ancient Temples and Altars. Larry G. Herr.

23 Bottled Health. Allan R. Magie. Americans take some 40 million pounds of aspirin each year—an average of 280 tablets for every man, woman, and child. Taking notice of what the headache is trying to tell you is a better way.


28 That Missionary Look. Veda Maxson. Is there a certain way that missionaries are supposed to look? Or can all who have dedicated their lives to the Master achieve the same expression?

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YOU CAN HAVE A GROWING CHURCH!

by Bruce Johnston

Not methods, but strategy, can help you achieve the evangelistic results that you (and God) want for your church.
No, you don’t have to be a genius. Neither do you have to abandon everything you currently are doing and adopt a revolutionary new method, so relax. What I am talking about can be done with methods already available. In fact, if methods alone would finish God’s work on earth, we could go home tomorrow. We have plenty of methods, so let’s just forget about them for now and concentrate on the really great opportunities for spiritual growth.

It all starts with writing history in advance. Let me explain. We are talking about doubling our results. So we have to begin with results, not methods. Don’t start by thinking about what program to push this year. Start by thinking about results. Think about what you want to accomplish. Use some creative imagination, and visualize results as if they were accomplished events. See your dreams as if they had already happened—the happy people who have found Christ, the fellowship that members are enjoying together in the church, the building bursting at the seams to accommodate a rapidly increasing membership, a second service each Sabbath, the new Sabbath school wing, and the new satellite churches planted in growing areas of the city or region. This is what I mean by writing history in advance.

It is going to take a lot of people to make the dream come true. They are going to have to catch the vision from you. But if you are thoroughly infected with it yourself and are really excited about it, you can spread the contagion.

The starting point, then, is the vision of what you can accomplish under God for the advancement of His kingdom and the joy of His people. Some might call this process setting goals. The terms don’t matter all that much; the main thing is to decide what you want to accomplish and by what time. (You may want to work on a five-year plan for long-range goal setting, and two years for short-range plans.) Aim high. Let God enlarge your vision. Dream dreams that will make you stretch to accomplish them. But be realistic, too!

As soon as you and the people around you begin to visualize what you want to do, you will find yourself planning the things that must be done in order for the dream to come true. Some call this process ordering the priorities, and it is very important. A lot of serious, hard thinking is necessary at this point to single out the priorities that will make happen what you want to happen. Some things that haven’t been done before will have to be done, and some things that are now being done will have to be abandoned. Of course, everything abandoned will be somebody’s priority, so this does take courage!

You can see now that starting with methods might short-circuit the whole process by overlooking necessary preparation. Until the vision is clear and priorities established, methods are premature. Obviously sooner or later the whole thing boils down to work, and then you must roll up your sleeves and go to work using those methods that will make your dream come true. But first you must know where you are going.

What we are talking about is strategy. Vision alone is not enough. What we are talking about is strategy. Vision alone is not enough. Methods alone will fail us. But strategy puts legs on ideas and connects the vision with the methods to make the dream come true. Strategy includes right thinking, right planning, and doing the right things.

Can strategy planning really make a difference? Can it double your soul-winning effectiveness in only a few years?

Through strategic planning, the pastors and laymen of the Sarawak Mission baptized more new church members in the first six months of 1975 than they had baptized in all of 1974, and by year’s end had added 1,031 new members—more than three times the number gained in the previous year! Across the entire Far Eastern Division annual baptisms increased from an average plateau of 16,000 to nearly 30,000 in four years.

What can we learn from this? What were the factors behind this growth?

When I say that church growth is a result of the work of God, I’m not just tipping my hat to Him out of a sense of editorial humility. God wants growth, yearningly longs for growth, waits (is it irreverent to say impatiently?) for growth, and will give growth when human instrumentalities willingly cooperate. His power alone can bring spiritual growth.

But although the work and the power belong to God, let us not deceive ourselves. It takes human sacrifice as well to make churches grow. It takes hard work and lots of it. One must count the cost and be willing to pay the price.

One could wish for miracles to avoid the effort and sacrifice, but the trouble with miracles is not that they are nonexistent, but that we have not learned to manage them. I suspect that God did not intend for us to depend on miracles as a general plan of operation. The real miracle is the Holy Spirit and the gifts that He imparts to make the church’s work for God effective. It is this miracle that makes it possible to obey the Lord’s commission to make disciples of the nations.

A basic philosophy of evangelism

The worker for God must have a clear understanding that he or she is under orders from the King of kings to make disciples of the nations. Evangelism is not everything—it is...
the only thing. Every other task derives its life from its relationship to winning souls. The successful soul winner exhibits an optimism for growth. He knows that growth is possible, he wants to grow, and he works to grow. Growth is the sure result of such an attitude.

As part of your basic philosophy of evangelism, concentrate on the responsive homogeneous units in your territory. In the Sarawak Mission two basic groups in the towns were especially responsive—tribal people in the process of urbanization and Chinese youth. Among the rural populations the Land Dyak and Iban tribes were most receptive. As a result of concentrating on these receptive segments of the population, 69 percent of those baptized were Iban, 24 percent Land Dyak, and 6 percent Chinese.

Society is made up of homogeneous segments that share a sense of belonging and that are usually bound together by common interests, culture, and language. Try to define such units in your territory and concentrate on those that are most receptive, trying to win entire segments such as whole family units, neighborhoods, or classes of people.

Also make it a primary focus of your evangelism strategy to seek conversion growth. Every church will almost automatically experience some biological growth as children of church members become baptismal age, as well as a certain amount of transfer growth from members moving in from other churches. This growth is desirable and important, but the church that does not make conversion growth its prime objective is doomed to stagnation.

A management-by-objectives approach to administration

Management by objectives is simply another way of saying, Plan to accomplish what you want to get done. The science of effective planning includes six fundamental steps.

1. Formulate a clear statement of purpose. Until your church asks and clearly answers the question “What is our business?” it cannot know what direction it should go or what it should do. Of course the overall business of the church is Jesus’ commission to make disciples of the nations (see Matt. 28:19, 20). However, formulate your own concept of your fundamental purpose.

2. Set challenging objectives. Objectives give you direction and destination. You cannot know whether you have succeeded in a particular task unless clear objectives are set at the beginning. The power of imaginative, clearly defined, and inspiring goals will evoke extraordinary performance from people.

3. List priorities. After you have decided what you want to accomplish, you must come to grips with the things that must be done in order to reach your objectives. This requires taking a hard look at your activities. What are you presently doing? Why? What few things that you can do well will really help you reach your objectives? List them. What activities are you doing now that will hinder you from reaching your objectives? Take a razor to them. This takes courage as well as wisdom!

4. Allocate resources according to priorities. Strategy and priorities are only a fiction unless the necessary money and people are allocated to them. The budget must be committed to the strategy if church growth is to occur. Failing to allocate high-quality resources is one of the greatest obstacles to achieving extraordinary results.

5. Concentrate efforts on the few things that bring results. Concentration is the key. In order to reach the objectives that really count, the energies and resources of your church must be concentrated on opportunities for growth and advance, rather than on problems or on maintaining programs that do not produce the desired results.

6. Review and evaluate. Periodically take a serious look at things to see whether you are on target. Your activities must be evaluated against your objectives. To do so requires facts and honesty. Only constant vigilance will keep high-quality resources from drifting into low-productive activities. Modification or adjustment may be necessary because of changing circumstances, but keep your eye on the goal and do not allow yourself to be derailed by every “mosquito wing” that falls on the tracks.

A candid appeal

Our churches are not growing and multiplying as they ought. Our denominational growth rate is far below what it could be. We are spending much time, thought, and money on things that do not really matter, even though they may be church-sponsored activities. We are maintaining at great expense many things that are of marginal value at best. We lack a clear-cut statement of purpose. We do not have a denomination-wide strategy for growth and advance. There is no master plan for multiplying congregations. Our priorities are not clearly defined. It is a rare church—indeed, an exceptional church—that has a well-thought-out plan for growth. This ought not to be. It does not need to be.

Many are waiting for revival to come so that souls will be won spontaneously. Some shrug off responsibility for hard thinking and planning by saying, “God will finish His work.” True, but He will do so through the church. Millions of people are still waiting only to be gathered in. You can double your evangelistic results and have a growing church!
On June 5, 1886, Ellen White wrote a letter from Basel, Switzerland, to a leading evangelist counseling him in better methods of conducting his work and of preaching. Because the instruction given then is still of value to preachers today, portions of that letter have been reprinted here.

My dear Brother A:

In order to make a success in this work you must do one thing at a time, concentrate your powers upon that one work. Your judgment in this direction is at fault. When you begin to give a series of discourses, make these discourses the main business. Do not begin to write letters and articles for the papers; for you divide your strength in doing this. Elder B and Elder C were corrected in this matter. The Lord showed me that the important work of presenting the truth was being marred in their hands; not one-half the strength was brought into their work, because of their devoting so much time to letter writing. The visiting is the important part of the labor; but the time of these brethren was occupied in almost constant writing which wearied them, occupied their time and did not help the present work but hindered it. The people were robbed of the clear, convincing exposition of scripture, and the devotional part of the work was neglected.

Their manner of presenting the truth was far from being perfect. They rambled too much in their discourses bringing in too large an amount of matter. They were well satisfied with their work themselves, they did not discern their mistakes, and see that their work was far from being what it might and should have been with their capabilities. Now the reason: out of the desk they employed much of their time in writing excusing themselves from visiting because they were so busy and so tired. As the result they were brain weary when they came into the desk; they were not prepared to do a work that God could set His seal upon. They made nothing clear. Yet if they worked themselves up to a high pitch of excitement they thought their discourses were powerful.

They touched here and there bringing a large mass of matter which they regarded as convincing and overwhelming evidence, but in fact they buried the truth under a mass of matter poured out upon the hearers so that the points never could be found. Everything they presented was muddled. So many subjects were brought into one discourse that no point stood proved and clear in the minds of those unacquainted with the truth. That which was perfectly clear to them they thought must be clear to others when they had presented a mass of matter which the mind could not handle. One subject, a few points made plain and clear, would be of more value to the hearer than this mass of matter which you may call evidence, and think your point substantiated. But it is this which the people do not comprehend, and it cannot benefit them.

Your mistake has been this: Just
as soon as you enter upon an effort, you begin to do much writing. Now if your part of the work is to write, if God has said to you as He did to John, Write these things, then give yourself to that, and do not attempt more. If you are to give discourses, your mind is not vigorous enough, although intensely active, to sustain the strain of speaking and visiting and writing. You should let your mind rest in a great degree when you engage in an effort to present new and startling truths to the people, the reception of which involves a cross. You need to carefully select your subject, make your discourses short, and important points of doctrine very plain. Take up one point at a time in a discourse, make it strong and clear and plain, with reasons drawn from the Word of God that all may understand. Your discourses should be short. When you preach at great length the mind of the hearer cannot grasp one quarter of what you say.

Now you are to engage in an important work and let the Lord come into your counsels. Preach short, govern your voice, put all the pathos and melody into it you can, and this terrible exhaustion that is liable to come through long protracted preaching will be avoided. Remember that the whole counsel of God is not to be brought out in one discourse. Let the people have the heavenly food in such measure that they can retain it and carry it away with them and digest it; so that their minds can comprehend the truth, and their souls be impressed with it. It should be uttered in the most pleasant manner that they may want to hear again. The gospel seed is to be sown and take root and bear fruit. The truth is precious, of more value than gold; therefore its delivery should be carefully considered that the message may be presented in such a manner that it will be to the hearer as the voice of God.

Much of the effect of discourses is lost because of the manner in which they are delivered. The speaker frequently forgets that he is God’s messenger, and that Christ and angels are in his audience as listeners. His voice should not be raised to a high key, shouting out the truth as through a trumpet; for this is more nervous power than the calm spirit and power of the Holy Ghost. Jesus, the greatest teacher the world ever knew was calm, earnest, and impressive in His discourses. He is our example in all things.

It is of little consequence how much we either hear or read from the Word of God, or how much we write upon the truth, unless we make the message our own, bring it into our life practice. We ourselves are to be sanctified through the truth. The message of salvation, the tidings we proclaim, concern our individual life and character and practice. We are to read the Word as written expressly for us, and practice the teachings of Christ for our own individual salvation. Then we shall be strong in the strength of the Mighty One.

The people need to be educated. This cannot be done if all the preacher’s powers are given to sermonizing or to brain work and writing; for this unfit the real work at the right time, and it has to be neglected for want of strength. The vitality, both physical and mental, has been expended needlessly, and the work has not been done with efficiency to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. The mere hearing of sermons Sabbath after Sabbath or the reading of the Bible through and through, or the explanation of it verse by verse will not benefit us or those who hear us unless we bring these precious truths into our own individual experience.

In short, my brother, you must take time to be a Christian, not tax brain and nerve to such an extent that you cannot be Christlike under difficulties. It is only by living a life in harmony with that of the Saviour that we meet the requirement of God to be not only hearers but doers of the Word.

The counsels are of God, and His Word was not given in a few days, on a high-pressure plan. It took a long space of time to bring out the Bible history. Under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, a chapter was written, a psalm was composed, a proverb penned, a vision from God recorded, and so down through the ages the will and purposes of God were brought out. About fifteen hundred years were occupied from the time Moses began to write the book of Genesis down to the completion of the Revelation by the beloved John. God would not have us so excitable, in such a hurry; and yet there are some who need to be taught diligence.

God help the teachers of His Word that they may give due attention to their discourses. I know that you do not do this. I know that you write too many letters that tire the mind and have an exciting influence upon the nervous system. You need less of the ways and impulses of A and more, far more, of the oil of grace which will make the machinery run without so great heat and friction.

Quality and Length of Sermons

There are sermons that are so filled with heavenly dew and fatness that the people never get weary of listening. But where this is the most lacking there is an endeavor to make up in length for want of the Spirit of God. But when the people are impressed that the message they hear has first been brought home to the soul of the speaker, that he has proved the preciousness of the truth, that his heart enlarged by the love of God is reaching out for others, that they may be blessed as he has been, that they may be partakers of the same consolation and receive the
same joy—then souls will be stirred. They will come into sympathy with the speaker.

"I do not like to go much beyond the half hour," said a faithful and earnest preacher, who certainly never gave to his hearers that which cost him nothing in the preparation.

"I know that the spiritual digestion of some is but weak, and I should be sorry for my hearers to spend the second half hour in forgetting what I had said in the first, or in wishing that I would cease when I had given them as much as they could carry away."

The discourses given upon present truth are full of important matter and if these discourses are carefully considered before being presented to the people, if they are condensed, and do not cover too much ground, if the spirit of the Master goes with the utterances, no one will be left in darkness, no one will have cause to complain of being unfed. The preparation both in preacher and hearer, has very much to do with the result.

I will here quote a few words that have come under my notice just now: "I always know by the length of Cannon's sermon whether he has been much from home during the week," said one of his flock. "When carefully studied, his discourses are of a moderate length, but it is almost impossible for his hearers to forget the teachings conveyed in them. When he has had no time for preparation, his sermons are unreasonably long, and it is equally impossible to get anything out of them which will stick to the memory."

Another able minister was asked how long he was accustomed to preach. "When I prepare thoroughly, half an hour. When only partially, an hour. But when I enter the pulpit without previous preparation, I go on for any length of time you like; in fact I never know when to stop."

Here is another forcible statement: "A good shepherd," says a writer, "should have always abundance of bread in his scrip, and his dog under command. The dog is his zeal, which he must lead, order, and moderate. His scrip full of bread is his mind full of useful knowledge and he should ever be in readiness to give nourishment to his flock."

"We have important, solemn truth to give to the people. Thank God, my dear brother, that you can act as a co-laborer with Christ; but do not, I beg you, groan under a yoke that Christ has never placed upon your neck. Do not bend under a burden which He has not made it your duty to lift. That which has greatly lessened the effect of your discourses in an important effort is that with that effort you keep up almost incessant writing, so that the vital elements and the condensed arguments are not matters of thoughtful consideration with you. You keep on hand no reserve force. You preach too many discourses, and too long, on a high key. When you cannot speak without being obliged to cough quite frequently do not try to speak; for you so enlist the sympathies of the hearers that they take no true sense of what you are saying. These points are worthy of consideration. You imperil your own health, and make it painful, exceedingly painful, for the hearers, so that anything you may present to them will not have much effect on their hearts or principles. . . .

The Sacred Work of Preaching the Truth

Show that you believe in God. Self-will indulged will drive to infidelity. Self subdued will lead to the submission of thought, word, and action to Christ. The Word of God, not impulses, not impressions must be your guide. A solemn, sacred work is this, to preach the truth for these last times to perishing souls. Take the things God has revealed in warnings, reproofs, corrections, encouragements. But if we have eyes that see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that feel not, then it is in vain that the declaration from God has ever come to us.

God has come very nigh to us; He has honored us by making us the depositaries of His truth, and this places us under the most sacred obligations to be keepers and diffusers of the light that must illuminate those who are in darkness. Has God made a mistake in us? Are we His chosen vessels? Are we the agents whom He has selected to carry out and send forth the last message of mercy to the world? Oh if we only had Jesus in our works, if His Spirit controlled our actions, if it was the rule and law of our life what a power for good we should be in the world.

We must remember that others have pleaded and preached for souls; persons more learned and talented than we have pleaded in vain. But the humble devoted worker feeling his own weakness and depending only upon God will realize the strength and sufficiency of the Mighty Helper.

We must pray more, have more faith. We only partially believe God's Word. We shall reveal all the faith we have. We want to take in the greatness of the work, believing every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. We must show our faith by our works.

Let not one of you seek for the supremacy. Let each regard his brother laborer as a worker for God. Let all plans be opened before the council, and not one labor to be the greatest. Alas, we are blind to our own deficiencies. We are not easily impressed with our weakness and the necessity of seeing as far as possible our errors, not to discourage our efforts, but to bring us to reform and thorough reformation. The minister must stand perfect in Christ, wanting in nothing if he would present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, coming behind in no grace.
The book of Daniel, although written more than 500 years before Christ's birth, contains specific parallels and references to the final deliverance of God's people at the Saviour's second coming. Incidents from the first to the last chapter repeatedly focus on confrontation over the worship of the true God, threat of extinction or a death decree, providential deliverance, and final triumph for the people of God. Thus the book of Daniel has a peculiar application to the last generation—those who will be involved in the climactic confrontation of the ages, face a death decree, and rejoice in that final deliverance at the voice of God and the second coming of Jesus.

Biblical interpretation needs to proceed by a careful observance of hermeneutic principles applied in an orderly fashion. Probably nowhere is this rule more valid than in dealing with apocalyptic material such as Daniel. Uriah Smith in his verse-by-verse exposition of the book used a literal approach in which he identified the historical settings of Daniel and made historical applications from the prophecies.

After such a base is established, the preacher, with homiletic freedom, may draw parallels, make comparisons, and note general principles and consistencies in God's dealings with man, thereby making the texts significant to the contemporary generation, and specifically relating the prophecies to the final conflict and deliverance of the people of God.

Without a basic literal-historical exposition, analogy is unreliable. On the other hand, the mere linkage of history to prophecy is barren, unless made spiritually pertinent to the contemporary generation. The prophecies of Daniel take on meaning for us today when the literal-historical approach merges with analogy in reference to the final crisis and deliverance.

Seven specific accounts of deliverance occur in Daniel's book, beginning with the personal experiences of Daniel and his friends, and expanding to embrace the Jewish nation, the Gentile Christian church, and at last the grand theme of worldwide deliverance from sin and the grave. These seven deliveries are: (1) Daniel's deliverance from Nebuchadnezzar's death decree for the wise men (chap. 2:18-46); (2) the three Hebrews' deliverance from the fiery furnace (chap. 3:24-30); (3) Daniel's deliverance from the lions' den (chap. 6:22, 27); (4) deliverance of the Jews from Babylonian captivity (chap. 9:25); (5) deliverance of the Gentile Christian church from the "little horn" power (chap. 7:26, 27); (6) deliverance of God's people from sin (chap. 9:24); (7) deliverance from the grave (chap. 12:1-3).

Likewise, seven chronological lines in the book of Daniel culminate either in the deliverance of God's people or in the establishment of the kingdom of everlasting righteousness. When placed in context, these prophetic lines all reveal a common focus—the deliverance of God's people from persecution, oppression, and sin. The seven are:

1. The metallic image and the establishment of the "stone" kingdom (chap. 2). Through the ages, various
governments have persecuted and martyred God’s saints, but the great stone shall break in pieces and consume all these persecuting powers.

2. The four beasts and the “little horn” persecution ending in judgment (chap. 7). The prophecy pictures the little horn making war with the saints, but concludes with the assurance that “the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end” (verse 26).

3. The ram and the goat, the fierce king, and the cleansing of the sanctuary (chap. 8). A heavenly inhabitants questions, “How long shall be the . . . desolation?” (verse 13). The answer returns that the persecuting power will be “broken without hand” following a 2,300-year period (verses 14, 25).

4. The detailed computation of the 2,300 years until the “consummation” (chap. 9). The angelic tutor gives the general and specific objectives of the investigative judgment—“to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, . . . to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness” (verse 24). In regard to final persecution and deliverance, the angel concludes by saying, “For the over-spreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation” (verse 27).

5. The succession of kings continuing to the reign of the King of kings (chaps. 11 and 12). The reiteration of the rise and fall of kings and the struggle of nations builds to a climax when the “king of the north” goes forth “with great fury to destroy” (chap. 11:40, 44). However, the drama comes to a thrilling conclusion with the magnificent deliverance of the living righteous and the resurrection of the sleeping saints.

6. The 1,290 days of “the abomination that maketh desolate” (chap. 12:11). This time period, given in reference to a persecuting power, must be viewed in connection with Revelation 13:16; 14:9, 16-18.

7. The 1,335 days until the pronouncement of blessing. “Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days” (Dan. 12:12). Ellen White writes: “The voice of God is heard from heaven . . . delivering the everlasting covenant to His people. . . . And when the blessing is pronounced on those who have honored God by keeping His Sabbath holy, there is a mighty shout of victory.”—The Great Controversy, p. 640.

In addition to prophetic lines dealing with deliverance for God’s people, many parallels significant to the last generation may be found throughout Daniel’s book.

Chapter 1 points out the striking contrast between the faces of those in Daniel’s band who followed the counsel of God and the faces of those who ate the food of Babylon.

“The book of Daniel is an exhaustless mine of truth filled with applications for our day.”

This experience may be seen as a parallel to the contrast between the faces of the wicked, which “gather blackness” (Nahum 2:10), and the glorified, shining faces of God’s triumphant people.

“Jesus rides forth as a mighty conqueror. . . . Before His presence all faces are turned into paleness; upon the rejecters of God’s mercy falls the terror of eternal despair. . . . and the faces of them all gather blackness.” Jeremiah 30:6; Nahum 2:10. The righteous cry with trembling: ‘Who shall be able to stand?’ . . . Then the voice of Jesus is heard, saying: ‘My grace is sufficient for you.’ The faces of the righteous are lighted up, and joy fills every heart.”—Ibid., p. 641.

When the king Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the supernatural revelation of his dream and the manner in which the God of heaven had delivered Daniel from the death decree pronounced upon the wise men he “fell on his face, and worshipped Daniel” (Dan. 2:46). In parallel, during the final conflict, the wicked will see the deliverance of God’s people, and they, as had Nebuchadnezzar, will fall down and worship at the saints’ feet.

“Then it was that the synagogue of Satan knew that God had loved us who could wash one another’s feet and salute the brethren with a holy kiss, and they worshiped at our feet.”—Early Writings, p. 15.

Nebuchadnezzar’s gathering of the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, and all the rulers of [Babylon]” (chap. 3:3) finds a parallel in the gathering of “the kings of the earth and of the whole world” (Rev. 16:14) to the final confrontation.

Other parallels between events in Daniel and the experience of God’s people at the end of time include: (1) the death decree on the plain of Dura (Dan. 3) and the final death decree (Rev. 13:15); (2) the interpretation of the words mene, tekel, and upharsin of Daniel 5:25-28 (“God hath numbered thy kingdom. . . . Thou art weighed . . . and . . . found wanting. . . . Thy kingdom is divided”) and the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14:6-12 (“Judgment is come. . . . Babylon is fallen.” God’s wrath is come); (3) Darius’ diversion of the Euphrates River to accomplish the fall of Babylon (Dan. 5:30, 31; Isa. 44:27-45:1) and the drying up of the Euphrates to prepare the way for the kings of the east (Rev. 16:12, 19). Many other such parallels may be found.

The book of Daniel remains a precious message from God thousands of years after it was written, giving courage to those who face the final confrontation between good and evil. The student of Daniel’s prophecies will find its pages an exhaustless mine of truth filled with timely applications and parallels to his own day.

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WHY NOT MAKE PASTORAL PRAYERS PASTORAL?

by Francis F. Bush

What part of the worship-hour service is the most important? Probably most Seventh-day Adventist pastors would agree that the sermon is most important. Surely, however, the pastoral prayer must rank second only to the sermon.

As a pastor you spend time all week preparing your sermon so that it will feed your flock, but how much time do you spend preparing for the pastoral prayer? Do you, the pastor, even offer the pastoral prayer? In many Adventist churches, if not most, the pastor takes the invocation and assigns the pastoral prayer to the elder. And yet, if it is indeed a pastoral prayer, why shouldn’t the pastor do the praying? What a blessing and encouragement it could be to the flock to see and hear their pastor in earnest prayer to God for them!

Contrary to custom, the practice of the minister’s offering the invocation and a layman the pastoral prayer has not always been so, nor is it a sacred Adventist tradition. I suspect it began as an attempt to introduce more solemnity and dignity into the service as with a dignified flourish the pastor set the tone for worship with the invocation. Yet when ministers began to appropriate the invocation to themselves and assigned laymen to offer the pastoral prayer, it seems to me, they reversed roles and put more emphasis on the importance of the invocation than on praying for the people.

In my ministry I have found real benefit in assigning the invocation to an elder and offering the pastoral prayer myself. As a consequence, thoughtful worshipers have told me that they were helped as much by the prayer as they were by the sermon, and sometimes more.

When well planned, the pastoral prayer can be the most effective part of the public worship service for many in your congregation. But this will never be as long as we view the pastoral prayer as a mere formality that is done simply because it must be done. Through careful preparation and thought the pastoral prayer can have a freshness and vitality, an earnestness and relevancy that will form a new link between hearts in your congregation and their God.

The only way to avoid having this important prayer degenerate into a mere ritual is to give unusual thought to the preparation we make for it. This prayer ought to be altogether different from either the invocation or the benediction. The invocation simply invokes, or invites, the presence of God in the service. And yet many pastoral prayers are only elongated invocations following exactly the pattern and content of the previous invocation. In fact, sometimes the one offering the pastoral prayer seems to assume that the worship service has not yet even started! Others, while praying, seem to anticipate all the blessings of the forthcoming sermon, when really it is the blessings of the present moment of prayer that one should focus on.

Public prayer may appropriately include many phases of worship, but I would like to draw your attention to five—praise, confession, requests, intercession, and thanksgiving. For brevity, plan only two or three sentences for each of these five sections. The Lord’s Prayer deals with six distinct phases, but each one is summed up in a fairly short phrase. It is possible to make each prayer entirely different by focusing on specifics rather than trying to cover everything in generalities. You may even want to select ahead of time the specific thing you wish to pray about in each of the five sections. Such a course would certainly disarm some of those who complain of the worship service as routine and dull if each time they attended church the pastoral prayer sounded different from any they had heard before. This can legitimately be done, and can only be done legitimately, by focusing the prayer on specifics rather than generalities.

Avoid clichés and continually heard phrases, and pray for something current and typical of the concerns and needs of your congregation. Let’s consider each of the five suggested elements in the pastoral prayer, in turn.

Praise

When we read what the Bible says about the way the angels worship God, and see the way that He is honored in the book of the Psalms, we must surely be impressed with the importance of praise. We keep our prayers on a very low level when all we do is ask for things. The more we know about God and the better we know and love Him, the more we shall be inclined to praise Him. Note I said praise Him. I did not say thank Him. The line separating praise and thanksgiving may be a thin one that allows some overlapping, but there is a line. We thank God for what He has done, but we praise Him for what He is. And really, our worship of God is based on who and what He
is, not on what He has done.

What is praiseworthy about God? The Bible says He is merciful and gracious; He is full of kindness; His character is love; His love is past finding out; He is the source of joy, our source of life itself; to know Him is to know life eternal; in His presence is fullness of joy. Reading the Psalms for only a little while should inspire you to find words with which to praise God. If you will break the habit of beginning your public prayer with thanksgiving and change to beginning your public prayer with praise you will find yourself thinking through your prayer as you never have before. And the people who worship with you will find themselves praying with you as they never have before. This feature alone will be a fresh approach to many people.

Confession

After praising God we may turn to an acknowledgment concerning ourselves. How can we ask anything of God until we first of all confess to Him? Confession may be of two kinds. First we confess that we are sinners. We may confess specific faults and sins of ourselves and of our congregation. Second, we should confess Christ as our Saviour. It is pleasing to God for us to confess that we are His children. With what words can we confess that He is our Shepherd and we are His sheep? With careful thought you can do this in a few sentences, without mere meaningless words and repetition.

Requests

Having praised Him and confessed before Him, we may now ask God to supply our needs. We should not make a long list of things, but rather ask Him for the thing that is most important for today. It might be quite different from the thing we prayed for the previous Sabbath, but it should be something that is important to us every day of our lives. This request could be something suggested by the sermon topic of the morning or some widely felt need on the part of the congregation on that particular day. It could be a request for a blessing upon our children, a keener sense of duty, a greater willingness to respond to the call of the world around us, the needs of others, to solve a problem, to meet the needs of the coming week. But whatever our request, it should be specific and timely.

This part of the prayer is distinct from intercession. Our requests of God ought to be for some blessing for the people right there in the congregation. Each church has its particular needs, and it is proper to pray for ourselves and our needs. Remember, though, you can’t cover everything!

Intercession

While our prayers should include our own needs we should go beyond these immediate concerns to pray for others. To intercede is to pray for someone else, and so in this part of the prayer we look outward to the needs of the world, the community around us, or anyone for whom we may have a burden. We may intercede for the sick, for those who have lost their way, for the leaders of the nations of the world, or for the leaders of our own church. We may intercede in behalf of innumerable concerns, but don’t forget to be specific and selective.

Thanksgiving

How appropriate to close such a prayer by thanking God for specific blessings we have received. If you want to thank God for the “beautiful Sabbath day,” do it now rather than at the beginning! Having asked for so much, it is good now to thank Him for what we have received. And there are millions of things to thank Him for—our school, our homes, our children, our teachers, our prosperity, our freedom, the healing of someone who has been sick, the restoration of those who have wandered away, the great reports of the progress of the gospel in other lands, the evidences of His mercy in spite of our mistakes and weaknesses—the list is bounded only by our limited imagination! There is so much to thank Him for! We may especially thank Him for Jesus, and for the gospel story of salvation. In your thanksgiving focus on tangible items that are familiar to your congregation.

These suggestions are intended only as a guideline, not as a source of embarrassment. No one should feel that his prayers are being analyzed and judged. We must remain spontaneous and free and pray from the heart, remembering that any prayer that truly comes from the heart will be acceptable to God. But should we not put forth effort to pray effectively and intelligently?

Must such an organized prayer be written out? Some people feel the need of doing this in order to pray a presentable prayer in public. We should not criticize this, but neither should we see it as really necessary. What is necessary is to think your prayer through ahead of time and pray about it in advance. People often recognize when a prayer is being read, and some are almost certain to feel that the written prayer is a mere formality.

My own plan is to outline my pastoral prayer on a three-by-five index card, making brief notes to remind myself of the items I want to mention. I mentally identify each of the five sections with a finger. My hands may be clasped together behind my back or in front of me, and as I move from one part of the prayer to another, I press one finger against my other hand and my fingering reminds me of where I am.

Ministers who enjoy a close relationship with God in private prayer and find it a source of power and peace in their daily lives, will be an important link between their people and God during the time of prayer in the worship service. When prayer is entered into as worship something happens, unconscious to the pastor and indescribable to the people, that brings power and blessing.

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My second installment of the answer to the above question (see Ministry, June, 1978) concluded with an appeal to keep in balance the great themes of salvation, and to stop pitting one phase of salvation against another. Admittedly, the church has not emphasized as it should have the great truth of justification. However, it would be disastrous should we now emphasize justification to the near exclusion of sanctification.

A recent camp-meeting tour has made even more evident to me the need for balance. Confusion reigns in the minds of some. Church leaders are often misquoted, and extreme positions taken. It seems that some hear what they want to hear, having ears equipped with special hearing aids, sensitive only to certain words and phrases. For this reason we ministers should be extremely careful to weed immoderate and exaggerated assertions from all our presentations. Let me urge you to read or reread our June editorial, especially the section relating Ellen White’s council to A. T. Jones. This sound advice is desperately needed by all of us!

I believe the definition of justification given in the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary, published eighteen years ago in 1960, is unsurpassed. It states clearly and concisely: “As used theologically, the divine act by which God declares a penitent sinner righteous, or regards him as righteous. Justification is the opposite of condemnation (Rom. 5:16). Neither term specifies character, but only standing before God. Justification is not a transformation of inherent character; it does not impart righteousness any more than condemnation imparts sinfulness. A man comes under condemnation because of his transgressions, but, as a sinner, he can experience justification only through an act of God. Condemnation is earned, or deserved, but justification cannot be earned—it is a ‘free [unmerited] gift’ (verse 16). In justifying the sinner God acquires him, declares him to be righteous, regards him as righteous, and proceeds to treat him as a righteous man. . . . Charges of wrongdoing are canceled, and the sinner, now justified, is brought into a right relationship with God that Paul describes as being at ‘peace with God’ (Rom. 5:1). The state of righteousness to which a sinner attains through justification is imputed (chap. 4:22), that is, counted (verse 3), or reckoned (verse 4). When God imputes righteousness to a repentant sinner He figuratively places the atonement provided by Christ and the righteousness of Christ to his credit on the books of heaven, and the sinner stands before God as if he had never sinned.”—Pages 616, 617.

I confess it is difficult for me to believe that I, a repentant sinner, am justified through no merit of my own—that is God’s action entirely, totally apart from my actions.

Through Ezekiel God describes the condition of His people in more powerful speech than I could ever command. The language is shocking, but mightily true! The Lord first lays as a foundation the utterly lost spiritual condition of His people from their very birth. He says, “‘Make known to Jerusalem her abominations, and say, Thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth are of the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite, and your mother a Hittite’” (Eze. 16:2, 3, R.S.V.).

This cutting language is followed by the illustration of a newborn baby girl that, in harmony with frequent heathen practice, has been cast out into the field to die of exposure. No one shows mercy or pity on this helpless infant until the Lord passes by. Then something wonderful happens! “And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee . . . Live” (verse 6). What an amazing picture of God’s love in granting life to one helplessly facing inevitable death! The continued reading of this story reveals statements such as “‘I . . . covered your nakedness . . . I plighted my troth to you . . . I bathed . . . washed . . . anointed you . . . I clothed . . . shod . . . swathed . . . and covered you . . . And I decked you with ornaments’” (verses 8-11, R.S.V.). These phrases pierce the mind in rapid succession with the thought that God takes the initiative. It is God who is acting and doing!

No creature on earth is more helpless than a newborn baby. Could a baby dare claim even an infinitesimal amount of credit for its spared life? The New Testament counterpart of this illustration is found in the words of Paul: “But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be
saved by him from the wrath of God” (Rom. 5:8, 9, R.S.V.).

God not only takes the initiative in justifying man, but, note carefully, what He does is a free gift. Justification is totally of grace and cannot be secured by any works that we can do. In fact, we are just as helpless to perform any meritorious works as Ezekiel’s cast-out baby was helpless to maintain life.

Justification as a totally free gift to undeserving sinners is a vital point that we find so easy to talk about but so difficult to grasp, believe, and accept. Unfortunately, we often describe and explain this magnificent truth in the same manner as a math teacher might explain an algebraic equation. Oh, preacher, pray for the Holy Spirit to be poured out as you lift up Christ—God’s Lamb who “was wounded for our transgressions, . . . bruised for our iniquities,” and who healed us “with his stripes” (Isa. 53:5).

We “esteem Him not” when we get into verbal skirmishes over this subject. We “esteem Him not” when we draw up battle lines and begin to castigate those who see not every point as we see it. Surely all of us agree that we poor sinners can take no credit for what Christ has done for us in His act of justification. Surely all of us as shepherds of the flock agree that we have not set this truth before our sheep in the appealing language and with the emphasis that we should have used.

Ellen White, in 1890, wrote words that we need to heed in 1978: “The point which has been urged upon my mind for years is the imputed righteousness of Christ. I have wondered that this matter was not made the subject of discourses in our churches throughout the land, when the matter has been kept so constantly urged upon me, and I have made it the subject of nearly every discourse and talk that I have given to the people. . . . There is not a point that needs to be dwelt upon more earnestly, repeated more frequently, or established more firmly in the minds of all, than the impossibility of fallen man merit any-thing by his own best good works. Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ alone.’’—Manuscript 36, 1890.

The second point I must emphasize is that we need the continual covering of justification. Well do I remember a very spiritual discussion on this point some years ago with my former associate, E. E. Cleveland. Seeds were sown in my mind by him at that time that have finally led me to my present understanding. Earl made the statement that justification is a covering umbrella over a person’s entire life. For some years I thought that justification came into action at conversion to care for past sins and then reappeared periodically to forgive those sins committed after a person had accepted Christ. Justification in my mind seemed to be Christ’s eraser, which, at the moment one accepted Him, He used to erase the mistakes of the past. Then He lifted it and held it in reserve until another mistake was made that required Him to use the eraser again.

A closer study of the Word revealed that Christ’s righteousness is compared to a robe, not an eraser! This robe must cover me constantly. This is by no means to say that my confessed sins are merely hidden under the robe, and not erased. It is to say, rather, that my sinful nature dare not be uncovered or exposed for a single second. I am in constant need of His justifying righteousness.

Justification is not designed merely to cover us intermittently, when needed, as we sin, as the eraser is used only when mistakes are made. To think of it in this way is to live the Christian life in spurts between sins and to destroy much of the beauty of justification as a garment that clothes us with Christ’s righteousness. In the Saviour’sparable of the marriage feast, the man without the wedding garment was cast out. (See Matt. 22:10, 14.) This is the same garment referred to in Revelation 3:18, where Christ urges Laodiceans “to buy of me . . . white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.’’

Note carefully, the robe is to be worn continually, else we will be in the shameful state of nakedness. This robe must become a part of our daily apparel. We don’t take it off even when we sleep! There is an intimacy about the illustration of the robe. It cannot be held at arm’s length and be effective. It cannot be carried around in a bag. It is not to be hung in a closet, to be used only when needed. It is a garment that is to be ever worn, not because of fear or for diplomatic reasons, but because it is a precious gift that one cherishes and prizes even above life itself. The infinite cost that made this robe available is what makes it so precious and desirable.

The actions of the One who made the robe may be considered to be objective and remote, but when one accepts this robe as a gift held out to us by nail-scarred hands, it becomes a deep, overwhelming experience! One may legally define justification as a forensic action on the part of Christ (and this certainly is true), but the moment the heart and mind, under the Holy Spirit’s influence, understands what the robe is, who provided it, and how He provided it, justification becomes a prized personal possession. It is no longer a theological idea, but a dynamic force in the life. Some may wish to call this development a new-birth experience and the beginning of sanctification. I have no quarrel with these ideas. But I am convinced that in the normal process of conversion a person can no more experientially segregate and define each step in the development of salvation than a young man or woman who falls in love can precisely explain the various steps that eventually lead to the marriage altar.

When it comes to diagraming the truths of salvation, may I offer some advice? There is danger in diagrams. If you use one, make sure you preface your explanation with a warning that no diagram can fully illustrate the point or points under consideration.

Furthermore, it is possible for
diagrams to teach both truth and error at the same time! For instance, a favorite diagram, used for years to illustrate imputed and imparted righteousness, had a diagonal line drawn from the bottom left-hand corner that gradually and erratically rose to the top right-hand corner. The intersection of this diagonal line with a horizontal bottom line represented the point of acceptance of Christ. A similar intersection of the diagonal with another line at the top represented perfection. Everything above the diagonal line symbolized justification, and all below this line symbolized sanctification. I certainly agree that the diagonal line correctly illustrated the advancement of the Christian life in sanctification. But I can no longer agree with the idea that less justification is needed as a person advances in the sanctified life. This is not to say that a person, as he advances in sanctification, continues sinning the same as he did in the beginning of his experience with the Lord. There must be advancement in overcoming sin, but there will never be a time while life shall last that we do not need the merits of justification.

Finally, in all of our preaching and teaching of the glorious truth of justification, let us never present it alone, amputated from the living gospel. Use the most winsome approaches possible to show that nothing reaches so fully the heart of the sinner with a desire for holiness as does a realization of the pardoning love of Jesus Christ. When a man fully understands what God has done for him, truly repents of his sins, and intelligently accepts pardon through the merits of Christ alone, he will then walk in the pathway of sanctification. Justification and sanctification are inseparable in the Christian experience. We may correctly define them theologically as distinct steps, but never preach justification in such a way as to downgrade sanctification.

Some time ago I heard of a minister who placed an extreme emphasis on justification as the absolute and only factor in one’s acceptance with God. The practical result of his preaching was the idea that works had nothing to do with one’s salvation. He shocked his congregation with the assertion that since he was a Christian, saved solely by the doing and dying of Jesus Christ, he would still inherit the kingdom even if in a moment of weakness he slipped into the sin of adultery and happened to die during the adulterous act! A strange illustration indeed, coming from the lips of a minister!

Did David, with his double sin of murder and adultery, ever intimate that during his flagrant departure from obedience he had the assur-
ance of God’s acceptance? Quite the contrary. “When I declared not my sin, my body was wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer” (Ps. 32:3, 4, R.S.V.).

These words, written by David, certainly do not ring with the assurance of acceptance. In his great penitential psalm David pleads with the Lord, “Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation” (Ps. 51:11, 12, R.S.V.). This prayer did not escape the lips of one who had solid assurance of acceptance while committing sin in a moment of weakness!

Were King David to enter one of our pulpits today and face the questions “David, did you feel that you were still accepted of God during the time you weakened and committed adultery with Bathsheba, then tried to cover up by ordering the murder of Uriah, her husband? And had you died during this incident, do you believe you would have been saved?” can we imagine him answering “Yes”?

The Bible phrase that David was a man after God’s own heart referred to his early years when the Lord, through Samuel, selected him as king in the place of Saul; it does not give blanket approval to David’s total life (see 1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22). Furthermore, the record states that what David did “displeased the Lord” (2 Sam. 11:27). The prophet Nathan, in leading David into a full confession of his awful crimes, pointedly told the king that he had “despised the commandment of the Lord” and in fact had despised God Himself (chap. 12:9, 10). The record is clear that the relationship between God and David was severed; David was a lost man until he confessed and repented of his sin.

Ellen White relates that when the prophet’s finger of accusation was pointed at him, “David trembled, lest, guilty and unforgiven, he should be cut down by the swift judgment of God.”—Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 722. In fact, “David’s transgression . . . changed his relation to God. The Lord could not in any wise sanction iniquity. He could not exercise His power to protect David from the results of his sin as He had protected him from the enmity of Saul. There was a great change in David himself. He was broken in spirit by the consciousness of his sin and its far-reaching results. He felt humbled in the eyes of his subjects.”—Ibid., p. 723. When the convicting power of the Spirit came upon David, “he saw himself in another light, as the Lord saw him, and as long as he lived he repented of his sin.”—The SDA Bible Commentary, Ellen G. White Comments, on 2 Sam. 12:1-14, p. 1023.

I wonder how many of us have had the same experience in repenting of our sins. Certainly we know that God has forgiven us, yet we constantly remember our true position before the Lord and with the publican cry out, “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13).

The marvelous thing about David’s experience is that through confession and repentance his relationship with God was restored. This can be the experience of every sinner! What a comforting thought! “In the promises of God to repentant sinners he [David] saw the evidence of his pardon and acceptance. . . . Though David had fallen, the Lord lifted him up. He was now more fully in harmony with God and in sympathy with his fellow men than before he fell. . . . Whoever under the reproof of God will humble the soul with confession and repentance, as did David, may be sure that there is hope for him. Whoever will in faith accept God’s promises, will find pardon. The Lord will never cast away one truly repentant soul.”—Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 725, 726.

Isn’t this our message for the lost today? Unless the sinner sees the enormity of sin, he will never cry out for mercy. And the enormity of sin is seen only in the light of what it cost Heaven to redeem us. No one who looks upon the cross of Christ can ever downgrade sanctification or talk lightly of obedience to God’s commandments. If we, as ministers, attempt to give the assurance of salvation to a person who has no guilt or sense of the awfulness of his sins, we will only lead him to continue through life unvictorious over sin, and worse yet, to become hardened in sin until his attitude toward God and his fellow man will be one of haughtiness and intolerance. We will presume on God’s love, laugh at His law, ridicule church standards, condemn those who mention obedience, and his fellow man will be one of haughtiness and intolerance. He will presume on God’s love, laugh at His law, ridicule church standards, condemn those who mention obedience, all the while he ecstatically marches down the broad way to hell, declaring, “I have the assurance of salvation!” What could be more pitiful?

Again I appeal for balance in our preaching. Lift Jesus Christ higher than ever before. Show the people what God has done, using illustrations and language that will cause people to humble themselves before God.

“We cannot save ourselves. We cannot regenerate ourselves. In the heavenly courts there will be no song sung, To me that loved myself, and washed myself, redeemed myself, unto me be glory and honor, blessing and praise. But this is the keynote of the song that is sung by many here in the world. They do not know what it means to be meek and lowly in heart; and they do not mean to know this, if they can avoid it. The whole gospel is comprised in learning of Christ, His meekness and lowliness.”—Testimonies to Ministers, p. 456.

The point we must understand and impart to a lost world is that salvation is of the Lord. Nothing in us or about us recommends us to God. Our state of corruption cries out for mercy every moment of our lives. Hopeless, helpless man doesn’t have within himself even the seed of salvation. We can choose, surrender, and commit, but even these actions of themselves will not save us. All glory, all honor go to Him who “while we were yet sinners . . . died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

(J. R. S.

(To be continued.)
ALTAR CALLS THAT ALTER

by L. Calvin Osborn

Whoever heard of making an altar call each Sabbath in the eleven o'clock worship service? Suppose no one comes forward? Isn't that embarrassing? Isn’t it easier to preach a sermon and not ask for a response? How will the congregation like being faced with the same routine of an altar call each week? Since most of the congregation is made up of regular and visiting church members, will anyone respond? Will the Sabbath morning altar calls alter anything?

I have found that altar calls alter my purpose in preaching. My sermons are entirely different since I began this method. I am no longer preaching merely to inform, but to persuade the non-Christian listener to accept Christ, and to join the church when he is fully instructed, and also to encourage members to rededicate their lives to Christian service. I am preaching for a verdict. Of course, it is less strenuous to preach a sermon and sit down without making a specific appeal, but this is not God’s plan. The following quotation has haunted me for years:

“There are souls in every congregation who are hesitating, almost persuaded to be wholly for God. The decision is being made for time and for eternity; but it is too often the case that the minister has not the spirit and power of the message of truth in his own heart, hence no direct appeals are made to those souls that are trembling in the balance... They decide to wait for a more favorable opportunity but it never comes.”—Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 447.

Altar calls alter me and my relationship with Jesus Christ. I have become more earnest, excited, and enthusiastic. I find myself praying that certain persons in the congregation will make a decision to accept Christ. I watch the congregation for possible “prospects.” I feel a sense of urgency as I proclaim the gospel. It gives me a spirit of holy boldness. At a previous church I used to make an altar call only when I had someone primed “to lead the way” because I felt self-conscious if no one responded. Now I forget self and personal success and trust the Holy Spirit to bring the results. It is not embarrassing to me if no one comes forward, because it is not my responsibility to convert, but only to proclaim the good news. It is thrilling to know that Christ and I are working together for the salvation of sinners and saints. It causes me humbly to depend upon Him for what will happen in the worship service.

Altar calls alter not only me and my preaching but the attitude of the congregation, as well. The members of the church feel a sense of mission. They can bring their non-Christian friends to church and know they will be given an opportunity to decide for the Lord. The calls encourage the spirit of prayer. Recently several members mentioned that they have begun to pray for souls to respond as the altar call is being given. I find that the congregation is not bored, but inspired and elated as the door is opened for men and women to decide for Christ. Since the call takes only an extra minute and is not prolonged, the congregation is very responsive. The altar call reminds the members of their own responses to the invitation of Christ and thus revives the spirit of evangelism. I now have a more enthusiastic congregation.

Altar calls alter the church membership. In a twelve-month period thirty-two accepted Christ at the Arlington Seventh-day Adventist church and were baptized and received into fellowship. Many of these represent families that have other members, who in turn become possibilities for the kingdom of Christ.

Altar calls give me a new conclusion to my Sabbath morning service. Following the sermon I make an appeal for those who wish to accept Christ or join the church when they are ready. I announce the closing hymn and then urge all who wish to come forward to do so as the hymn is sung. There are no appeals made between the stanzas, no urging. I then step down to shake hands with those who have responded. After the hymn is sung and the benediction pronounced I signal those who came forward to follow me to the pastor’s study. My associates care for the greeting at the door. In the study I give each one who has come forward a decision card, which he or she fills out and hands to me. We join hands in a prayer circle, and I pray for their specific requests. I congratulate each on his stand for Christ and make arrangements for a visit in the home for further study and preparation for baptism.

I must say I deeply regret my old face-saving approach of formal sermonizing without making altar calls. I would never go back to my former method of preaching now that I have had the gratifying experience of seeing souls won through altar calls that alter.

L. Calvin Osborn, Ph.D., is pastor of the Arlington Seventh-day Adventist church in Riverside, California.
Rearranging life's building blocks. Scientists can now reshape the genes of living organisms, raising serious moral questions.

by George T. Javor

The 1970's are witnessing a scientific breakthrough of potential significance, comparable to the splitting of the atom in the 1940's and the landing of human beings on the moon in the 60's. This new knowledge, known as recombinant DNA research, enables man to combine the genes of unrelated species and introduce these hybrid genes into a live organism, where they become active.

Before examining the religious implications of this development, we will describe the continuing gene recombination experiments and the lively debate they have touched off among both scientists and nonscientists.

A characteristic property of living matter is its potential ability to reproduce itself. The information required for faithful reproduction resides in the chromosomes of the cells—the building blocks of living matter. This genetic information is divided into units called genes. Each gene contains a particular piece of specially coded genetic information regarding the structure either of a protein molecule or of a small ribonucleic acid molecule or of some control function in the biosynthesis of both nucleic acids and proteins.

Genes control all of the physical attributes of an organism by controlling protein molecules—the molecules that perform most of the work within the cell, and constitute a large portion of its structure. During growth, the genes inside each cell double in number so that following cell division both resulting cells receive the identical number of genes. This holds true for all forms of living matter from the simplest to the most complex.

In the early 1940's O. Avery, of Rockefeller University, discovered that the chemical identity of genes was deoxyribonucleic acid, commonly abbreviated as DNA. Detailed structural analysis of this substance revealed that DNA ordinarily occurs as a double molecule—two very long molecules intertwined around each other in a "winding staircase" pattern. The genetic information carried by DNA is determined by the particular sequence in which the building blocks of DNA, the nucleotides, occur. The two strands making up DNA are not identical in their chemical make-up, but they contain identical genetic information, somewhat like the positive and negative plates of a photograph.

As chromosomes double inside the cell prior to cell division the two strands of the DNA molecule separate and the original positive strand acquires a new negative strand. Likewise, the original negative half of DNA is joined with a newly made positive strand. In this fashion each new cell inherits the exact number of genes of the original, and the species' characteristics are perpetuated.

In nature it happens occasionally that extra pieces of foreign genetic material find their way into cells. However, cells are not defenseless against this intrusion. Each cell has a detachment of internal-security agents, known to scientists as restriction enzymes. (Enzymes are special protein molecules that promote specific chemical conversions.) The restriction enzymes carefully probe the structures of any newly arrived genetic material. If it turns out to be of foreign origin, the restriction enzymes rapidly degrade and inactivate it. The universal and ubiquitous presence of restriction enzymes is one of the main barriers between inter-species reproduction.

In the early 1970's molecular biologists discovered that restriction enzymes did not degrade foreign DNA molecules randomly, but broke the strands at very specific sites. In fact, these enzymes break one strand only at a particular nucleotide sequence that they are programmed to recognize; the second strand is cleaved at a different site not far removed. This attack on the foreign DNA converts the original, long, double-stranded DNA to several shorter pieces with identical frayed ends. These ends can fit each other in the manner of a jigsaw puzzle.

If these short pieces of DNA molecules are placed in a test tube and treated by appropriate chemical means, splicing of these units occurs. This crucial discovery gave rise to the field of recombinant DNA research. Scientists were quick to realize that if one takes two separate types of DNA, each treated with the same kind of restriction enzyme, and applies the splicing technique, the end products are hybrid DNA molecules.

Most DNA recombination research to the present has involved Escherichia coli. This harmless microorganism, originally isolated from the human colon, is one of the most studied and best understood organisms. Scientists have learned that hybrid DNA is not degraded when introduced into special variants of E. coli which have defective restriction enzymes. Genes of foreign origin thus introduced can express themselves in the host cell.

As scientists began working with this system they realized that highly dangerous varieties of E. coli and other microorganisms might be produced by such techniques. For example, if the gene that carries the codes for the neurotoxin of botulism in the organism Clostridium botulinum were to be spliced into E. coli we would have a truly deadly organism, since less than a millionth of a gram of botulinum will kill a person.

Consequently a number of concerned scientists published a plea in the Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences to halt these kinds of experiments. Later a conference composed of 140 scientists from 16 countries convened in Asilomar, California, for the purpose of dis-
scissoring guidelines in this type of work. Not everyone agreed on the magnitude of the danger involved, but there was no doubt in anyone’s mind that definite risks were involved. The conference agreed to formulate guidelines for recombinant DNA research by which the potential risks would be matched by appropriate containment measures. Unfortunately, the magnitude of danger involved is totally unknown, and this is the point around which vigorous debates have sprung up both among scientists and informed nonscientists.

The majority of scientists feel that the risks are minimal if proper containment techniques are followed, whereas the potential benefits are incalculable. These individuals see this technique as the first step toward being able to replace faulty genes in individuals with inborn errors of metabolism, such as those suffering from sickle cell anemia, phenylketonuria, hemolytic anemia, etc cetera.

In agriculture, the incorporation of nitrogen-fixing genes into plants would do away with the need for nitrate-containing fertilizers. Recombinant DNA techniques could even contribute to the solution of the energy crisis by the construction of easily grown microorganisms that could convert water to hydrogen gas, using sunlight as the energy source.

But one cannot ignore the minority opinion concerning recombinant DNA research. It raises the specter of accidental or deliberate construction of organisms with unknown or unpredictable behavior, especially in large scale use of these organisms for industrial or medicinal purposes. The time when we are in complete control over any microorganism is certainly not here, as demonstrated by the outbreak of the so-called Legionnaire’s disease in Philadelphia, now fairly conclusively shown to have been caused by hitherto unknown microorganisms.

The most extensive current guidelines for this type of research have been formulated by the National Institutes of Health. All research funded by the U.S. Government must abide by these guidelines, as of July, 1976. These guidelines spell out various levels of physical and biological containment, including rigorous systems of hoods, airlocks, and other facilities, as well as limiting the types of strains of E. coli that can be used as recipients of hybrid DNA. Strains permitted for such use would be those unable to survive outside the sheltered laboratory.

Since not all research in this country falls under the sponsorship of the National Institutes of Health, the United States Congress is currently considering legislation to make it a Federal offense to perform experiments involving recombinant DNA without adequate safety measures.

Christians living amidst this controversial development will naturally ask themselves, What is the meaning of all this? Does tampering with genes amount to rebellion against God’s plan for nature?

In the Bible, following the Creation account we find that the Lord commanded man: “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion . . . over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Gen 1:28). Thus the Creator gave mankind a mandate to explore this world, and to use his discoveries for the benefit of mankind. Scientists have found ways to hybridize plants, obtaining new varieties of fruits, vegetables, flowers, etc cetera. Man also has been successful in producing very useful strains of horses, sheep, cattle, dogs, etc cetera, through controlled breeding. All these activities involve genetic engineering of sorts. If carried to their ultimate potential, recombinant DNA techniques would enable man to accomplish such activities more efficiently and to a greater extent.

It might be argued that new life forms that might emerge as a result of the application of this method, would not be offensive to the Creator so long as they did not bring suffering to any existing life form, nor result in the degradation of humanity. Thus, engaging in recombinant DNA research itself does not appear to be rebellion against God.

Nevertheless, like many other discoveries, recombinant DNA work can be used for evil purposes. This was, in fact, the basis of the alarm sounded by the scientists pioneering in this field. The great rebel, Satan, used genetic engineering, perhaps of the recombinant DNA variety, when he went about producing noxious and poisonous plants early in this earth’s history (SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1086). In the antediluvian world, genetic manipulation led to the appearance of degraded forms of species, and to confusion among the created kinds. This sin was the greatest among those that led to that world’s destruction (Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts, vol. 3, pp. 64, 75).

The current mood among scientists is one of opposition to excessive Federal intervention and regulation. They down-play the potential dangers of recombinant DNA research, citing recent data on this subject that would indicate that much of the previously expressed fears have no factual base (editorial by P. Abelson, “Recombinant DNA,” Science 197, Aug. 19, 1977). But the Christian perspective should call for continued or even increased vigilance and caution along these lines of research. It should applaud the NIH guidelines already implemented and should encourage their continuance.

Many Christians are amazed at the extent to which the Creator has allowed sinful man to pry into the secrets of creation. Among the possible reasons for God’s forbearance on this point is the hope that man, after considering the almost unfathomable intricacies he is currently discovering in nature, will come to the obvious conclusion that a loving and wise Creator does indeed exist.
Ancient temples and altars. Despite standard features, places of worship unearthed in the near East show widespread individuality.

by Larry G. Herr

For as long as man has existed he has reached out toward divinity, leaving widespread evidence of his religious concerns in the numerous temples and altars reclaimed by archaeological excavations.

The relatively large number of such structures discovered is due mainly to two phenomena: 1. Archaeologists tend to excavate the most prominent areas on their site, which are often the places where public buildings such as palaces and temples were built. 2. Since much of what is excavated represents a culture radically different from our own, the function of many objects and structures cannot be identified with certainty. The temptation in such cases is to ascribe unknown functions to the most enigmatic of man's activities—his religion. Thus "cultic" remains turn up quite frequently, although through subsequent study many turn out to be quite secular.

By the time of the early Israelites, temples had developed into special buildings or precincts set apart from the secular activity of the town. Earlier scholars tried to define as many similarities as possible between temples of different cultures, especially in their general features, but so many differing forms have come to light that settling on a typical temple plan is becoming recognized as impossible. Each nation worshiped its own particular gods and expressed that worship through temples that reflected the nation's religious personality, much as modern church buildings comment on their owners' modes of worship.

In seeking to find parallels for Solomon's Temple, an activity researchers have been attempting since the science of archeology began, similar buildings have been suggested as candidates now and then, but the general consensus is that there is no temple yet unearthed having a real identity in plan with that of Solomon's Temple.

The temple with the most similarity to Solomon's Temple of any yet found is in the northern part of modern Syria, at a site called Tell Tainat. This structure dates from the ninth or eighth century B.C., a century or so later than Solomon's time. Because it is only the chapel to a large palace nearby, it lacks the storerooms that Solomon's Temple had, nor has a courtyard with an altar of burnt offering been found.

We are thus left only with the basic building itself. Two pillars, like the Biblical Jachin and Boaz, originally stood on a porch in front of a central room (approximately twice as long as it was wide) corresponding to the Biblical Holy Place. Beyond this room is a "Most Holy Place" with a platform for the divinity similar to the function of the Biblical ark of the covenant. This "Most Holy Place," however, is rectangular and not square, as was Solomon's.

As we shall see, many ancient Semitic temples had corresponding features in their temple plans, including the two pillars in a porch and two rooms making up the main portion of the temple, but these were usually arranged in slightly differing plans. Therefore the similarity of the Tainat temple with that of Solomon is probably more coincidental than meaningful.

In order to trace the development of this rather standard temple plan we should look first at temples from the period just prior to the conquest of Palestine by the Israelites during the Late Bronze Age. Probably the most striking temple recently unearthed is that found in the lower city of Hazor. It is complete with a porch containing the two columns, a middle room, and an inner room, the "Most Holy Place," with a niche for the deity. Other temples, such as those at Beth Shan, combine the porch and the "Holy Place," placing the two columns into that first room.

A "Most Holy Place" with a platform for the divinity completes the building. Another temple, probably less formal than these at Beth Shan, was found in a large moat at Lachish; it had only one basic room, into which were placed both the platform for the deity and the altar, usually a courtyard feature. Most of these differences were due probably to the same reasons that modern churches tend to be different from each other—encroaching buildings, dissimilar topography, relative wealth of the devotees, architectural expression, or the effects of specific religious beliefs reflected in the temple architecture.

Another important aspect of temple life focused on the altar where the daily and special sacrifices were offered, although not as many altars
have been recovered as temple buildings themselves. Altars unearthed by archeologists usually stand outside the temple in a forecourt, much like those of the desert tabernacle and Solomon’s Temple, and, like the Biblical altars, represent many different sizes and shapes, from the large, round, outdoor altar at Megiddo to the very small, single-stone altar in the temple at Lachish. Some of these altars had stairs for the priests to reach the top, a practice which was forbidden to the Hebrews in Exodus 20:26.

Amos preached. An actual temple building or an altar has not yet been found there.

The most remarkable Israelite temple to be found is the one at Arad inside a small border fortress protecting the southern flank of the Judean kingdom from possible marauding bands attacking from the southern desert. Even though it is perhaps overbilled by the excavator as a very close parallel to the desert tabernacle and Solomon’s Temple, we should note the similarities. The altar is in a large courtyard and measures five by five by three cubits, the same dimensions as the tabernacle altar, and is made of unhewn stones, following the Biblical injunction. The earliest structure at Arad had no storerooms on the sides but the second stratum added such rooms to the north, almost enclosing the altar in the process, and added two columns in front of the door into the “Holy Place,” as on Solomon’s Temple.

However, the similarities end here, for the “Holy Place” is extremely rectangular, and the “Most Holy Place,” if that is what it is, is little more than an elevated platform to house the presence of the divinity, perhaps as a place for several small standing stones, called massebot, possibly intended to represent a covenant between clans or between the worshippers and God. Also, on the front of the raised platform, as if before the “Most Holy Place,” are two incense altars, still with the evidence of burning on them.

This temple, or sanctuary, does not seem to be mentioned in the Bible, and indeed, seems to have been missed by the purges of Josiah’s reformations, since it continued on through to the Babylonian destruction. It may have been one of those unrecognized places of worship that the prophets railed against so heartily, in spite of several very orthodox elements, such as the unhewn stone altar.

A Judean temple that ignored the command regarding unhewn stones was found at Beer Sheba. It is mentioned explicitly by the prophet Amos in one of his most cutting invectives. The stone blocks of its finely chiseled altar, complete with horns and a rude carving of a snake, were found recently where they had been rebuilt into a storeroom wall after having been dismantled, probably in the reforms of Hezekiah. No wonder it received the language from Amos that it did; it clearly was not an orthodox shrine!

So far, however, nothing has been found of the temple itself at Beer Sheba, although one scholar thinks it could have been a building near the city gate containing an unexplained, cornered stairway that would fit precisely the dimensions of the reconstructed altar. If he is correct, the stairs would be yet another violation of the Biblical commands for altar structure (Ex. 20:24-26). Possibly the temple was completely destroyed by Hezekiah’s reformers and another building constructed in its place.

In the last couple of years an extremely important find has been made in the southern desert near Kadesh Barnea. Here, at a lonely military and trade outpost a small sanctuary has been found whose plan has not yet been published. Its plastered walls are covered with inscriptions, in which the name of Yahweh is mentioned several times. In one case He even seems to have a consort, the Canaanite goddess, Asherah, well known from Biblical passages dealing with heretical religious practices of the Israelites (Judges 6:25, R.S.V.). Several of the votive vessels found in the rooms contain inscriptions dedicated to God, as well.

It would thus seem that what archeologists have found regarding temples remarkably confirms the Biblical record. Certainly, the discoveries illustrate the unorthodox temples and shrines erected throughout Israel and fully illustrate the necessity for the frequent invectives of the prophets.

Larry G. Herr received his Ph.D. from Harvard in June of 1977 in the field of Near Eastern languages and literatures.
Bottled health. Instead of masking nature’s warning signals with drugs, why can’t we learn a better way?

by Allan R. Magie

Pain, feared and often misunderstood, is actually nature’s warning signal. Human beings try to avoid it, yet pain is necessary if we are to recognize actual or impending problems, often deep inside our bodies.

In His all-knowing, divine foresight, God designed into our bodies a sensitive mechanism to reveal changes or stresses that could potentially harm the intricate mechanism of life itself. Man, in turn, has developed an array of chemicals to counteract this mechanism by weakening or blocking entirely the pain signals sent to our brain.

Far too many of us believe that for every kind of pain and sickness there is a drug that will relieve symptoms and cure disease, and therefore every visit to a physician must conclude with a prescription.

Abuse of common drugs

The advertising media and the pharmaceutical firms would have us believe that we can deliberately abuse our delicate physical apparatus and then avoid the consequences by finding relief in a pill.

Are you tempted to overeat? Go ahead and eat the whole thing, take all you want. It doesn’t matter; you only have to drop a couple of tablets into a glass of water, watch it fizz, and drink it down. You’ll feel much better.

Do you have trouble sleeping? Are you tense or apprehensive? Take a sleeping pill or tranquilizer.

As a result, the volume of drug usage in the United States is enormous. Aspirin is a good example. Each year approximately 40 million pounds of aspirin are consumed—an average of 280 aspirin tablets of 3-
grain size (300 milligrams) for every man, woman, and child! One study of a mid-Atlantic county of 112,000 inhabitants found that enough prescriptions were issued in one year for every person to have received an average of 46 tablets! And that figure doesn’t take into consideration liquid medication or over-the-counter drugs such as aspirin, which don’t require a physician’s prescription!

Drug-caused illness
This unrestrained use of drugs has another side, too. Illnesses caused by legally obtained drugs have shown a marked increase in recent years. Of course, certain inherent and calculated risks attend the use of any drug; however, the rise in drug-related illnesses stems more from excessive and unnecessary medication than from these subsidiary risks.

Side effects of modern, highly effective drugs are virtually unavoidable. If a drug has no side effect, then it likely has no main effect! In other words, no really effective drug is absolutely safe. Fortunately, side effects generally pose a very minor risk, although occasionally they can be serious. Sensitivity to drugs varies from person to person, so a drug that has apparently proved safe for one person to use may not necessarily be safe for another.

Alternatives to drug medication
Most of us do not understand the nature of disease or the symptoms and visible indications that accompany it. Much of the demand for drugs and their overuse stems from the fact that the nature of disease is very complex; thus we find it easier to treat symptoms with drugs than to deal with the root causes of disease. A knowledge of certain simple, basic principles can guide us in the proper treatment of minor illness and protect us from unnecessary use of medication.

1. Pain. Because pain hurts and is unpleasant, most people never consider how essential it is to our body’s survival. Yet just think for a moment what happens when this sense is lost. Cuts, scrapes, burns, or other relatively minor injuries often go unnoticed, resulting in infection. In a disease such as leprosy, which affects the nervous system, all sense of pain and temperature is lost. The leper’s skin is often seriously damaged by the burning heat of a kettle or pan, because the normal defense mechanism of pain is absent. Unless his appendages are protected, his hands and feet will become mutilated.

2. Headache. This pain is often, but not always, the body’s signal that it needs rest. The purpose is to protect us from becoming overstressed. Since the body’s natural defense and healing mechanisms work best when an affected part is at rest, a headache that is associated with an injury or localized infection tries to ensure this rest through pain. Instead, most of us are apt to thwart nature’s intended warning by soothing the headache with a pain killer such as aspirin, and plunge into further stress through continued activity. Our motivation for doing so may be good—a sense of duty or the need to finish a necessary task—but good motives won’t lessen the injury done to our bodies.

3. Elevated temperature. Fever is also a part of the body’s defense against disease. Therefore, up to a point, fever is beneficial. Like the role of pain, this fact often is not appreciated. Unless exceptionally high, the temptation to lower an elevated temperature immediately should be resisted. Of course, since death occurs at temperatures between 106°F and 107°F, any fever over 101° should be lowered.

4. Tiredness. No matter what the cause of this body condition, it indicates the same thing—the body needs rest. So it is not really helpful to suppress the signal by using stimulants such as coffee.

The point is this: pain killers, temperature reducers, and stimulants don’t cure disease; they only quell the body’s natural and useful warning signals. If we are paying attention to these signals, we can look for the necessary remedies to correct the problem. Persistently blunting the body’s natural curative defenses with drugs can only bring harm.

Undoubtedly there are times when such chemicals must be used, but for those who desire not to use drugs unnecessarily for common aches and pains, what are the choices? In perhaps the majority of cases the best treatment is not a pill or an injection, but rest, proper food, and a balanced routine of life, including a proper amount of exercise.
The best and ultimate healer is nature’s God. Therefore, one who suffers pain should assist Him by providing the very best condition for the body to defend and heal itself. Prayer and trust, together with an intelligent use of nature’s remedies, are part of God’s plan for a healthy life.

“Through the agencies of nature, God is working, day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, to keep us alive, to build up and restore us. When any part of the body sustains injury, a healing process is at once begun; nature’s agencies are set at work to restore soundness. But the power working through these agencies is the power of God. All life-giving power is from Him. When one recovers from disease, it is God who restores him.”—The Ministry of Healing, pp. 112, 113.

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Touching hearts through healing. Conferences would be well advised to hire nurses to work full time with ministers.

by Janet Skilton

There’s no question—the Lord uses ministers and medical doctors to spread the gospel. They cooperate in the Five-Day Plan to Stop Smoking, the Institute for Better Living, and other health-emphasis programs. And doctors witness also through their private practice. But what about the nurse? Is her only place of witness in a hospital room? Or can she make a contribution to medical missionary work through procedures she is particularly qualified to perform?

As a registered nurse married to a pastor, I have met the challenge of these questions head-on. And after nearly thirty years of such a joint ministry I feel qualified to suggest several ways in which the nurse may work effectively in combining the gospel ministry and the health message into a soul-winning program.

In fact, I believe conferences would be well advised to hire nurses on a full-time basis to work with the minister. And I shall suggest a way to finance such a program.

While working in a large city a few years ago my husband and I utilized a Smokers’ Dial and a Health and Inspiration Dial, as well. My responsibility was to prepare three-minute telephone messages. Most of the time I also answered the telephone when people called in for the free literature we offered on our dial programs. I kept a card file on all who called, and gave the material to church volunteers to deliver.

My part in the program became even more personal when our Health Dial featured hydrotherapy. Listeners were invited to call in if they wished to see a demonstration treatment. We got more calls than I could handle. I went into the home, taking a church member with me in each instance to teach him or her how to do the work. The hydrotherapy demonstrations resulted in a further “water” treatment—baptism.

People calling in for free literature often shared word of their physical problems. Often I was able to answer their questions or, in some cases, to refer them to a physician.

Nurses are, of course, bound by professional ethics and legal restraints. They are not free to give treatments unless these are ordered by a physician. But I know of no rule prohibiting a nurse from giving demonstrations of treatments. This service is little different from that given by a Red Cross instructor—other than its being done in the home.

On one occasion our church-school teacher was ill with the flu. After two hydrotherapy “demonstrations”—fomentations, cold-mitten friction, and a rubdown—she was back in class.

I recall a doctor who called and
requested hydrotherapy for his wife, who was ill with the flu. I went to the home, demonstrated the treatment, and showed her mother what to do. From then on, she administered the treatments.

Doctors have told me that they have no medicine or treatment especially for flu. All they can conscientiously do is to recommend bed rest and lots of fluids. But in our old Washington Sanitarium and Hospital we student nurses were taught that the above procedures were beneficial for the flu. It worked for me this spring when I succumbed. One good treatment from my daughter reduced my temperature from 104 to 101 degrees in two hours.

Of course, such procedures are old hat in Europe, where many people who develop upper respiratory infection do not even consult a doctor. They simply seek out their closest Seventh-day Adventist neighbor for a fomentation treatment.

During our Health Dial, I organized a course of training in gospel medical missionary evangelism for church members. Included were a study of the Bible, Steps to Christ, the Conflict of the Ages books, and the medical classics—The Ministry of Healing, Medical Ministry, Counsels on Health, Counsels on Diet and Foods, Temperance, and The Story of Our Health Message. In addition, the nurse associated with the minister can teach simple courses in anatomy and physiology, hydrotherapy, home nursing, and nutrition. Many churches now have personnel qualified to teach cooking schools.

I have always used the Bible as authority in my lectures. It comes as welcome news, indeed, to many listeners to hear that Christ is vitally interested in their health. Many who attended our evangelistic meetings told us that it was the health subjects that first compelled them to come. It seems no wonder that Ellen White advised, “Let the teachings of health reform be brought into every effort made to get the light of truth before the people.”—Medical Ministry, p. 304.

From my own experience I believe any pastor’s ministry would be more effective if he had a nurse working with him in a medical missionary program. When an Adventist physician is not available the nurse can assist in Five-Day Plans, and in Century 21 Institutes for Better Living. The nurse can work, as I did, with callers in Health Dial, visiting homes, giving hydrotherapy demonstrations, instruction in nutrition, and, not incidentally, Bible studies. By taking church members along, the nurse can give on-the-job training. Thus they can help fulfill the vision of Medical Ministry, pages 300, 301: “In every large city there should be corps of organized, well-disciplined workers; not merely one or two, but scores should be set to work. But the perplexing question is yet unsolved,” Ellen White added, “how they will be sustained.”

I think I have the answer. When my husband and I conducted the Century 21 program, church members told us it was the best evangelism they had ever witnessed. They showed their appreciation by more than doubling their giving to conference evangelism. It would seem that most of the larger conferences could financially support medical-missionary nurses from conference evangelistic funds.

In the world are many men of means and influence. They possess gifts entrusted to them by the Lord “to be increased and used for the good of others” (Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 115). Touch their bodies with healing through the message we have been given, and their hearts also will be touched. Means will come into the conference. Many Adventist physicians and dentists are earning large amounts of money in private practice. If such a program were set before them many would be willing to contribute substantial amounts.

The work remains to be done, especially in the big cities. Let’s not put it off any longer!

Janet Skilton, R.N., is a pastor’s wife living in Keene, Texas, and director of nurses at the Ridgewood Manor Nursing Home in Keene.

**Calling all nurses**

“...Young men who have a practical knowledge of how to treat the sick are now to be sent out to do gospel medical missionary work, in connection with more experienced gospel workers.... Where it is possible, these young men should visit the hospitals, and in some cases they may connect with them for a while, laboring disinterestedly.”—Counsels on Health, p. 538.

“With the knowledge and experience gained by practical work, they [our medical missionary workers] are to go out to give treatments to the sick. As they go from house to house, they will find access to many hearts. Many will be reached who otherwise would never have heard the gospel message.”—Ibid.
The larger pulpit. Why do we confine ourselves to small congregations when we could feed a larger flock?

by Robert H. Pierson

In recent months we've been talking much about finishing the work. We have been praying about it and studying ways in which this might be accomplished. We've asked for re-dedication on the part of both ministry and laity. We've emphasized evangelism, an all-out effort on the part of every one of God's children to share the good news of a soon-coming Saviour.

We've spoken of visiting homes, of distributing our literature far and wide. The printed message of God's love must go everywhere. We've voted funds for evangelistic campaigns, and urged everyone to participate in them. We've encouraged lively support of It Is Written, Faith for Today, and Voice of Prophecy programs, with a follow-up ministry to take advantage of the long lists of interests stirred by these programs.

But there is a larger pulpit that is being left empty or that is being abdicated to preachers with messages of less urgency. There is a pulpit not confined to four walls and a limited seating capacity. It is a pulpit that can reach thousands upon thousands who may never think of attending a church service or an evangelistic meeting. Science has prepared it for the Lord's use, and we should fill it—the pulpit of the airwaves.

More than eight hundred religious radio and television programs are broadcast in the United States every week. The format of these programs includes talk shows, straight preaching, interviews, personal witnessing, dramatic presentations of religious themes, and fire-and-brimstone sermons. Some are sophisticated, top-quality productions; some are homespun presentations. Some are taped in private studios, but many are prepared in the station itself and kept for airing at the appropriate time. Often a radio speaker can tape several programs at one time, so that he need not repeatedly interrupt his other ministerial duties.

Last year the Christian Broadcasting Network, with its center in Virginia Beach, Virginia, spent some $20 million sending out gospel programs to 130 commercial TV stations and more than 3,500 cable hookups in North America. They think telling the story of Jesus is worth it.

Jim Bakker, of Charlotte, North Carolina, a newcomer to TV, claims an audience of 20 million on 181 stations and more than 4,000 cable systems in the United States and 12 countries south of the border. Viewers can telephone a number flashed on the screen from time to time to respond to the program. Last year callers pledged approximately $25 million, and several hundred thousand people visited Heritage Village, headquarters of Bakker's program. Newsweek declares Bakker is planning to follow in Oral Roberts' footsteps with a Christian university where young people can be taught to use the media to win men and women to Christ.

Seventh-day Adventists are doing something in radio and television locally, nationally, and internationally, but it is not a tithe of the proclamation that a people expecting Jesus to return in their day should be doing. In 1976 the Adventist Church was heralding the good news from 3,406 radio and television stations. Adventist World Radio proclaimed God's message on 2,019 broadcasts from four stations. Voice of Prophecy, Faith for Today, It Is Written, the Quiet Hour, and Breath of Life are doing a great work worldwide. We praise God for their powerful witness. Some 30,000 persons have been baptized as the result of our airwaves ministry. But we should be doing much more!

The question rises before us: Why are not more of our ministers using this gift of communication to herald the Advent message? Why do we confine ourselves to small congregations when we could mount a larger pulpit and feed a larger flock? Materials such as prepared scripts are available from our Communication Department. Those who have a radio or television presence should not neglect this area of ministry.

Even though conducting a radio or TV broadcast might mean extra preparation, surely this wider ministry, this unseen audience, should be reached, must be reached, if we are to fulfill the gospel commission. I want to challenge our local pastors and evangelists to give the message wings in your area! Let God's Word "fly in the midst of heaven." Fill the airwaves in your section of the vineyard with the message of Jesus' soon return! Get into the larger pulpit! Reach thousands where now you are reaching hundreds! Let's get the work of God finished and go home!

Robert H. Pierson is president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.
That missionary look. Unique experiences give a unique expression, but all who serve the Master can share that missionary look.

Dear Shepherdess:

In these days of uncertainty and turmoil everywhere in the world it is wonderful to know "what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee" (Ps. 56:3).

Missionaries seem to have a special claim on that verse as they face difficulties and situations that those of us in the homeland do not have to experience. Our friends in Detroit, the Blincis, had a period of anxiety during the 1975 hostilities in Lebanon. Cirila's letter of God's providential care for their son and his family who were there during this very trying time was an inspiration to me. I would like to share it with you, as well as an article written by Veda Maxson, who with her husband has spent many years as a missionary in Mexico, Chile, and other countries. As you read it, I know you will catch the desire, as I did, to have "that missionary look" no matter where your place of service may be. With love, Kay.

God's Providential Care

by Cirila Blinci

Our son Bob, his wife, Karen, and little daughter, Teresa, lived at the mission compound in Beirut, Lebanon, during part of the destruction of Beirut in 1975.

On October 11, Karen was in labor with their second child, but fighting at the foot of the hill below the division headquarters made it impossible to get through to the American University Hospital only a few miles away. Fortunately, Karen's doctor had given her the name of a doctor in another town in case they could not get to him.

With prayer on their lips, and with the help of Mrs. Mary Darnell, a nurse from the compound, they traveled for more than an hour through unfamiliar mountains to the little town of Jhounie, and found the hospital.

Using Mrs. Darnell, who could speak Arabic, as spokesman, the doctor helped make Karen comfortable, and at 4:35 A.M., October 12, 1975, little Daniel Keith was born at St. Louis Hospital in Jhounie, Lebanon. In the words of our son, "When all doors are closed God opens a window somewhere." Only two weeks later Jhounie was invaded by ships from the sea and was completely cut off from the surrounding villages and towns.

We parents in the homeland owe a great deal of thanks and appreciation to those missionary ladies who know how to care for their neighbors. The ladies of the mission compound took complete charge of our son's little family. They cared for Teresa, then 18 months old, saw that meals were supplied for the family, and took care of the laundry, the home, and the needs of mother and baby. Yes, I worried and wondered just how they could manage during this very trying experience, but our Father in heaven had it all in His plans. The love and care of the missionary ladies were an example that we all must learn to follow.

That Missionary Look

by Veda Maxson

"You are just what a missionary is supposed to look like," popped up a dear little old sister one day in the lobby of a church in the homeland. My mind whirled with many thoughts like the flash of an instant dream. What gives that missionary look?

Was it learning to stay by oneself as a young bride miles from home in a foreign land where the language still sounded like the Tower of Babel? Was it the trust that you learned in the Scripture promise, "The angel of the Lord encampeth . . ."? Oh, how sweet you learned that verse to be when the bullets were flying around your home during an overturn of some political ideal?

Or did that missionary look come from learning that you can always feed extra mouths even though visitors are not foreseen? Remember the time when if you saw five people come into the Sabbath school from up in the mountains or the near town, you knew that you had five extra mouths to feed and to teach that spitting on your floor was not the best of hygiene? They would sling their hammocks and spend the days at the pastor's home in the "city." Remember the time on Friday morning when your husband went to the door and called back asking whether you wanted mangoes? This was not mango season, but someone had a tree somewhere that did not know this. You suggested one hundred mangoes and then changed your mind, asking for two hundred. After all, available food was limited at this time, and the family did like mangoes. Shortly before sundown you were doing the last-minute things when a knock on the door, you graciously invited five unexpected guests into the household to receive the Sabbath day blessings. With the solicitous help of the lady and her daughter the floor was swept, the green mangoes were peeled and cooked, and you were ready for Sabbath. Everyone had fresh mangoes and mango sauce. Saturday night's meal was nothing but plain, fresh mangoes. Sunday, as the guests left for their homes refreshed, you remarked to friend hubby that God always provided something to eat, even if it was fresh mangoes.

Did that missionary look come from the time you paid the rent and your landlord asked who your visitor was the night before? He said that you were seated in the front room with the children around you, as your custom was, and right beside you was a very beautiful lady. "Who was she?" You replied that you had had only one visitor about 6:00 P.M.—the neighbor at the corner. The landlord knew her and said, "No, she is very dark; the lady I saw
beside you as I drove by in my car was sitting very close to you. She was blonde and dressed in white."

As you walked back home it dawned on you that your landlord had seen your own guardian angel! Are these the experiences that give a missionary look?

Or is it the tears in your eyes as you listen with a torn heart as your young neighbor girl asks, "Does God ever answer prayers with things that are not good for you?" And she continues how she had prayed to become pregnant with the child of a certain man so that he would marry her. "God answered my prayers for a child, but when I told the father he just said, 'I will give it to you as a gift.'" Was it the mothering you did during this difficult time? Was it guiding her to a better understanding of her Saviour, and finally to full surrender? Was it later, watching as she was baptized?

Or was it when you and your husband walked two hours with Loron and Ruth Ann Wade through the jungles to visit an isolated group, only to find upon your arrival that the message had not been properly understood and that the candidates for baptism were scattered over several kilometers, working in the fields? On your two-hour walk back it was raining full tropical buckets. Walking, wading the streams, sticking in the mud, and being showered with mud, you laughed with Ruth Ann and quipped, "There's nothing like wading with the Wades." You finally got to the railroad tracks just as the train was arriving and you sat in the boxcar cold, wet, and laughing in Christian fellowship. Was it the mud that gave you the missionary look?

Your thoughts flash back to your early mission service. The pastor, your young husband, went to scout out a new district. No matter that it was the size of the State of California. Questioning the home office about the district, your husband learned that there was in this district a family that had not been visited for more than eighteen years. Upon his arrival he inquired of a colporteur where the group was. The colporteur told him, but cautioned him not to try to go in now. "Wait until the dry season, and I will go with you and show you how to get there," he said. But your husband knew the leading of the Lord and insisted he wanted to go. He prayed in his room that if he was to go visit this family the Lord would provide some kind of transportation to get him there. He went to the market place and within twenty minutes had found a truck that was leaving. Climbing up on top of all the produce, your husband sat contemplating God's leading. The truck bulldozed through the grand-daddy of all mud puddles and finally arrived in the next town. A quick inquiry at the local store uncovered a youth who was going in the right direction. Yes, the pastor could go along with him to the Sabbath-keepers. After a three-and-a-half-hour walk up the trails, wading through the river crossings sixty times, in the rain and through the night, your husband had "the missionary look" to say the least. When he knocked at the door Sister Bermudez welcomed him into the house, without asking who or what he was, even though he was covered with mud. She scouted through the house and found him a change of clothes, clean socks, and even a pair of shoes to put on his feet. "You must be hungry. Let me fix you a warm drink." When your husband felt clean and warm again she turned to him.

"Pastor, six weeks ago I had a dream that a missionary was coming to see us. I told my family, and they laughed. After eighteen years, they thought everyone had forgotten us. Ten days ago I had the dream again. My family again laughed at me. But I knew you were coming. Pastor, you were the one I saw in my dreams."

What gives that missionary look? It's the surrender of your life to the Master's plan. He guides and He designs that "missionary look." 

Veda Maxson and her husband, Glenn, presently are working in the stewardship and development office of the Canadian Union.
Sacred Words

Neighbor or stranger
A lawyer stood up one day to argue with Jesus and raised a question that has concerned people of all time. Citing Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, the lawyer had said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God... and thy neighbour as thyself” (Luke 10:27). Then he asked, “Who is my neighbour?” (verse 29).

In every land and through all time people have accorded more attention and privileges to members of their own group, tribe, or nation than to strangers. Neighbors can be trusted; strangers are suspect. The Old Testament uses four terms for neighbor: "amīrēth, meaning "an equal" or "a fellow" (cf. Lev. 6:2); qārōb, "someone who happens to be nearby" (cf. Ex. 32:27); shaken, "someone who lives in the neighborhood" (cf. chap. 3:22); and rea' (feminine, re'ēth), "a friend" or "companion." In the Old Testament verses that the lawyer quoted, the word rea' occurs in parallel with the phrase "children of thy people": "Thou shalt not... bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Lev. 19:18). Thus, to qualify as a neighbor, the lawyer apparently felt, one should be at least another Jew.

The Old Testament also has many words for "stranger," most of which emphasize the temporary sojourn of a person or his lack of kinship ties. Even second-generation immigrants were known as the sons of strangers.

Whatever word the lawyer may have used in Aramaic, his intent was clear. He wanted Jesus to list the criteria for those whom one should treat as neighbors.

Secular Words

Words From Nature

English is a language rich in metaphor, but how often we overlook the depth of meaning in some of these picturesque words, many of which come from the animal kingdom. Sloths are very slothful in their movements, hogs at the trough try to hog all the food, and sheep look at their master sheepishly. Anyone who has tangled with a rosebush can appreciate a thorny problem, and one who watches a duck at midstream may discover what to do when faced with a difficult issue. One Bible writer compared Jacob to a lowly worm (Isa. 41:14), and another admonished the Christian to emulate the Samaritan who came upon the wounded man. He did "Go and do as he did" (verse 37, N.E.B.).

The words below include some in which human traits are represented metaphorically by figures from the world of nature. Using words drawn from natural things or events can help make one’s vocabulary more pungent.

Other words in the list come from professional literature and from this issue of MINISTRY. Test your knowledge of them by selecting the closest match from among the choices given. For the correct answers, turn to page 32.

1. bearish: (a) immodest; (b) insinuating; (c) gruff; (d) tender.

2. cliché: (a) trite expression; (b) elite group; (c) purse; (d) decisive argument.

3. crow: (a) enjoy; (b) warn; (c) gloat; (d) belittle.

4. cultic: (a) superstitious; (b) secret; (c) sacred; (d) pertaining to a system of religious or other beliefs.

5. drone: (a) persuade; (b) vilify; (c) work effortlessly; (d) talk monotonously.

6. epistemology: (a) the science of knowledge; (b) the attempt to translate meaning from one language to another; (d) the study of last-day events.

7. iconoclast: (a) fervent preacher; (b) one who destroys religious images; (c) one who reveres pictures of saints; (d) "once saved, always saved.

8. inventive: (a) exclamation; (b) contagious; (c) insult; (d) command.

9. kerygma: (a) love; (b) mystery; (c) the apostolic preaching that Jesus is the Christ; (d) teaching of the imminence of the end.

10. mawkish: (a) grasping; (b) sickly sentimental; (c) given to display; (d) belligerent.

11. Monothelitism: (a) belief that Christ had one nature; (b) belief in the Trinity; (c) belief in one God; (d) belief that Christ had but one will.

12. nettle: (a) vex; (b) soothe; (c) acquire gain; (d) make peace.

13. pathos: (a) abolutions; (b) producing illness; (c) rejoicing; (d) evoking pity.

14. votive: (a) ecclesiastical; (b) expressing a vow or wish; (c) elective; (d) powerful.

15. Zoroastrianism: (a) belief in a cosmic war between good and evil; (b) belief in never-ending cycles of events; (c) belief in stars as determinants of human affairs; (d) belief in fate.
The Uniform File Plan for the handling of the names of interests, introduced to Ministry readers in 1969, is now in use in most Adventist conferences and churches of North America. It utilizes the Rolodex File, the National Multi-ring Visible Binder, and punched prospect cards in three colors. Also available are cards for filing the names of members. These materials have been available from the Ministerial Association of the General Conference at a substantial savings.

In response to suggestions for modification of the wording on the interest cards, the Ministerial Association, in conjunction with the Lay Activities Department, has produced a revised card that is now available. Although the wording has been slightly revised, the major change is that the card now comes in triplicate so that notations made on the top form will appear also on the other two. They remain the same size, 4 x 6 inches, and are punched to fit both the Rolodex File and the Multi-ring notebook.

Reprints of the articles appearing in the April, May, and June, 1969, issues of Ministry explaining the organization and use of the Uniform File Plan are available by writing to Ministry. However, the prices quoted therein no longer apply. The current prices of the file materials are:

- Rolodex V546 (500-card capacity) with 25 division alphabet guides but without cards . . . $28.95
- Rolodex V1046 (1,000-card capacity) with 40 division alphabet guides but without cards . . . $39.95
- Rolodex plastic insertable guides—set of 50 . . . $7.95
- National #84-361 Multi-ring Visible Binder, including ten divider cards . . . $10.35

Extra insertable dividers for notebook—set of 10 . . . $10.35
Extra insertable dividers for file . . . $10.35

Triplex prospect card—punched for notebook and file. Per thousand . . . . . . $34.95
Triplex prospect card—unpunched. Per thousand . . . $26.00

Single white prospect card—punched. Per thousand . . . $18.75
Single white prospect card—unpunched. Per thousand . . . $11.00
Yellow church-membership card—punched. Per thousand . . . $18.75
Plain white cards, unprinted but punched. Per thousand . . . $12.75

The above prices INCLUDE POSTAGE. All orders must be accompanied by check, money order, or purchase order. Cards must be ordered in multiples of 250 for each kind. Please send your order to:

Ecal chose the FBI again.

"That's why we're here," said the FBI agent. "We need your help to solve this case."