Ministry
International Journal for Clergy
November 1992
Into All the World
“I committed adultery”

The extremely sad experience (“I Committed Adultery,” July 1992) is all too familiar. Through the years the ministry has lost many workers, some of rare talent, brilliance, and productivity, in the same way.

Is adultery, serious as its consequences often are, so much worse than other sins? Is there no way of rehabilitating and restoring such workers, particularly one-time offenders? Do not forgiveness and restoration go together? Can we not do something to save this loss to the church? Do we not have the capacity to do something really Christian in this respect, or will we continue to throw them to the wolves?

In a recent discussion I had with a union president, he agreed that something should be done. But will we? Several denominations are taking positive steps in this direction. I recently read a book about a pastor who had a serious problem. When things finally caught up with him, he confessed to having ongoing affairs with various women in his previous three parishes over a 10-year period. He was removed as senior pastor, made an associate in another congregation (but fully supported by his fellow ministers), and given professional help. In time he regained the confidence of his denomination.

Can we not accept the counsel of the Master in another context: “Go, and do thou likewise”?—John M. Staples, Angwin, California.

I identified with the writer and relived a personal experience. Once again I felt the hurt my actions brought on my loved ones and me, and the agonizing trauma imposed by the administrators of the church I had served for 29 years.

If someone had told me that I would be treated the way I was by the “caring church,” I would have argued the point. I pastored some of the denomination’s larger churches, was always one of the top three soul winners in the conference, and met my conference-set objectives.

I never contested the charge made against me. I willingly complied with the stipulated requirements of conference administration. I pleaded with my superiors to discipline me in any manner they chose, only to allow me to stay in the ministry. But alas, the church didn’t care enough for me to provide any kind of rehabilitation. Their treatment of choice was to apply the scalpel and remove me—without anesthetic.

Several months after my dismissal I met the conference president on the steps of the largest church in the denomination, smiled, and stuck out my hand to say good morning. He declined my handshake, nodded curtly, and walked into the church. I was so heartbroken I wept. My wife has refused to enter a Seventh-day Adventist church since that day. It has also wreaked havoc in this respect, or will we continue to throw them to the wolves?

Several denominations are taking positive steps in this direction.

I was quite impressed with “A Design for Pastoral Accountability” (July 1992). No doubt it will be an eye-opener to anyone who faithfully fills in the chart to determine the individual areas of strength. However, I feel two of the most vital areas were not included.

The most important accountability for a minister, as one who speaks for God, is personal time with God, time allotted for prayer that time that alone gives all other activities meaningful. I believe that the success of a person’s ministry is in direct proportion to the amount of time and quality of the effort put forth in faithful prayer.

The second vital factor that contributes to the effectiveness of a minister is time spent with immediate family. Working through the most intimate relationships in our private lives enables us to assist others.

From my observation, it is in the areas of greatest intimacy—with God, with family—that the pastor has the greatest difficulty. I am convinced that a truly valid ministry must spring from the

(Continued on page 27)
The Seventh-day Adventist Church takes seriously the command of Jesus "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:19, 20, NIV). Therefore we present this special issue describing what the Adventist church is doing to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world.

Seventh-day Adventists have never taught, and do not teach today, that you must become a commandment-keeping Adventist in order to be saved. Only the blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross for our sins can save anyone (1 Peter 1:18,19). People are saved when they accept by faith the sacrifice of Christ (Rom. 3:22-24; Eph. 2:8, 9).

Seventh-day Adventists also take seriously the words of Jesus when He said "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). That is why they emphasize so much the fourth commandment which is the most neglected of the ten commandments. This they do not in order to be saved but because they are saved. Those who love Jesus are interested in learning what He wants and with the help of the Holy Spirit doing what He wants. Love never asks how little it can do but how much.

Jesus gave everything for us and He desires that we give everything in response. The hardest part of Christianity is being willing to surrender ourselves one hundred percent to Christ. A surrender of ninety-nine percent is just as futile as a surrender of one percent.

We present these articles on Global Mission not to boast about what the Adventist Church is doing, but to share the part we are playing in fulfilling the gospel commission. We are part of the great army of Christians seeking to lift up Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And may anything we do be done for the one purpose of glorifying God (1 Peter 2:12).
S

everal years ago I had the opportunity to share my testimony informally on one of the California State University campuses. Ted, a sophomore art student, wanted to know why he had to become a Christian to be saved. "Hindus and Buddhists have high moral standards," he argued. "Muslims and Jews worship a personal God. Jesus was a great leader, all right, but couldn't we just appreciate Him as one of the world's great gurus and remain outside of Christianity?"

"Here's what Christianity offers that's unique," I suggested. "Although many world religions value Christ as a teacher and worthy example, only Christianity honors Him as the unique Saviour of the world." I proceeded to explain that God has high standards that none of us can meet; our only hope of doing business with Him is through the One who is our Saviour as well as our Creator.

These twin facts of life—creation and salvation—not only form the foundation of Christianity but also motivate our worship. That's where the Sabbath comes in. Through the weekly day of worship God has chosen to memorialize both Creation and salvation.

To appreciate the meaning of Sabbath rest we must go back to the Garden of Eden. After Jesus finished His work of Creation on Friday afternoon He proceeded to rest on the Sabbath. Then He invited Adam and Eve to join the celebration of His work—even though they had done no work themselves to earn the right to rest.

This essential meaning of the Sabbath—resting in Christ's accomplishments and not our own—is reinforced by Calvary. On that fatal Friday afternoon Jesus once again completed a work on our behalf. With His dying breath He cried, "It is finished!" Mission accomplished! As the sun began to set, the friends of Jesus laid Him to rest inside a tomb, where He remained over the Sabbath hours to memorialize His completed work of salvation. After His quiet Sabbath repose Jesus came forth and ascended to heaven's throne.

Because of His two great accomplishments of Creation and Calvary, Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath. We express our faith in Him as our maker and redeemer by sharing the Sabbath rest He earned by His work. In keeping the Sabbath we contribute nothing of our own—we only accept God's gift of life and new life in Christ. The Sabbath is much like baptism: both are important observances that signify our acceptance of what Jesus has done for us. While baptism is a one-time event, the Sabbath is a weekly experience of celebrating Christ's accomplishments.

Our own feeble accomplishments cannot impress a holy God. He appreciates sincerity, but His uncompromising law demands a finished work of perfection: "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work" (Ex. 20:9). But tell me, have you ever finished all there was to do when Sabbath came? I haven't either! Often I'm like a hamster in the pet shop spinning inside one of those little wheels. Always moving, always striving, but never making it to the top where the law requires me to be. The Sabbath offers refuge in the completed work of Jesus from the hamster wheels of our own accomplishments.

Complete in Christ—this is the message of the Sabbath. What therapy for legalism! The enemy of souls well knows that many who try to please God wind up trusting in their own works for salvation. Misguided souls who rummage around in their lives looking for evidence that they deserve to go to heaven must lament, "Woe is me, for I am undone!" The Sabbath is designed by God to prevent such spiritual discouragement. Week by week it comforts the conscience, assuring us that despite our unfinished characte...
Into all the world: the meaning of Global Mission

Michael Ryan

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has launched the most arduous plan in the history of missions. An introduction.

More and more I was convicted that time was short and Jesus was about to come. I determined that somehow I would share the hope of salvation with those whom I had neglected for years.”


“From the day of my baptism three years ago in the college chapel, I felt God speaking to me, ‘Go home and be My witness.’ I was afraid, for there was not a single other Adventist in my family, my town, or even my state. It’s a miracle. God has sustained us. Many are now faithfully worshiping God, and many others are studying His Word. Yes, I have been beaten a few times, thrown out of my house, and our simple little church structure has been burned. We are still at great risk, for this is not a Christian country. Oh, but the joy that has been mine to work with God.”

Result? Since 1991, 42 people now faithfully worship and witness for God in a land of 1.2 million people with previously no Adventists and very few Christians.

To become a Christian is to proclaim Jesus Christ. A Christian has no other business, no higher priority, than to tell others of Jesus’ love and His offer of salvation. Seventh-day Adventists everywhere affirm with the apostle Paul: “We preach Christ.” This is Global Mission.

A century of growth

Seventh-day Adventists are one of the fastest-growing churches. At the time of the 1888 General Conference session, there was one Adventist for every 58,000 people in the world. In 1929 the ratio had improved to one for every 6,837. Just prior to World War II there was one Adventist for every 4,549. In 1960 it rose to one in 2,425.

Today, for every 758 of the world’s population one is an Adventist. Of the 250 million people who live in South America, one out of 230 is a Seventh-day Adventist. Of the 46 million who live in the Philippines, one out of 90 is an Adventist. Rwanda, in Central Africa, however, takes the statistical lead with one Adventist out of every 33 people.

Around the world every 52 seconds another person is baptized as a Seventh-day Adventist.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>SDA Membership</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
<th>World Population</th>
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<td>26,000</td>
<td>1:58,000</td>
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<td>1929</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>1:6,837</td>
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<td>1940</td>
<td>505,000</td>
<td>1:4,549</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1960</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>1:2,425</td>
<td>3,000,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>1:1,280</td>
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<td>1980</td>
<td>3,500,000</td>
<td>1:1,279</td>
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<td>1989</td>
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<td>1990</td>
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<td>1:798</td>
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<td>7,097,661</td>
<td>1:758</td>
<td>5,384,000,000</td>
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New horizons

In the face of this rapid worldwide growth, most Seventh-day Adventists are shocked to learn that 89 percent of the church’s 6.5 million members are concentrated in areas where only 23 percent of the world’s population lives. This means that only 11 percent of church membership is found in heavily populated areas with 77 percent of the world’s population.

We are in transition. We are at the verge of experiencing greater religious freedom. Tremendous opportunities were being opened to us; the walls of Communism were about to open its doors, allowing free access to public evangelism halls in the independent countries that have emerged from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Cambodia, formerly unentered, now has several groups of believers.

In 1987 the earth was pregnant with change. The Soviet Union was about to take the good news from everywhere to every corner of the world. Global Mission is an initiative whose time has come.

In 1987 at the Annual Council in Rio de Janeiro, Neal C. Wilson, then General Conference president, first called for a rebirth of missions: to awaken the church to a sense of mission, under the empowering of the Holy Spirit, to take the good news from everywhere to everywhere. Global Mission is an initiative whose time has come.

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Global Mission's time has come. The church is now gathering and preparing the church to respond to one of the most unprecedented sweeping geopolitical changes ever to take place in the history of the world.

In 1987 the earth was pregnant with change. The Soviet Union was about to open its doors, allowing free access to 280 million people hungering and thirsting for something better. The walls of Eastern Europe were coming down, and China's 1.2 billion people were on the verge of experiencing greater religious freedom. Tremendous opportunities were about to open among the vast millions of South Asia. Christian growth was beginning to make inroads into the 1.1 billion people of the Islamic world.

The world of 1992 is vastly different from that of 1987. We are in transition—economic, spiritual, cultural, and political. Values are being redefined. There is a longing for stability, direction, and meaning. And where people are in transition, spiritual opportunities exist. Yet it is not only opportunities that indicate that Global Mission's time has come. The pace of the great controversy between good and evil has quickened. Satan knows that time is short, and those agencies that work with him are busy setting the stage of deception.

Jesus is coming again

Seventh-day Adventists are familiar with the signs of Jesus’ coming. Every newspaper illustrates Matthew 24 and points to the nearness of His return. Negative signs seem to stand out—false christs, earthquakes, pestilences, a resemblance to the days of Noah. Matthew also speaks of a positive sign of Jesus’ coming: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world... and then shall the end come (verse 14).” Is this sign being fulfilled today?

Paul says it will happen. Romans 9:25-28 affirms that God’s children will be found in the lands where it was said God has no people. The text also places this harvest at the time when the remnant will be gathered. It will be a short work, and God will finish it.

What are the challenges? Where is the land that yet remains? Is a harvest taking place in those lands? What should the Seventh-day Adventist Church be doing?

The challenge

One out of every 6.5 persons in the world is a Muslim, and there are 1.1 billion of them. While there is one Seventh-day Adventist for every 758 population worldwide, in the Middle East the ratio is one to every 50,500. India’s 900 million are predominantly Hindu. In north India, areas without an Adventist have a population twice the total population of the United States. China has 1.2 billion people. The combined population of China and the United States is less than the United States, India has 1.2 billion people. China is more than the population of areas within China without an Adventist presence. In the Buddhist world, one out of every 8,400 is a Seventh-day Adventist.

While there are no unentered groups of 1 million people in Eastern Europe, Western Europe has 43 such segments. Massive urban areas that account for 60 percent of the world’s population pose an increasing challenge to evangelism.

### Unentered Countries and Territories of the World

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Presence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>TED</td>
<td>Mauritania AID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>TED</td>
<td>Monaco EUD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andorra</td>
<td>EUD</td>
<td>Mongolia EAC</td>
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<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>EUD</td>
<td>Oman MEU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>SUD</td>
<td>Palestine MEU</td>
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<tr>
<td>British Indian</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Qatar MEU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>San Marino EUD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunei</td>
<td>FED</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia MEU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>FED</td>
<td>Somalia EAD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>FED</td>
<td>Syria MEU</td>
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<td>Comoros</td>
<td>FED</td>
<td>Tanzania EAD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>FAD</td>
<td>Wallis &amp; Futuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falkland Is.</td>
<td>SAD</td>
<td>Wallis &amp; Futuna</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holy See</td>
<td>EUD</td>
<td>Islands SPD</td>
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<td>Johnstown Is.</td>
<td>SAD</td>
<td>NAD Western</td>
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<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>MEU</td>
<td>Sahara EUD</td>
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<td>Maldives</td>
<td>SUD</td>
<td>Yemen MEU</td>
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<td>Countries of the World (UN 1991)</td>
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<td>Countries with SDA presence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Countries with no SDA presence</td>
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</table>

Progress—"Where they say God has no people"

Islam. Which area of the world has the highest percentage of church growth? Inter-America? South America? Southeast Africa? Papua New Guinea? Over a 10-year period, the church in one Middle Eastern country has experienced a growth rate of 814 percent. By the power of the Holy Spirit more than 50 new churches will be planted in the Middle East by the year 2000. Recently 43 were baptized in a country that has never had a Seventh-day Adventist presence before. Muslim North Africa has had similar experience.

Hinduism. 1992 marks 100 years of Seventh-day Adventist presence in India. During these years 800 companies and churches have been established. In the next eight years the Southern Asia Division hopes to organize 950 new companies and churches. More than 120 of these have already been established, 91 in areas of 1 million people that have had no Adventist presence. Nepal now has an organized company of believers.

Communism to Christianity. Thousands of people are filling and refilling public evangelism halls in the independent countries that have emerged from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Cambodia, formerly unentered, now has several groups of believers.

China. According to a Chinese government report, there are 200,000 Seventh-day Adventists in China. Recent advances in religious freedom have made it possible for thousands to respond to the gospel. Within the guidelines provided
To every nation, kindred, tongue, and people" Rev. 14:6

Population per SDA Member

- No SDA Members
- Above 5000
- 1000 to 5000
- 50 to 1000
- Less than 50

LEGEND (Numbers)
Large numbers - Country population in millions
Small numbers/population segments of one million with no SDA
(Countries with less than one million are not labeled)

Data for January, 1990
We are God’s ambassadors to proclaim the hope of Jesus Christ to a lost world.

by the government, the church has experienced significant growth.

Buddhism. Adventist work began in Sri Lanka 80 years ago. In all these years Adventists have a presence in only 10 of the 22 predominantly Buddhist districts of Sri Lanka. Since 1990, amid intense persecution and church burnings, groups of believers have been established in seven additional states. It is the goal of the Sri Lanka Union to have groups worshipping in all 22 districts by the year 1995. In Thailand, where Buddhism claims 62 million, the Adventist Church has planted 31 new churches and plans to establish 106 more by the year 2000.

Youth. A grass-roots movement among the youth of the church is impacting on Global Mission. Apart from the Holy Spirit, the most significant worldwide variable that is making Global Mission go forward is the young people. Think of the young Taskforce teams scattered around the world. Consider the students from Spicer College and the difference they are making for Global Mission in India. Hundreds of young people are risking their lives at this very moment to plant the gospel in closed and hostile areas of the world. The Far Eastern Division has just launched the most dynamic youth missionary movement, with plans to send 1,000 missionaries into Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and Communist countries.

Everybody to everywhere
What is Global Mission? I want to make one thing perfectly clear. Global Mission is an initiative to penetrate the unentered areas of the world with the gospel of Jesus. Every country of the world has “unentered areas.” A next door neighbor can be an unentered area. In this task, every division, union, conference/mission, church, and member has a part.

Some have misunderstood the Global Mission initiative. They have thought that it was a program for some far-off distant land for which they were to contribute money. Giving money is important and appreciated, but Global Mission extends much further. If a conference/mission or a church has not identified unentered areas close to home and become involved in taking Jesus to neighbors and friends, that conference/mission or church has missed one very important aspect of Global Mission.

For example, the Atlantic Union, in the North American Division, has tentatively selected more than 50 unentered areas for penetration. The South American Division, with a membership of more than 1 million, has identified 4,172 unentered municipalities. By 1995 the division hopes to have a Seventh-day Adventist presence in every municipality.

Global Mission information for pastors
Global Mission office at the General Conference. For more information on Global Mission services, call toll-free (within the USA) 1-800-648-5824. For example, call:

- to involve your church in prayer for a specific unentered area.
- for more information on the progress and challenge of Global Mission.
- to find out how your church can be involved in small projects. Small projects are those that (1) are affordable; (2) focus on finishing the work—preaching Christ and establishing a body of believers in an unentered area; and (3) include frequent reports to inform church members of results.
- for speakers for Global Mission weekends.
- for materials for a church Global Mission bulletin board (many churches are doing this).

Center for International Relations. Call if people or youth groups would like to volunteer to take Jesus to an unentered area.

Study Centers. Centers focusing on the challenges and opportunities of working among Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and the urban masses have been established in different parts of the world field.

Organization and finance
Membership involvement forms the backbone of Global Mission. Global Mission has been organized as the president’s program. From conference/mission to the General Conference, the president takes responsibility for direction and emphasis. Global Mission serves to coordinate existing church resources to establish Seventh-day Adventist congregations in unentered areas. All play a part. Without the participation of dedicated Adventists and such ministries as the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Adventist World Radio, Church Ministries, Communication, Education, Health and Temperance, Ministerial, Publishing, and other departments and institutions, Global Mission would have no resources or programs. All of these entities play a role and are vital in realizing the Global Mission objective. Global Mission itself is not a department, but an initiative to which every resource of the church is being summoned.

The General Conference provides a special Global Mission appropriation to the four divisions and one attached union in which are found most of the unentered territories. Approximately 12 percent of the General Conference Global Mission funds go for operation of the Global Mission Office at the General Conference. The Global Mission Office includes the Center for International Relations, Global Urban Mission, and the three Religious Study Centers located in England, India, and Thailand. Other divisions also receive funds for Global Mission projects as provided by donors through development. When donors send money for a Global Mission project, all of the funds are sent to the project and none of the funds are kept for operational overhead.

The window of opportunity for Global Mission may remain open only for a moment—a moment filled with the greatest display of the power of the Holy Spirit, a moment in which the unveiled ambitions of evil will directly conflict with Christ’s desire that all people will go to heaven. We are God’s ambassadors to proclaim the hope of Jesus Christ to a lost world. Now is the time. God’s church will rise to the challenge of Global Mission.

* An Adventist presence is defined as an organized local church.
## Global Mission Progress Analysis, July 1990 — June 1992

<table>
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<th>Entity Division **</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Appropriations</th>
<th>Project Donations</th>
<th>Groups Identified</th>
<th>Groups Targeted*</th>
<th>Groups Identified</th>
<th>Groups Targeted*</th>
<th>Churches Established</th>
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<td>Niger Stop Smoking/Better Living Ctr</td>
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<td>Congo, 4 targets</td>
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*Projects approved, funding incomplete.

*Each group contains a population of one million with no SDA members at the beginning of 1990.

*Targeted means plans have been completed for and/or activities have begun in these groups.

**AID=Africa-Indian Ocean; EAD=East Africa; EUD=Euro-Africa; ESD=Eura-Asia; FED=Far Eastern; IAD=Inter-American; NAD=North American; SAD=South American; SPD=South Pacific; SUD=Southern Asia; TED=Trans European; MEU=Middle East Union; SAU=South em Africa Union; EAAC=East Asia Administrative Committee.
Exclusivism, pluralism, and Global Mission

Russell Staples

How to vitalize the spirit of missions without sacrificing theological fundamentals.

The missionary enterprise of the church has always had challenges to meet and difficulties to overcome, but relatively seldom has the traditional concept of mission itself been directly challenged from within the church. No, I am not thinking of the perennial struggles the church has within itself to maintain missionary consciousness and the flow of resources to missions, or even to combat the ever-present tendencies to turn the structures and resources of mission into a church maintenance system. The challenge I am thinking of is more abstract and resistant.

About 30 years ago W. Cantwell Smith suggested that Christianity was facing its third great challenge. He identified the first as its encounter with Greek philosophy; the second as the encounter with the Age of Reason and Science; and the third as just beginning, the encounter with other world religions. A half-century earlier the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh (1910), with ringing optimism, had declared the world more open to the gospel than it had been at almost any time previously, and the other religions moribund and ready to die. The world religions were regarded somewhat as darkness that would disappear before the light of education and the gospel. Now, 80 years later, the “heathen” are no longer “over there,” they are here. The non-Christian religions themselves have undergone a process of revitalization in reaction to Christianity and Western culture. Some branches of these religions are bubbling over with fundamentalistic zeal and evangelistic fervor.

Pluralism in the West

Religious pluralism exerts profound legal and religious consequences. In some Western countries where religion is taught in public schools, it is now required that all religions be given equal time and that Christianity be taught simply as one of, and on an equal footing with, the great religions of the world. Christian hymns may not be sung at assembly, as was the custom in my high school days, not even carols at Christmastime; and Christian communities are keenly aware of this loss.

Furthermore, some of these world religious communities hold such high ethical and social standards that maintenance of values in some Christian communities appears contemptibly weak and shabby. In the seeming absence of Christian conviction, world religions are converting from within the Christian fold. In the light of religious pluralism and the failure to win significantly large cohorts to Christianity, it would seem, alas, that the prediction of Cantwell Smith is a more nearly accurate reflection of the contemporary situation than the Edinburgh pronouncement.

It is not surprising, then, that within the past 20 years there has risen a new theological subdiscipline, “theology of religions,” that is coming to dominate missiological thinking. In fact, it appears to be the hottest subject on the evangelical theological agenda. Books dealing directly with Christianity’s relationship
to other religions and missiological approach to peoples of other faiths are coming off the presses at an astounding rate. And, given the state of the debate, this challenge is likely to be a major missions issue for some time to come.

On one side of the debate are scholars who favor religious pluralism and support a "wider ecumenism" of religions. On the other side are evangelicals with the greatest mission enthusiasm since the days of the Student Volunteer movement a century ago. These evangelicals are moved by a vibrant eschatological fervency, partly coupled with ideas regarding the beginning of the third Christian millennium and the possibility of a world with a Christian presence in every unreached people group by the end of this millennium. Thus two opposing currents of thought, each of which is profoundly missionary, are now in open confrontation.

This article will set forth the major reasons for the rise of this "wider ecumenism" movement, examine leading positions in the evangelical stance, and make some suggestions regarding a possible Adventist posture.

**Christianity and other religions**

How should Christianity relate to other religions? Generally answers take one of four perspectives: exclusivism, inclusivism, pluralism, and relativism.

*Exclusivists* maintain that the central claims of Christianity are uniquely true and that the claims of other religions are to be rejected when these are in conflict with Christianity and its major tenets. One such uniquely true claim is that Jesus is the only Lord and Saviour of humankind. This is generally the position of American evangelicals.

*Inclusivists* affirm the uniqueness of Jesus Christ on the one hand and on the other the possibility of God's saving activity in other religions. They seek to avoid minimizing the truth claims of the gospel, but allow that God may also work in other ways and in other religions.

*Pluralists*, in contradistinction to both exclusivists and inclusivists, are prepared to abandon the claims of Christianity to exclusive truth or uniqueness in favor of a willingness to recognize truth and the saving activity of God in all religions, with Christ being one of the great figures God has used to call people to faithfulness. Christianity is thus one form of religious expression among other equally valid responses to the divine reality.

*Relativists* tend to be agnostic. They recognize no exclusive truth, and as such are diametrically opposed to pluralists, who accept the truth claims of religion and advocate a certain kind of missionary activity.

Our concern in this article is primarily on a dialogue between exclusivism and pluralism.

**Why pluralism?**

Several factors are responsible for the rise of pluralistic position. First, reflections on theological positions have raised questions on uniqueness. Such positions include the concept of endless punishment without any hope of deliverance for those who have not heard the gospel; understandings of the function and scope of general revelation and special revelation and of the relationship between the two; functions of the Holy Spirit in the missionary process; and concepts of salvation and universalism.

Second, insights from the social sciences and history of religions have un-

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"I predict that before you finish the last chapter, you will dust off the welcome mat, invite some company, warm up the oven, and wait with anticipation for God and your guests."  
—J. Allen Petersen, President, Family Concern, Inc.

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Has not the evangelical exclusivist approach perhaps narrowed too much the theological foundations of mission?

deroed claims of Christian uniqueness. Parallels in the development of religious experience in humankind and the discovery of cultural shaping of religion have had a relativizing influence. Is religious affiliation practically determined by where one is born? It seems so. The vast number of adherents of the major world religions that are resistant to Christianity cause pluralists to ask whether Christianity constitutes God’s only way of salvation. Ethical questions come up as well: What is one to make of the justice of a God who ordains that people can be saved only in a way that excludes the majority from salvation? Are two thirds of the children of earth God’s orphans?

Third, the demographic pluralism in our Western cities has had a bearing on the debate. It was easy to think of adherents of other religions as being misguided or benighted when they lived at a distance. But now that they are neighbors with a level of religious commitment and moral standard that is a challenge to our own decadence, a new way of thinking about these religions is virtually forced upon us. In the face of these and other similar considerations, pluralists have sought to legitimate a broader understanding of the missionary task of the church, and in all fairness it must be admitted that the issues they raise are weighty and challenging.

Exclusivism and its responses

Three major considerations lie at the heart of the exclusive position maintained by American evangelicals. First, exclusivism affirms that there is salvation in “no other name” than that of Jesus Christ. Acts 4:12 is the key text, and of course this affirmation is in harmony with the general understanding of the gospel. What is distinctive about the exclusive position is not so much the stress placed on the positive affirmation of this text as the weight given to its unstated obverse—that those who have never had an opportunity to hear the gospel have no hope of salvation and are eternally lost.

Second, exclusivists emphasize the concept of the heathen going to a Christless grave. It is not so much the grave now, as endless punishment, from which there is no hope of deliverance. The key text cited is Matthew 25:46. This doctrine of endless punishment for finite sins or for not having heard the gospel constitutes a powerful motivation to mission for some evangelicals and provides pluralists a ground for criticism that approaches ridicule.

Third, exclusivism affirms that general revelation, while a source of some knowledge of God, does not constitute saving knowledge. Exclusivists hold that special revelation alone conveys the knowledge that leads to salvation. This is specifically affirmed in the Lausanne Covenant: “But we deny that this [general revelation] can save.”

These issues are outlined rather starkly here, and in fairness it must be stated that not all exclusivists adhere to all of these points.

Global Mission and all of this

There is, of course, a close connection between methods of salvation and missionary motivation. Motivation is also affected by understandings of the doom pronounced upon those who either reject or have not heard the message. And certainly the fear on the part of the evangelicals is warranted: that if the above doctrinal points are undercut, there will be a corresponding reduction in the sense of necessity and urgency of the missionary task.

Nevertheless, it needs to be asked: Has not the evangelical exclusivist approach perhaps narrowed too much the theological foundations of mission? Is there anything that can be learned from the pluralist approach?

Is it possible to affirm the uniqueness of Jesus Christ—that there is salvation in no other name—without turning Acts 4:12 into a universally binding, negative statement? Peter does not state, as do some exclusivists, that all who have not heard the name of Christ will be lost. We are to proclaim the uniqueness and saving power of Jesus Christ; but it is God’s prerogative, and not a human responsibility, to judge who will be in the kingdom.

If the doctrine of everlasting punishment provides mission motivation for some exclusivists, is it not enough to affirm the final judgment by a God who rewards all justly, without falling back on the horrors of unending punishment? Otherwise, it would seem that the responsibility for mission has been narrowed too much to a negative incentive.

The debate regarding possible saving dimensions of general revelation is too complex to discuss in a few lines. On the basis of Romans 1:18-23, many argue that general revelation is adequate to constitute a basis for judgment, but not for salvation. But justice requires that persons be condemned only for failing to do what they know is right and are able to do. If, then, general revelation provides a basis for damnation, then it should also provide the basis for salvation.

Wesley showed us long ago a more balanced view. He taught that the heathen will be judged according to the light they have. In a sermon entitled “The General Spread of the Gospel,” he asked whether a lack of means will frustrate God’s purposes and answered: “No: were there no other means, he ‘can take them by his Spirit’ (as he did Ezekiel) [Eze. 3:12], or by ‘his angel,’ as he did Philip, [Acts 8:26] and set them down whereover he pleaseth him. . . . He will give his Son ‘the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.’”

Some contemporary evangelicals do make a case for a broader function of general revelation than is typical of exclusivists. Some of them fall back on an intuitive sense of a divine being and moral worth. Others argue the case exegetically and rationally. Still others build on the functions of the Holy Spirit, as did Wesley. For example, Donald McGavran allows that God, should He so choose, “can bring those who know nothing of Jesus Christ back into fellowship with Himself. But the means by which He might do this . . . remains hidden.”

Herbert Kane takes a similar position: “Throughout history there may have been the odd person who got to heaven without the full light of the gospel. In that case, God is the sole Judge.”

John Stott hints at this possibility, but prefers to remain “agnostic” regarding what has not been revealed.

Ellen White, taking a stance similar to that of Wesley, writes more openly than do the above evangelicals on two points:
First, that the Holy Spirit may work directly on the heart of those who have not heard the gospel; and second, that God will judge them according to the light they have (i.e., general revelation): “Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God.”

With these fundamentals, the missionary spirit among us should be vitalized in a gracious spirit of love as we set about the renewed task of Global Mission.

Clark Pinnock takes an even broader view, verging perhaps on an inclusivist position. But even so, he succeeds in showing that an evangelical need not be locked into the extremes of the exclusivist position to maintain a powerful sense of commitment to, and motivation for, mission.

Toward an Adventist posture

While not intimately involved in this debate, we Adventists are influenced by the kinds of doubts about mission that are becoming a part of the wider public consciousness. We too face the challenge of maintaining missionary responsibility and motivation. We are also forced to clarify our theological foundations of mission and the uniqueness of Christianity amid world religions.

From what we have seen so far, it seems to me that a moderate exclusivist position is most compatible with the Adventist sense of identity and mission.

Along with other evangelicals, Adventists believe that sin has corrupted human nature, and that we are all doomed to perish, yet not for the intervention and mercy of God. We also believe that human beings have no power within themselves to achieve salvation. Salvation is a wonderful and undeserved gift of God’s grace, mediated only through Jesus Christ. Regardless of the avenue through which the knowledge of Jesus Christ comes to the believer, whether through the usual providence of the Holy Spirit or a missionary agent, salvation is only through Jesus Christ. Finally, Adventists recognize that it is not given to us to judge who will be in the kingdom; God is the sole and sovereign judge.

As L. E. Looper wrote, “The believer, whether through the unusual experiences and lights of his own conscience or through the usual means of divine revelation by word and deed of the Holy Spirit, is constrained to announce the gospel he has heard and to act upon his convictions.”

—Sermon 106, sect. 1, par. 4.}

2 This is implied in the Lausanne Covenant, par. 3 (J. D. Douglas, ed., Let the Earth Hear His Voice [Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1975], pp. 3, 4), and is directly affirmed by Harold Lindell: “Man may not be regenerated either because he has never heard the gospel... or because he has refused to avail himself... Whichever it may be, the end is the same. He is permanently separated from God. Heaven and hell, then, are the competing options which the unredeemed man faces.” (“Fundamentals for a Philosophy of the Christian Mission,” in The Theology of the Christian Mission, ed. Gerald H. Anderson [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1961], p. 246).
3 Lausanne Covenant, par. 3.
4 This is the position John Wesley took. Of the heathen, Wesley wrote, “Yet it is not our part to pass sentence upon them, but to leave them to their own Master.” Sermon 106, “On Faith,” in The Works of John Wesley, ed. Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), vol. 3, p. 495.
5 Ibid., Sermon 106, sect. 1, par. 4, p. 494.
12 Clark Pinnock, who has previously written several essays on various aspects of this debate, has recently published a book on the subject, in which the issues involved are discussed with admirable clarity: A Wonder in God’s Mercy: The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1992).
How to contextualize the gospel.

Jon Dybdahl, Ph.D., is the associate director of the Institute of World Mission at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

How should Masai tribespeople recently converted from animism worship God as Christians? How should we preach Jesus to Muslims on the Indian subcontinent, where some biblical phrases like “Son of God” are widely misunderstood? Is it valid for former Buddhists to continue past meditation practices after conversion to Christianity? How far should North American churches go in accepting music popular in youth culture? All these questions deal with the matter of contextualization.

How can the unchanging revelation of the eternal God find expression in the diverse and changing life of human beings? The church has a vital challenge to communicate God’s salvation in the context of the world’s many religions and cultures. People can respond only to a message they clearly hear in their own context.

Contextualization was not born in the ivory-towered halls of the great universities or in the studies of theologians. It comes with urgency from the front lines of mission, where those communicating Jesus struggle to tell the gospel story. Proclaimers want animists, Buddhists, Muslims, the secular minds of the West and elsewhere, rich, poor, slave, free, Jew, Greek, all to hear the message clearly. The question is so urgent it must now become the concern of all Christians, from lay member to church pastor, from mission president to university professor, from foreign missionary to home missionary.

Factors requiring contextualization

Four factors in our world make contextualization particularly necessary right now—actually, an issue of present truth. First, the worldwide Christian missionary movement must be cross-cultural. To reach the world in a global mission, missionaries must meet people where they are. The unreached cannot be won unless the gospel comes to them in harmony with their own thought patterns.

Second, travel, immigration, and communication advances over the past decades have internationalized the world and the church. We are no longer isolated entities able to live our own lives and think our own monocultural thoughts. In this global city, Christianity must show that it is a world religion.

Third, the development of anthropology and sociology has led to greater awareness about other peoples. This has heightened sensitivity to their cultures. When recognizing others as children of God, fully equal to ourselves, it is hard to maintain a sense of cultural superiority. Rather, we have a new desire to communicate the gospel in a way that allows local cultures to remain true to their heritage.

Fourth, cross-generational communication in a rapidly changing society involves cross-cultural communication; the older generation faces major challenges in communicating with their own children and grandchildren. We must learn to communicate meaningfully to our children in their subculture so they do not hear truth as dead, irrelevant orthodoxy.

Biblical basis of contextualization

Contextualization by its very nature involves risk. Are there principles in God’s Word to guide us? Consider 1 Corinthians 9:19-23: “For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews; to
those under the law I became as one under the law—though not being myself under the law—that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law—not being without law toward God but under the law of Christ—that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.”*

Note, first Paul’s action of contextualization. He becomes all things to all people. Seeking to reach Jews, Gentiles, and those with weak consciences, he incarnates himself in these cultures. The apostle clearly does not forsake his principles (note verse 21), yet he regards contextualization as his very mission, a fulfillment of the “law of Christ.” The previous chapter (1 Cor. 8:9-13) offers additional insight into Paul’s strategy.

Notice, second, Paul’s attitude of contextualization. Though free from all, he has made himself a slave to all. The easiest path is always to avoid contextualization and simply follow one’s own culture. Paul says that theoretically we are free to do so. However, he rejects the easy path and makes himself a slave to others. It takes work and humility to be all things to all people, but Paul is following the path of his Lord, who, according to Philippians 2, took the form of a slave in order to contextualize Himself as a human and communicate with us.

Ponder, third, the aim of contextualization. He aims to “win the more” (verse 19) or “save some” (verse 22) for the “sake of the gospel” (verse 23). To lose sight of this aim is to turn contextualization into an empty intellectual exercise.

Contextualization is also clearly espoused by Ellen White. She states that the usefulness of Gospel laborers who follow such principles would increase a hundredfold.2

With such a need in the world and a definite inspired mandate, how should we proceed with contextualization? To that issue we now turn our attention. We will deal first with the spheres of contextualization, followed by the methods and models that explain the process. Then we will examine guidelines to help us discern where God is leading in contextualization and ways to guard against dangers. Finally we’ll consider a case study to illustrate how contextualization has worked in my ministry.

Spheres of contextualization

The three major spheres where gospel contextualization can take place are church life, ethics, and theology. Church life includes the realms of hymnody, architecture, worship style, ecclesiastical structure, methods of governance, decision-making, etc. Ethics involves the standards and moral life of the church. Theology includes doctrinal beliefs, statements of faith, and explanations about God. While to some extent these areas overlap, each presents its own special challenges. Contextualization should take place in all three spheres.

Should Zambians be required to hold worship services based on a North American pattern? Should the order of service, the songs sung, and the use of time be the same in Africa as they are in America? I think not. Zambian worship should fit within the Zambian context.

Should Muslims be told about Christ and the Trinity in the terminology of Western Christians, or in terms they can relate to? Language not directly abhorrent to Muslims can be found to express the essence of the gospel. By judicious use of Bible passages that do not offend, combined with a knowledge of Jesus from Muslim sources, a valid contextualization in the theological sphere can take place.

A strange anomaly exists. Traditionally for Adventists the theological sphere has been the central core of our identity. The ethical sphere is a close second, while church life would clearly be third in the minds of most. This seems to imply that contextualization in church life is the easiest and that contextualization in the sphere of theology would require the most care and effort. In real life the opposite is often true. Adaptations for the sake of the gospel in church life are often harder for people to relate to than theological contextualization.

The present controversy in our church over “celebration” worship is an example of this. Practitioners of celebration worship do not see themselves as changing church ethics or theology. Others, upset at this movement, have tried to move this matter of church life into the theological sphere so their critiques can gain credence. A fellow Adventist pastor remarked that it would be easier in his church to preach a new viewpoint on one of our fundamental beliefs than it would be to change the order of service!

Church life is hard to contextualize because it is visual and affects the way people actually live their lives. Theology, on the other hand, is not as concrete and visible in daily life. Whether we are dealing with church life, theology, or ethics, God has called us to communicate our message in a powerful, contextualized way for the sake of the gospel, even if we meet with misunderstanding.

Methods and models

Here are three principles that govern contextualization:

1. A difference exists between form and meaning. Form refers to the outward act or object that transports the inward concept—which is the meaning or content. Think of it this way: Form is like the pipe; meaning is the water passing through that pipe. All of life and religion have both form and meaning; the two go together. Both form and meaning change over time, even within a single culture. Absolute biblical meanings can be expressed in different forms.

Cross-culturally, of course, having different meanings for the same form is a major problem. For example, silence is a form of human behavior. The silent person in many Eastern cultures is seen as profound and deep, full of wisdom. In most of the West, however, silent people are perceived as backward, introverted, perhaps slow-witted or even angry. The form—silence—is the same, but the meaning given that form radically varies by culture.

The wedding ring is a form with varied meanings. For years North American Adventists shunned it as a violation of Christian principles regarding adornment. Most European Adventists, however, have regarded the ring not as jewelry but as a symbol of deep commitment to the Christian wedding vows. If the meaning we see in the ring form is sinful adornment, wearing it is wrong. But if the meaning is a commitment to principles related to Christian marriage, it is not wrong.

Properly evaluating any belief or practice requires examination of both form and meaning. Contextualization requires that we ask: Does this issue deal with form or meaning, or both? Has either form or meaning changed over time? Does either need to be changed? What does this form mean in another culture?

Answers are not always easy, but separating form and meaning can help us understand many issues that have faced the church as times change and we meet other cultures.

2. Contextualization is a translation
process. When church life, ethics, and theology are translated into the target culture so that receivers can “read” Christianity in their own environment, contextualization is taking place. In a most basic way, translating the Bible into various languages involves interpretation and thus contextualization. Muslims seek to avoid this contextualization—to this day there is no true authorized translation of the Koran. It can only really be understood in Islamic theology by those who know Arabic.

The theory of how translation should be done has changed over the years. Not long ago, literal or “formal” translations were the rule. Many came close to word-for-word translations. The American Bible Society has convinced most Christians today that dynamic equivalence translations are best. The idea is that the essential thought should be translated rather than simply all the words. A slavish word-for-word translation may in fact distort the meaning of the original, because of differences in grammar and word order.

Contextualization in presenting the gospel should follow the same rules used by good translators. Styles of worship, marriage customs, and statements of belief should all go through “translation” when the gospel goes into another culture. 3

3. **Contextualization requires a “trialogue”—a three-sided conversation among proclaimers and their culture, receivers and their culture, and the Bible.** Much early mission work took place in a straight line that went from the Bible through the missionary to the target group. The proclaimer made the decisions about the message and delivered them as a package to the hearers. If the missionary was sensitive, there might be some feedback so that the action was reciprocal. If not, the missionary produced carbon-copy Christians living as aliens in their own country. Some suggest that the proclaimer must set up a dialogue between Scripture and the missionized so they can discover God’s will and express it in their culture. While this is an improvement on the straight-line method, it remains deficient. First, it is an ideal that is not possible: usually the message comes first through a living cross-cultural evangelist; if not it comes through a translated Bible from a cross-cultural missionary. Second, when people become Christians they become part of a multi-cultural, universal, worldwide church, and theology must be shared. The unity of the body must be maintained.

I suggest that the best vehicle for contextualization is a trialogue—an ongoing three-way conversation among the Bible, the missionary, and the missionized. Thus theology, ethics, and church life can be contextualized to the receivers’ situation while remaining consistent with Bible truth and with worldwide members in other cultures. Such a trialogue not only contextualizes the theology of the missionized but in fact enriches the theology of the missionary. At the same time it preserves the centrality of Scripture and the unity of the body.

This trialogue is not done only once but is a continuous dynamic process that under the Spirit’s guidance leads to an ever clearer vision of God’s will.

**Dangers of contextualization**

The process of contextualization faces two major dangers. The first is superficiality. This can arise from ignorance or insensitivity. Sometimes a few outward forms are changed, but a deep awareness of the receivers’ values and culture never takes place. The few who become Christians do so by converting culturally to the ways of the missionary, thus becoming strangers in their own land and ill-fitted to reach their own people with the message of Christ. The brand of Christianity practiced becomes increasingly irrelevant to the needs of people. As one young man said: “What the preacher said sounds nice, but I never get the idea he is really talking to me.” The eternally relevant gospel is perceived as irrelevant, not on the basis of what it really is, but on the basis of the cultural baggage contained in its presentation.

The second danger is syncretism, the mixing of differing beliefs. That happens when contextualization has gone so far that it has lost its Christian principles. Form and meaning have been captured by the culture, and the essence of Christianity is lost. Instead of Christianity using the vehicle of culture to communicate its message, culture has taken over Christianity to use the faith for its own aims. In our attempt to communicate with culture, we must take care to preserve absolute biblical principles. The church must constantly guard against these two extremes in contextualization.

**Guidelines and safeguards**

How can we safeguard contextualization from syncretism?

1. **Maintain close connection with the Scriptures.** Continually check the direction of contextualization in every sphere with the whole counsel of God’s Word.

2. **Pray for and trust in God’s leading.** The Holy Spirit has promised to guide us into all truth. We must believe that pledge and really allow Him to lead.

3. **Check our motives and attitudes.** Are we truly trying to give the Gospel as clearly as possible, or are we just making excuses for laxity? Do we have the mind of a servant, or are we just pushing our own agenda and culture?

4. **Consult the community of believers.** Often individual decisions are not good ones, reflecting only one viewpoint. The church is a body; there is wisdom in hearing what the Spirit is saying to the whole body.

5. **Realize that over time, truth surfaces.** Sometimes haste forces wrong decisions. Allow the Spirit time to bring about right ones. Sometimes questionable decisions are reversed as we allow God time to operate.

6. **Maintain concern for the weak.** Paul in 1 Corinthians 9 says that we become all things also to the weak. The weak in this context refers to those who are bothered by certain changes taking place in the church. Committed contextualizers always consider the feelings of their brothers and sisters and try to relate to them while also relating to those who need to hear the gospel.

**Case study**

How does all this work out in practical circumstances? Illustrations could come from any place, even subcultures in North America. For me, the clearest example comes from my own mission experience. In the mid-1970s we were working with the Hmong people in northern Thailand. Most Hmong people are spirit-worshiping animists, and in our area they had had no previous genuine contact with Christianity. The first challenge we faced was presenting the gospel in a way that spoke to their real needs. Traditional Western ways of presenting the good news of Jesus did not work.

**Theology contextualized**

In the West we usually present Jesus in one of three different ways: 1. Jesus is the answer to guilt, able to pardon our sins and enable us to overcome them. 2. Jesus loves and cares for people who haven’t experienced love. 3. Jesus gives meaning to life now and offers eternal life.

None of these three approaches
scratched the Hmong where they itched. To them, shame posed a larger problem than guilt and sin. Sacrifices to get rid of sin already existed. They experienced love and care in their extended, close-knit family groups, so loneliness and lack of caring were not a major issue. The notion of "meaning of life" was abstract, and they already had some hope for a hereafter in their religion.

Continued contact and discussion with the Hmong convinced us that Jesus Christ was extremely relevant to them in two ways: First, they lived in constant fear of the spirits who they believed caused misfortune, crop failure, sickness, and death. Jesus Christ had power over these entities. This biblical theology had little relevance to Americans but powerful meaning for the Hmong. Second, the Hmong believed in a high God, and they knew His name but little about Him. They were eager to learn more and discover that He has a Son who cares about their fear of the spirits and has power to conquer them.

This contextualized gospel brought numerous Hmong to immediate faith in Christ. Many decided to follow the living God after only one hearing of the gospel. They rid their homes and their bodies of all the spirit-related charms and paraphernalia used for generations. They joyfully looked for the Second Coming, when they could see this Jesus.

Ethics contextualized
As this new phenomenon of Christianity entered Hmong life, many questions arose as to what it meant to live as Adventist Christians. One had to do with the circles of silver that both men and women wore around their necks. To Western missionaries the circles looked suspiciously like necklaces and hence jewelry or adornment. Did these silver circle forms have the same meaning for the Hmong? There were no banks in their remote villages. Some said the circles were the safest and easiest way to store money—a kind of safe deposit box in place of the local savings and loan. Would we be accused of making theft easier if we suggested that the circles of silver be removed? What should we do that would uphold the principle of nonadornment and stewardship and yet be sensitive to the Hmong culture?

We arranged with local Hmong pastors and leaders that the members themselves should decide what to do. First, we reviewed together the Bible teaching on adornment and jewelry. We then discussed available options. After a season of prayer, we opened the matter for discussion and debate in the body of believers. I purposely excused myself from the dialogue. I felt that I had already done what I could and it was time for them under the Spirit's guidance to choose what they should do.

The members pondered the matter for quite a long time before reaching their decision. They determined to not wear the circles of silver on a day-to-day basis, judging that even in Hmong culture the circles were more adornment than they were safe-deposit boxes. On festival occasions, when donning traditional costumes for the Hmong new year, they would wear the circles as a part of that costume—in that case, they were more like a pin or tie tack than jewelry.

Everyone was satisfied with the decision. No grumbling took place because they had made the decision and outsiders had not imposed it. Clear Bible principles had been translated into Hmong culture—by the Hmong themselves.

Conclusion
More than 2 billion of the world's population will hear the gospel only if cross-cultural missionaries make themselves servants and become all things to them. From tribes in Africa to heavy-metal rockers in the "jungles" of New York City, from the sophisticated professional to the troubled teenager next door, people desperately need to hear the gospel in a context they can understand. Who will humble themselves and become incarnate as slaves for the sake of these souls? Who will go through the hard, risky business of contextualization so others may clearly hear the gospel?

*All texts are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.


2 Gospel Workers, p. 119, par. 3.

By everyone to everywhere

Harold Butler

Global Mission is a systematic, planned approach of taking the gospel to specific areas or people groups that have not heard or accepted Jesus Christ as personal Saviour.

What is the best method to start new work? Are there basic principles that apply to all planning? While some fundamental principles remain the same for all plans, each situation requires a customized approach. For example, meeting people's needs is a principle that can be used anywhere, but what needs and how they are met may differ. A country like Japan with its high-tech, literate Shinto-Buddhist culture would require a much different approach than Afghanistan with its agrarian lifestyle and Islamic belief system. However, both contacts may begin with the principle of providing a service to society that meets a felt need.

In the Philippines, with its Christian background, the first contact may involve only an invitation to an evangelistic crusade or perhaps an opportunity to reestablish one's relationship with Christ. Decision, response, and baptism may follow. On the other hand, Somalia, a Muslim nation with no Adventist members and recovering from years of civil strife, may require a totally different approach. The initial contact there may be humanitarian aid through the Adventist Development and Relief Agency or the Adventist Volunteer Taskforce, meeting crucial agricultural or health needs.

Thus, the initial contact with a community may vary with each situation. It may be a public evangelistic crusade; an English language school; a health education program; distribution of food, clothing, or literature; or simply being a friend. Whatever the approach, it must break down prejudice against the gospel and reveal that Christians really do care because that is the Christian thing to do. It must also foster relationships that might develop interest in the gospel.

Christ's method

Look at Jesus and see how He made contacts. He was an itinerant, traveling from town to town with His disciples. There was little if any community-based support. His ministry was with people. He taught them, healed them, and spent time with them. He provided opportunity for spiritual healing. His encounters were not for long periods of time, or even repetitive. Christ employed a personalized approach. Often He dealt on a person to person basis, rarely holding large public meetings. His methods were simple and practical. He adapted easily to the situation and to the individual concerned, whether rich or poor, educated or uneducated. He sought people, spoke to them at their level, and met them where they were. He refused no one. He used the meager resources at hand.

Early church

Paul and other early missionaries combined Christ's method of going from town to town with a new church-based outreach. As soon as one church developed, it became a base of outreach to the
surrounding areas. A community of churches began to develop. The early Christians were Christians by example first. In contrast to the typical lifestyle of the day, they gave to the poor, helped the sick, cared for widows and orphans, and were generally good citizens. Christian migrants and traveling merchants took the gospel to areas far from their home churches. They were so successful in sharing their faith that historians estimate that half of the city dwellers of the Roman Empire were converted to Christianity from a non-Christian, hostile background before Constantine made Christianity the state religion. This was accomplished, not by a centrally organized program of outreach, but by individually inspired Christians doing their part in sharing the gospel.

Adventist beginnings

When the Adventist movement began, the church was small, regionally based, and concerned primarily with North America. In 1869, nine years after the organization of the church, the first Foreign Mission Society was formed for the purpose of sending the gospel to foreign lands and distant parts of the United States. By the 1870s Adventists began to feel a responsibility to take the gospel to the whole world. In 1874 the first Adventist missionary went to Switzerland. Thereafter, missions opened up in Australia (1885), South America (1886), Africa (1887), the Far East (1888), Turkey (1889), the Pacific Islands (1890), and India (1893).

The early Adventists based their missions philosophy on Scripture, Mark 16:15 told them to go to all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. They identified with the three angels of Revelation 14:6-12, who had the everlasting gospel for every nation, tribe, language, and people. They took seriously their task of proclaiming the gospel to the world. They even felt that Christ would not return until the task of proclamation is complete.

Because the Adventist Church is worldwide, the phrase “foreign missions” is not quite appropriate to define the Adventist mission. Missionaries are sent “from everywhere to everywhere.” In effect, “missions” in Adventism has a unique meaning: “missions at home and abroad simultaneously, with the whole world a mission field and every member a missionary.”

Early Adventist missionaries used a method similar to that used by the apostle Paul. When the apostle started work in a city he went to the synagogue first and tried to get converts from the Jews before going to the Gentiles. Once there was a nucleus of believers in that location, the new members worked for their friends and neighbors, expanding their group. Although Adventists are Protestant Christians, some of their major doctrines differ from other Protestant denominations. Early Adventist missionaries often started working in new areas by sharing their unique Christian beliefs with other Christians with whom they had something in common, just as Paul did with the Jews. After establishing a local nucleus of members, they shared the gospel with the non-Christian community.

Adventist missions and laypersons

Adventist laypersons initiated the work in several countries. Michael Czechowski, a Polish Catholic priest, converted to Adventism during a trip to the United States in 1857. Unable to persuade the Adventist Church to send him back to Europe as a missionary, he found his own source of support and returned to Europe to share his new-found faith. From Italy to Switzerland to Romania, he traveled from town to town. He printed some 100 tracts in various languages. His work caused Adventist headquarters to send their first church-sponsored missionary, J. N. Andrews, to Switzerland in 1874.

Abram La Rue approached the church about going to China. Administrators told him he was too old and advised him to go to Hawaii. In 1883 he started selling Adventist books in Hawaii. Within two years the church sent a missionary to the islands to follow up La Rue’s interests. La Rue continued his mission sailing toHong Kong, China, Japan, Borneo, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Palestine, and Lebanon. And wherever he went he sold Adventist books, creating interests for the truth. In 1902 church headquarters sent J. N. Anderson to Hong Kong to baptize the believers La Rue had prepared.

A diamond-digging Adventist layman from Nevada went to South Africa in 1878. He took with him a supply of Adventist tracts and papers. He shared his faith and soon created a great interest in the community. In 1886 the new believers wrote to the General Conference requesting a minister be sent to their town to start an Adventist church. The next year a missionary team arrived.

In India Adventist work began with a woman. Anna Gordon left the United States in 1892 as a self-supporting missionary. However, one year later she died. Soon after, five literature evangelists from Australia, New Zealand, and the United States landed in India. In 1895 the church sent Georgia Burrus, a Bible worker, as the first regular missionary to work among the women of Calcutta.

South America was no exception to the pattern of lay involvement seen on other continents. In 1883 W. J. Boynton, a layman, sent tracts with a sea captain from New York to Guyana. The captain dropped them off on the pier in Georgetown. Curious individuals picked up the tracts. Several accepted the truth and wrote to Boynton, requesting more materials. To follow up these interests T. E. Amsterdam went to Guyana in 1886 as a self-supporting literature evangelist. A year later a regular missionary reached Guyana. In Uruguay three colporteurs started the work in 1891. Later a Bible worker joined them, and in 1895 the first missionary arrived. In Colombia, a self-supporting English teacher started the Adventist work in 1894.

The model and the challenge

The early Adventist mission model included: (1) publications taken or sent to seaport towns; (2) literature evangelists working initially among Christians in these towns; (3) regular missionaries sent after interests had developed; (4) missionaries and national workers taking the gospel inland; and (5) Adventist health and/or educational work established to strengthen and broaden the growing church.

This model and the method of the early church may not be exciting or profound, but they were simple and they worked. Beginnings were small. Deprived
Adventists can also be true witnesses while practicing their various professions.

of a local support base, the evangelists moved from town to town, building a nucleus of believers. Self-supporting volunteers and itinerant tentmakers made their impact. Ministry was often individualized, Ministers practiced what they preached. They loved people. They helped people.

And the results were historic. Just as the early Christian church was very successful in the first few hundred years of its outreach, so was the early Adventist mission. Today, 129 years after the organization of the church, Adventists have a presence in 200 of the world’s 229 countries.

The remaining unentered areas of the world are a great challenge, however. Many of these areas are resistant to Christianity. What can we learn from the early Christian church and early Adventist missions that will help us reach these unentered areas? What resources does the church have to make the initial contact? Here are some.

1. **Health**. The health work is still the right arm of the church. We have a rich heritage of health outreach programs that are being used successfully in many countries. Can our health work still play this important role today? The curative approach of the past, with a hospital/clinic base, may not always be possible because of political, financial, or human resource constraints. However, simple tasks such as sending volunteer health teams to villages, teaching people basic health principles, and conducting rural and mobile clinics may still serve as an effective means of witness and outreach. Of course, the sophisticated high-tech health care available in our large institutions will continue to open doors.

2. **Development and relief**. Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is already on the front lines in many parts of the world with their humanitarian outreach and development programs. This organization probably comes as close as any to carrying out Christ’s type of ministry. ADRA is able to meet a variety of needs and begin establishing relationships with communities. As an international organization with credibility with many governments, ADRA’s goal is to help others help themselves.

3. **Communication**. Face to face initial contact is preferable but not always possible. The church has used Adventist World Radio to make initial contact with potential believers in areas inaccessible to direct contacts. The printed page is another proven method of making initial contact. Even if we cannot give out literature in person, we can mail it to any part of the world. Audio- and videotapes are becoming important communication tools for outreach. Christian Record Services reaches out to the hearing-and sight-impaired around the world.

4. **Educational contacts**. With the world becoming more and more an international marketplace and English becoming the most common mode of communication, Adventist English language schools not only meet a specific social and business need, but provide opportunities for goodwill and outreach in many places.

Students in many countries are looking for an opportunity to travel abroad and study in Western universities. International friendship arrangements for foreign students to live in private homes while they attend university. Opening our homes to such students provides an excellent contact point.

5. **Adventist tentmakers**. Adventists today have an opportunity to follow the example of Paul. The great apostle made tents to support himself, but used every moment he had to be a witnessing missionary. Adventists can also be true witnesses while practicing their various professions. This may be the only way Christian faith will ever enter some parts of the world. The Center for International Relations, recently set up by the General Conference, will help Adventist professionals be tentmakers in areas where there are no Adventists.

These are just a few ways to make initial contacts in unentered areas. Each group responsible for an unentered area will have to innovate outreach methods appropriate to that situation. But innovation need not be complicated or costly; it can be simple, practical, and people-based—just like the early models of mission.
Overseas mission service

Yvonne Dysinger
Ted Wilson

The Lord may be calling you.

Recently Ron and Teresa Clark of Iowa moved with their family to Africa. They took up the challenge of assisting the publishing work of the Adventist Church in Rwanda. Ron’s talent, motivated by his love for the Lord, is now guiding hundreds of literature evangelists in sharing the good news of salvation.

Pat is a health worker and Adventist “tentmaker” in a Middle Eastern country. Tentmakers are committed Christians who use secular jobs in non-Christian countries as vehicles to share their Christian faith. Pat’s contagious enthusiasm and commitment have already won friends for her Saviour. Through her witness for Christ after one year at her post, two new believers have been baptized, three more are ready for baptism, and several others are studying.

Wes Olson, M.D., of West Virginia typifies the medical personnel who volunteer their time in relief service. When asked why he and his family served for three months at Mugonero Hospital in Rwanda, he responded, “In the final judgment God will ask us how we treated those in need. Did we feed them, clothe them?” Dr. Olson covets the hope of hearing the Lord’s words, “Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me” (Matt. 25:40, NKJV).

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has had a global emphasis since our first missionary, John Andrews, went overseas in 1874. The church has a comprehensive program sponsoring career and volunteer missionaries to support its ever-growing global mission. Adventists are working in 185 countries, yet much remains to be done. See the chart on the following page for the types of service opportunities available.

1. Career missionaries. Qualified applicants have specific educational qualifications, specialized skills, and the long-term commitment needed in many areas of the world. Mission service today includes administration, development/relief, educational, health, pastoring, pioneering, publishing, office-related, and other professional and technical opportunities. Many positions require a specific academic background and experience. Some require proficiency in a second language.

Career missionary applicants should be members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and in good health emotionally, mentally, and physically. They need spiritual vitality and dependence on prayer, along with high dedication to the sanctity of marriage, home, and family. They must commit themselves to multicultural relationships and have the educational requirements necessary for visas and work permits, plus the experience needed to meet job requirements. Some of the most critical needs at present are for health professionals.

2. Adventist Volunteer Service (AVS). Avenues for AVS assignments are open to individuals willing to serve
Avenues of Opportunity Overseas

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Length of Service</th>
<th>Educational Requirements</th>
<th>Support</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CAREER MISSIONARY</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Family</td>
<td>6+ years (with furloughs)</td>
<td>College/Graduate degree</td>
<td>Salary and allowances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Single</td>
<td>2+ years</td>
<td>College/Graduate degree</td>
<td>Salary and allowances</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ADVENTIST VOLUNTEER SERVICE</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Educational</td>
<td>2-12 months</td>
<td>As applicable</td>
<td>Self-funded or as indicated by field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Medical/dental</td>
<td>1-3 months</td>
<td>Professional degree as applicable</td>
<td>Self-funded or as indicated by field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Medical Elective</td>
<td>1-3 months</td>
<td>Professional graduate study</td>
<td>As arranged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Retirees</td>
<td>1-24 months</td>
<td>As applicable</td>
<td>Self-funded or as indicated by field</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Teachers for Eastern Asia</td>
<td>12-24 months</td>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>As arranged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Volunteers with special skills</td>
<td>2-12 months</td>
<td>Degree or experience as required</td>
<td>Self-funded or as indicated by field</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ADVENTIST YOUTH SERVICE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Student Missionary Adventist Youth</td>
<td>3-12 months</td>
<td>College student/ non college youth (ages 18-30)</td>
<td>Board/stipend and lodging</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ADVENTISTS ABROAD</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tentmakers</td>
<td>Open-ended</td>
<td>As applicable</td>
<td>Self-funded</td>
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between one and 24 months in meeting specific priority needs. Volunteers should be active members of the church and display a maturing faith. Many opportunities exist for volunteers, especially in the Far Eastern Division.

a. Educational service. Multiple opportunities on all levels are available for educators with appropriate credentials. Openings include teaching English as a second language. Beyond the need for classroom instructors are requests for educational administrators. Assignments can range from two months up to two years, with the possibility of extension to five years. Denominational service credit can be arranged when a field salary is provided.

While specific academic credentials are essential, personal commitment to God and love for people are also basic qualifications.

b. Medical/dental relief. Opportunities for relief health-care professionals are usually for a short term of one to three months. This service provides temporary coverage in places where the regular physician or dentist is away on furlough. Health-care professionals are expected to provide photocopies of a diploma or certificate and a current license to practice.

c. Medical elective. The Loma Linda University schools of medicine and dentistry provide, during the senior year, time for students to be involved in hospital/clinic service in an area of choice. Each year a number of senior medical/dental students use this opportunity to serve in an overseas mission hospital. Assignment to a participating hospital is made by Loma Linda University and processed through the General Conference Secretariat.

d. Retirees. Scores of opportunities exist for retirees to serve in assignments ranging from 1 to 24 months. Current needs are for pastors, teachers on all levels, treasurers, physicians, dentists, allied health professionals, secretaries, maintenance and construction workers, evangelists, and Week of Prayer speakers. Retirees’ expertise, experience, and faith provide a meaningful complement to the advancement of the good news in cross-cultural settings.

e. Teachers for eastern Asia. Qualified college graduates to teach English are needed in the eastern Asia program. This is an opportunity to participate in a special avenue of volunteer service.

f. Volunteers with special skills. Volunteers qualified through academic study or experience are needed to fill a wide range of service opportunities from ministry to maintenance, computer skills to construction, optometry to obstetrics, administration to accounting, seminar leaders to science teachers. Term of service runs from two to 12 months.

3. Adventist Youth Service (AYS). The General Conference sponsors a program enabling youth to volunteer their services. AYS has proved to be most adventurous and exciting for Adventists between 18 and 30 years of age to work in the following areas.

a. Student missionary. For Adventist youth currently enrolled in one of the church’s institutions of higher learning. Most assignments are for teachers.

b. Adventist youth. For young Adventists studying or employed in the non-SDA Church sector.

c. ADRA short-term. For Adventist college students wishing to do pioneer work in remote areas for a short term. The Adventist Development and Relief Agency offers exciting and rewarding projects in many countries.

4. Adventists Abroad. The church cannot employ all qualified Adventists who desire to work abroad. However, outside of the regular denominational avenues there are numerous opportunities for “tentmakers.” Tentmakers are committed Adventist Christians who, like the apostle Paul, use their secular skills or expertise as a means of entry into and support in another culture. Their primary purpose is to share sensitively their faith in Christ and where possible establish and strengthen churches.

As the global economy develops and the foreign job market increases, thousands of unprecedented opportunities are opening for Adventist tentmakers in gov-
government embassies and consulates, international organizations, businesses, associations, research and educational institutions, consulting firms, and private voluntary organizations.

These entities are looking for professionals such as health workers, diplomats, mechanics, English teachers, computer programmers, agriculturalists, sales consultants, engineers, etc. Other avenues of overseas witness include self-employed entrepreneur opportunities, and student-study or teacher-exchange programs.

Recognizing this tremendous potential for witnessing by its laity, church leaders in 1990 voted to establish the Center for International Relations (CIR) under the umbrella of its Global Mission office. CIR particularly focuses on restricted-access areas of the world where the promotion of Christianity faces political, sociocultural, or religious impediments. Through its databases the center assists in matching interested individuals with international job opportunities.

In addition to calls processed by the various offices of the General Conference, tentmaking and other overseas mission opportunities are also offered by laymen's organizations associated with the Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries (ASI). Guidelines have recently been provided by the General Conference that will strengthen the cooperation between supporting ministries and the church organization, thus expanding the mission outreach of Seventh-day Adventists. The Adventist Resource Management Service (ARMS) is a developing office connected with ASI. It will maintain a database of opportunities from many different entities within the church and its supporting ministries and will also serve as a clearinghouse for personnel seeking service availabilities.

Seventh-day Adventists are committed to the task of world evangelization through the implementation of Christ's Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19, 20, NKJV).

For more information, contact the General Conference Secretariat, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.
is a mission to people. If we are to take seriously Christ's Great Commission, to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19, NIV), we must go to the cities. We cannot afford the luxury of settling down in the suburbs and in comfortable churches, teaching fine theology, while ignoring the desperate needs of the urban world. Jesus wants us to be with Him where He is (John 14:3), and that close personal proximity need not be simply future—it must also be present. Jesus is present wherever there is sin and suffering, pain and alienation. He is alive and well in the cities, and He calls us to join Him there. Christ, our model, ministered in multicultural and urban settings. He did not limit His ministry to the Judean suburbs but served racially mixed and culturally diverse Galilee and Samaria and urban Jerusalem.

Three enablers

Three important value commitments of the Adventist Church prepare us well for work in the cities: The Second Advent, social involvement, and the Sabbath.

The Second Advent and its concomitant doctrine, the judgment, teach us that nothing is permanent but God Himself. The Second Advent liberates us from the tyranny of the present by anticipating the coming of God's future—and even participating in that future now. The Second Advent offers hope for the urban hopeless. The judgment will reverse the tables of political power and give the kingdom to the saints. We can experience the reality of that future here and now: "As through Jesus we enter into rest, heaven begins here. We respond to His invitation, Come, learn of Me, and in thus coming we begin the life eternal. Heaven is a ceaseless approaching to God through Christ."

Advent-expectant theology and resultant lifestyle can modify even the bleakest urban existence, transforming ghettos through changing lives.

Adventists have a rich history of quiet social involvement and gentle transformation. Our hospitals serve many of the larger cities of the world and are known for their excellent care. Programs directed toward better living, aimed at various soft and hard addictions, improve the health and economics of urban peoples and their quality of life.

Adventist schools have also been responsible for significant social changes. In the city of São Paulo, Brazil, the several conferences in that city operate more than 40 elementary schools. They have earned the respect of the community—75 percent of their enrollment is from the non-Adventist public sector. The effect of these schools on the church is considerable, providing many new members each year. The impact of these schools on the city is also significant as families are visited by teachers and pastors to be touched by the gospel and introduced to a wonderfully inclusive community of faith. Mission schools in Africa and the South Pacific have served as change agents producing much of the political leadership in the new nations. Adventist schools have influenced many of the leaders.

Isaiah relates the rich Sabbath blessings the Lord gives to those who show concern for the hungry, the homeless, and the oppressed (see Isaiah 58). Our commitment to the Sabbath must drive us to the slums of the world, where millions live in terrible desperation. Such a minis-
try can only enhance our Sabbath joy. "Then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Jacob, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken" (Isaiah 58:14, NRSV).

**Three barriers**

Ray Bakke, noted urban missiologist, perceives three major barriers to Christian involvement in the cities. The first is the *theological* barrier. We still read the Bible through rural eyes, having been raised that way. The urban reality is so new that we have not had time to catch up with it theologically. We suffer from what Alvin Toffler calls "future shock," the premature arrival of the future. Many of us idealize the little brown church in the wildwood, forgetting that our fastest growing churches are in the cities. Bakke states, "We need to expand our theology until it encompasses God's vision of the city."

The second barrier is the *ecclesiastical* barrier. Our churches can no longer be culturally homogeneous religious clubs speaking one language and operating on a rural time schedule. Urban congregations must celebrate the three angels' messages in a rich diversity of cultures and languages. One intersection near my church offers me the opportunity to eat Cuban, Salvadoran, Jamaican, Chinese, Italian, Vietnamese, West African, and Peruvian foods, but the music and worship style in my church membership of which reflects all these cultures— is mostly Western. The local Safeway store is open 24 hours a day. My church is essentially closed except from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon on Sabbath. How can we liberate our churches to serve in the new urban context? How can we minister to the culturally distant who live in the shadows of our existing churches? The needs of the cities require strong urban churches with experienced leadership. The traditional distinction between foreign and home missions is a thing of the past.

The third barrier is *fear*. With the needs of the cities being so pressing, we must fight the temptation of "White fright" and "White flight," escaping to the suburbs. People thought my family was brave and praiseworthy when we moved to Africa a number of years ago, taking our small daughter with us. Some of these same people considered us less intelligent and even less sanctified when we later went to an inner-city church in a violent area ruled by a vicious gang, with my two daughters working with me in our summer urban day camp. Yes, cities are dangerous, but even more dangerous is our fear itself.

Fear of the unknown and of that which is different intimidates us. The fact is that life is dangerous everywhere today. Drugs are a problem in affluent suburbs as well as in ghettos. Driving on the highway is more dangerous than driving through town. Misplaced fear can immobilize us and prevent us from effectively following Jesus, who is Lord of the cities as much as He is of the jungles and bush and farmlands.

Safety is never mentioned in the biblical lists of personal and collective goals. It is not included in the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23). In fact, Jesus suggests that seeking safety is actually fatal (Matt. 16:24, 25).

The gospel cannot be effectively shared from a distance. Christians are desperately needed in the cities to model faith and compassion, successful families, and perhaps most important, modeling community. One of the most important gifts that the church has to offer to the cities is just what we are. We must not accept the concept of "throwaway" neighborhoods, where the visible evils of drugs, prostitution, and violent crime are fenced off from us and contained, ignoring the equally serious but less visible crimes of the suburbs.

**Three prepositions**

The relationship of the church to the city may be viewed through three prepositions. The first is the *church in the city*. This is the shallowest relationship of the three. The church is simply there, with no particular attachment to the city or the specific neighborhood. The church in the city is superimposed upon the neighborhood, a ghetto in one building. Frequently the church in the city is a drive-in church, a congregation that drives in on Sabbath and then returns to the safety and tranquility of the suburbs or farms. These commuting members generally have no stake in the community: they have no psychological ownership there, no con-
In this model the church incarnates itself in the community, becoming one with the people.

cern for its schools and its families, no concern for what happens on Sunday through Friday as long as the church building is not harmed.

The second level is the church to the city. This suggests interaction between the church and the community, concern about the neighborhood and its problems. It is a more wholistic approach that understands the need for the church not only to be present in the community but also concerned with both evangelism and even social action. The Achilles’ heel in this approach, however, is that the church “knows” what is best for the community ("Look at those teenagers. What they need is . . .").

In reality, the people most affected by problems are the ones best able to deal with them. While this is a primary principle underlying effective urban ministry, it is also one of the most difficult insights for Christians to apply—even after we accept it intellectually. Because we know the gospel, we feel that we know what is best for the community. Programs under the “church to the city” model may thrive, but only as long as the congregation keeps committing people, materials, and funding. Effectiveness is limited, and burnout is inevitable. Eventually the programs will die because they were never the programs of the people. The people in the community were spectators or clients, not participants and goal owners. So the church to the city model is actually colonialist in nature, operating out of a paternalistic attitude.

The third approach is the church with the community. In this model the church incarnates itself in the community, becoming one with the people, and entering as a partner into the life of its neighbors. The community, which understands the problems from personal experience, informs the church, while the church respects the people of the community, correctly perceiving them as persons of great wisdom and potential—the only potential agents of real change in the community. Few urban Adventist churches (with the exception of some largely Adventist neighborhoods) are community churches, acquainted with and responding to their immediate surroundings. Those that are know the excitement of being part of such a dynamic living organism.

What works?

Mission is always local. McDonald’s can franchise identical outlets in all the cities and succeed because they are selling basically a standardized product. Christianity, however, is intensely relational and thus must be culturally conditioned. What works in one city may not work in another; even what works in one neighborhood of a city may not work in another neighborhood of the same city. New York is different from São Paulo. Manhattan is different from the Bronx. Strategy may be painted in broad strokes, but the fine lines must reflect the immediate cultural, social, economic, and historical context.

During the past decade in São Paulo, Brazil, the Adventist Church has experienced unprecedented growth, swelling to 73,000 members. A recent survey of our conferences there serves as a baseline of comparison with other urban areas, and suggests some broad essentials that appear to be transferable:

1. A growth mentality. It is important that the local church senses an imperative of growth and perceives itself as growing. Organisms that do not grow may be either retarded, sick, or dying. When a church loses its vision of growth it faces one of the three dangers. This growth identity is generally accompanied by a strong sense of urgency that drives the congregation. Frequently this growth identity is facilitated by a visionary program developed within the conference/mission or union, that builds the structures of evangelism into the local churches.

2. A sense of confidence on the part of the church. That is, the church members must have assurance in both their salvation and in their Christian uniqueness. Few members are going to be enthusiastic about inviting others to become part of a community that is vague about its identity or purpose. Adventism must continually renew its sense of uniqueness and prophetic identity within the constantly changing structures of society. And the church’s identity and uniqueness in the past may not suffice today as we near the twenty-first century.

3. A positive attitude toward the unchurched. When Christians experience a radical break from the host society, they find it difficult to cross back over and recruit new members. To be totally absorbed into an Adventist subculture is to be no longer effective “in the world,” as Jesus said we should be (see John 17:11). The larger society then perceives that we have little intrinsic interest in them, other than as numbers on our books or trophies of our “crusades.” The unchurched must not be viewed as the "enemy," but as the subject of God’s concern and thus the church’s.

4. A willingness to make the best of social context. When people migrate to a new area, they are open to change. They have already changed homes, jobs, and neighbors, and they need to replace old loyalties with new relationships. The church as community can offer a new church home, new spiritual neighbors, and a new community of satisfying and caring relationships.

5. The establishment of small groups to give a structure for evangelism and easier assimilation of new members. These groups allow for diversity, fellowship, lay training, and growth.

The new frontier

The cities are the new frontier of missions. Alert and sensitive Christians in many churches and denominations are responding to the challenge. What a shame it would be if Adventists, who sense their end-time uniqueness, should fail to read the signs of the times by failing to follow Jesus in His mission to every nation and tribe and language and people.

The cities cry out for creative, innovative, caring Christian mission. God invites us to join Him in His mission to the world, to the increasingly urban world. Dare we refuse?

Letters

I used to be a pastor

Dwight McDonald (“I Used to Be a Pastor,” May 1992) makes several important points. The problem is more common than many realize and may occur for a variety of reasons. In my own case, I returned from overseas mission service to find my recession-burdened home division unable to find immediate employment for me. My five months of unemployment were made easier by a number of people who did exactly what McDonald recommends.

To his excellent counsel I would like to append a special word to conference administrators. Much of the nonfinancial stress of pastoral unemployment can be relieved if leaders in the church still recognize the calling and usefulness of clergy whom they cannot afford to employ. Most of us are willing to assist in pastoral lines, even when we cannot be paid for doing so. My own self-esteem was considerably improved by a conference president who asked me to serve as pastor (at least on weekends) in a district that was temporarily vacant, arranged to pay my travel expenses, welcomed me warmly at conference workers’ meetings, put my name in the conference directory, and even gave me a paid subscription to Ministry! —Donn W. Leatherman, Collegedale, Tennessee.

The article touches many of us who have been pastors. How well I recall the feeling of deep concern when the conference spoke of “cutbacks” in the ministry 30 years ago and terminated me for “lack of funds” and other reasons.

I know how it feels to be out of work as a minister, but I have learned one thing: there are other places than the church to minister to persons in need. Many hospitals have clinical pastoral education that furthers the scope of ministry. Chaplains serve in hospitals, military, and correctional institutions. Colleges and academies need chaplains and Bible teachers. It is not “easy” to land one of these positions, but with training, anything is possible.—Chaplain Willard Beaman, Moberly, Missouri.

Strange! Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.” What has happened? Maybe we need to reexamine our tracks.

Many years ago and in another world division, after finishing the seminary course and three years with the military, I was called to be director of four departments in a conference with more than 100 churches. Another colleague was called to be a minister. Soon he realized that his first priority was to evangelize. So he began to hold three-month meetings in different places, baptizing hundreds of people and organizing new churches.

Could it be that our educational system and seminary training should be reevaluated and redirected? It is generally believed that half the population of North America is unchurched. If so, the harvest indeed is plentiful. Maybe in the future our colleges and seminaries should train more frontline evangelists rather than pastors. They could strengthen the now dying little churches and organize new ones. It will not be an easy road. But looking back at our church history, we meet Joseph Bates, James White, John N. Loughborough, and J. N. Andrews as field evangelists.

The harvest is still plenteous.—Jeremia Florea, Bee Branch, Arkansas.

Gospel, justice, and the globe

Justice and peace on whose terms (“The Gospel and Global Mission,” May 1992)? God desires justice and peace, and also mercy. But Satan convinced Eve that justice (fairness) made it OK for her to eat the forbidden fruit and that God was unjust in telling her not to. Since that time Satan has continued to deceive humanity with his kind of justice while, at the same time, demanding the right to destroy us on the basis of what he portrays to be God’s justice (Job 1; Zech. 3:1). The universal conflict being played out in our world is the contest between Satan’s terms for self-centered justice and peace and God’s terms, which are based on unselfish love. With most of the people in the world choosing Satan’s terms, how can a social gospel convince them otherwise and help them understand their need of a Saviour?

We can be thankful that God does not save us on the basis of the justice we deserve (judge by our actions), “but according to his mercy” (Titus 3:5). This is the good news—the gospel—and it is our global mission to make this saving mercy known to the entire world. This changes hearts—a social gospel does not.—J. Stanley McCluskey, Redlands, California.

Where was that quote? If I could just remember where I saw it! I’m sure I read that somewhere.

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World Religions in Your Neighborhood. Loving Your Neighbor When You Don’t Know How

North America, once predominantly Judeo-Christian, is changing. One in 10 persons is a non-Christian. Your neighbor and the place of worship down the street may be non-Christian.

Terry Muck writes on how Christians should relate to these neighbors. Do we encourage dialogue? Do we socialize with them, convert them, or denounce them? Can they be saved in their own religions?

In answering these questions, the author is not concerned with hermeneutics, soteriology, ethics, ecclesiology, and authority of non-Christian religions. He does not examine their social dynamics. He does not discuss how fundamentalism defines and shapes religious practices. He does not explore what drives non-Christian religions to propagate their beliefs.

But he does answer questions in a sensitive, practical, and reasonable manner. Muck writes primarily for the person in the pew. He challenges us to initiate dialogue with non-Christians. He shares how he and his family respond to invitations to participate in non-Christian religious services.

The author, a teacher at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and a specialist in non-Christian religion, also poses some disturbing questions: Are not all religions the same anyway? Does the Bible teach us to avoid personal contact with non-Christians? Are my non-Christian neighbors lost? How should I share my faith?

Non-Christian religions are here to stay. Every indicator points to their growing influence. This book offers the pastor a concerned and thoughtful answer on how to love our non-Christian neighbors.

Shame and The Church

This award winning video was especially developed to assist clergy (and the general Christian community) in the identification of personal, spiritual and church-related problems which have shame at the core.

Payoffs for reducing shame in the Christian community include deeper spirituality, a reduction of energy putting out “church fires”, less clergy-parishioner criticism, and more satisfaction with interpersonal relationships.

This 40-minute video is a rich resource for sermons, vespers, and special programs. It comes equipped with discussion questions and background information which would be useful in the church setting. Viewers will find this video thought provoking, as well as inspirational.

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The Tie That Binds

How to Reach Baby Boomers

Easum pastors a church that reaches out and draws in baby boomers. His purpose in writing this book is not to describe or define baby boomers—others have done that. Instead, he proposes to assist churches in ministering to this generation and realize the cost in doing so. He suggests basic changes in leadership skills, the quality and scope of ministry, and the methods of preaching and worship. He maintains that churches can make changes without abandoning any basic tenets of Christianity.

The author recognizes the idealism of the “sixties generation” that evolved into ego-centered self-fulfillment. His goal is to help boomers develop self-fulfillment through self-denial.

He understands our modern world of diversity and the many choices we face. He acknowledges that baby boomers are not choosing Christianity. He wants to change that situation.

Easum is convinced that churches wanting to reach baby boomers must make major changes in evangelism and worship. He warns of tensions that will arise from such a choice. Easum explains differences in thinking and acting between opposing groups of people. He shows how churches can reach boomers without totally alienating current members.

Before reaching out to boomers, the author suggests, each church should ask itself five questions: 1. Are most of the major ministries conducted on church property? 2. Does the church provide ministries for the community and give visibility for the church? 3. Does the church provide ministries that nurture and assimilate those who respond to the church’s outreach? 4. Does the church provide ministries that make disciples out of those involved in the life of the church? 5. Do all the ministries of the church consider the needs of the unchurched and provide ways to establish a relationship with them?

One helpful chapter shares insights on how to preach to boomers and what worship styles will attract them. The author’s comments on “celebration” worship will be of special interest to Adventists.

Reaching baby boomers is not easy. But for churches that believe God calls them to welcome this largely unchurched generation, Easum’s book will offer a source of relevant ideas for ministry.

Health, Healing, and Transformation

This book hopes to assist the church with one of its most important missions—the healing ministry of the gospel. It is an outgrowth of presentations made at the
1989 World Vision International Conference on Health. Four presentations are included.

The first presentation, by Dr. E. Anthony Allen, a psychiatrist and theologian, analyzes salvation and healing as a part of the kingdom proclamation. As Christ commanded His disciples to heal the sick, He challenges the church to fulfill a similar role today. Allen takes issue with the spirit-body dualism dominating the church, and looks at the human being as a whole person. This whole-person approach to health and human development, derived from Gospel accounts of healings, drives him to a ministry of caring. He believes that an inflated concern with filled churches has distracted us from our healing ministry. The evils of exploitation and noncaring must be countered by Christian ministers, physicians, and health-care institutions. Allen encourages local churches to function as hospitals of healing with prayer as the principal tool.

Kenneth Luscombe, a Baptist theologian from Australia, in the second presentation, sees our unresponsiveness as the result of indulgent lifestyles. We overeat, not being hungry. We overspend and are not satisfied. We attempt to compensate for such sins with fast fitness workouts. Health becomes another means to secure prestige, pleasure, and power. To be a Christian, Luscombe says, is to invest our lives as Jesus did. This call to discipleship takes into consideration the needs of the world; the reality of selfish, sinful human nature, and God's healing power. Jesus demonstrated that true greatness comes from serving others. We are not His disciples unless we follow Him, but there will be a cost. He asks, Are we willing to suffer to bring healing to others?

The third presentation, by Brian Meyers, an executive in Health Services for World Vision, looks at health care in the light of the Exodus. It took only a few days to get Israel out of Egypt, but it took 40 years in the wilderness to get Egypt out of Israel, he says. Like Moses, health-care workers must listen to God. "Seeing him who is invisible," we turn away from the quest for gold, our idolization of learning, and our focus on institutions rather than people. The idolatry of health care workers and the use of drugs can be a form of magic, states Meyers. Therefore it is essential to redirect faith from the human instrument to the God of restoration.

Toward the end of the book we meet Dr. Eric Ram, director of International Health for World Vision. He repeats the call to heal found in the Gospels. Jesus exemplifies compassion, he tells us. And

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The material goods a missionary possesses may be confused with the gospel.

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compassion is more than pity or sympathy; it is a capacity to feel, even suffer, with persons in need. Love is a fruit of the Spirit. Physician missionary Paul Brand calls it a polyvalent vaccine for the prevention of almost all diseases of a behavioral nature. The church must possess this same compassion of Jesus in ministering to the ill.

The message of this book deserves prayerful reflection. Medical practitioners and church leaders will profit from the insights and challenges posed by these Christian leaders.

The Bible and the Flag

While Adventists discuss Global Mission, they also need to look at what past experience teaches. Dr. Brian Stanley, registrar and tutor in church history at Spurgeon’s College, London, is passionately concerned that church history be taught in a missions context.

His book deals with the vexed issue of the link between imperialism and Christianity. He confesses to being tempted to entitle his work “The Bible and the Gun.” Imperialism was not achieved without force. Governments often used armed intervention on behalf of Christian mission, either to protect nationals or as an excuse to penetrate other lands.

Students of nineteenth-century history of prophetic interpretation will be interested in the discussion of the relative roles of pre- and postmillennialism in missionary enterprise. While this reviewer would agree with Stanley that the missionary movement was “born out of a conviction that the church stood on the brink of the last days of history,” the question of the balance between post- and premillennialists before 1880 may need to be examined. Certainly the premillennialists claimed that their belief did not lead to any complacency or fatalism.

While the whole book should be read by missiologists, some chapters are particularly instructive. For example, “Christianity and the Anticolonial Reaction,” “Missions and the Nationalists Revolutions, 1860 to 1895,” “Christianity and Culture,” and “Empires and Missions Under Human and Divine Judgment” are relevant.

The collapse of Christian work in China in 1949 shows how a seemingly sound structure may rest on an insecure base. Church institutions commanded little loyalty from the Chinese nationals.

Stanley contends that the heart of our mission problem has been that Western cultures contain a complex amalgam of Christian and secular influences. The Western missionary may have rationalistic philosophical assumptions that do not fit other cultures. The material goods a missionary possesses may be confused with the gospel and create an appetite for things, he says.

The author calls for an alternative that will “involve the construction within each society of a Christian counterculture to exemplify the absolute values of the kingdom of God within that particular cultural context.”

Stanley raises such questions as,
Where do we stand on the fate of those who have never heard of Jesus Christ? Are all the heathen lost? Are all non-Christian religions of the devil, or are they approaches to God, awaiting fulfillment in the gospel revelation? Has the main aim of mission shifted from souls to social uplift?

We must ask whether Adventist missions have been too closely associated with political regimes. Has such association muted the church's concern for social justice or left the church vulnerable when the regime ended?

Adventists need to be sensitive to the issues raised in this book and to absorb its lessons. We must, as Paul said, become all things to all men, without losing sight of the centrality of the One crucified, risen, and returning.

Recently Noted

This book is built on 23 propositions about communication. Smith's propositions encompass fundamental truths about communicating from a Christian perspective. Smith shows how meaning and understanding are the focus of communication.


John Sanders researches the various schools of thought concerning the destiny of the unevangelized. He investigates the claims of two extreme views—restrictivism and universalism—and reveals their weaknesses. He supports the "wider hope" of salvation as universally accessible and builds a good case for inclusivism: universally accessible salvation apart from evangelization. An appendix section discusses the salvation of infants. This book is indispensable for anyone interested in missions and evangelism.

Why the Sabbath?
From page 4

Calvary's freedom. Week by week the seventh day comes around to remind us we can't save ourselves—we must trust Jesus. And in this world where atheism abounds, the Sabbath testifies that we didn't evolve by chance. God made us as His children.

Unfortunately, we Adventists have traditionally presented the Sabbath as an attempt to fulfill the law rather than as rest in the accomplishments of Christ. No wonder fellow Christians who know God's grace have not been overly impressed by Adventist evangelism. Thank God we are repenting of legalism and beginning to preach the truth as it is in Jesus.

So let us call the world to worship God at Calvary, not at Sinai. Only then can we honor the gospel and complete our Global Mission.
Two 1992 evangelism councils in the North American Division

West: December 13-16, 1992, beginning 7:00 p.m., Sunday, December 13, on the campus of the Adventist Media Center. Speakers and presenters include Glenn Aufderhar, Dan and Gloria Bentzinger, Alf Birch, Mark and Ernestine Finley, Don and Margie Gray, Gordon Henderson, Dan Matthews, Lonnie Melashenko, H.M.S. Richards, Jr., George Vandeman, Jim Wood, and C. Lloyd Wyman (director).

Motels, restaurants, and stores are within 1 1/2 miles of the campus. For further information call 805-373-7612 or write the Adventist Evangelistic Association, 1100 Rancho Conejo Boulevard, Newbury Park, California 91320.

East: December 14-17, 1992, beginning 7:30 p.m., Monday, December 14, and ending at noon, Thursday, December 17 at the Daytona Hilton, 2637 S. Atlantic Avenue, Daytona Beach, Florida 32118-5699 (call for hotel reservations at 1-800-525-7350).

The program will include evangelists presenting messages just as they do in crusades. Participating evangelists are Lyle Albrecht, John Carter, Ron Halvorsen, and Dennis Ross. There will also be workshops on pastoral preparation for crusades.

Enhancing worship for the disabled

An interdenominational handbook to assist congregations in welcoming persons with disabilities is available from the National Organization on Disability. Its 52 pages are full of fresh ideas for overcoming the reluctance and awkwardness many members have in relating to the physically, mentally, or emotionally handicapped. Single copies are US$10 postpaid in the United States. Bulk orders are discounted, and free copies are offered to individuals or congregations in financial need. Contact N.O.D., 910 6th St NW, Suite 600, Washington, D.C. 20006.

Eulogy

I have found it effective to summarize the eulogy at funerals into a one-column format on my computer. On another page I change fonts and type the scriptures used. Then I have my plotter print this combination in appropriate colors, after which I place it in a double picture frame and present it to the family at the proper time and setting. I find this to be quite an effective tool for counseling and evangelism.

Even if one does not have a color printing plotter, most printers accommodate font changes. The effect still looks excellent in black on white.—Bill Tuite, Alexandria, Indiana.

Essays

For some years my ministry has profited from essays on a wide range of subjects in the newsletter of the Royal Bank of Canada. If you also wish to receive the Royal Bank Letter free of charge, write to the Royal Bank of Canada, P.O. Box 6001, Montreal, P.Q., H3C-3A9.—William Cranford, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Illustration and quotation diskettes

When typing sermon notes on my computer, I usually include any illustrations or quotations. Rather than having to retype them in case of future use, I copy them from the sermon file to a diskette for illustrations or quotations. To avoid confusion I use the extension ".i" for illustrations and ".q" for quotations. Items can also be dated as a reminder of when they were last used. It is always wise to make a note indicating the source of the illustration or quotation.—Gayle Woods, Burlison, Tennessee.

Footprint with a prayer

I have a special ceremony for every newborn in Paraguay Adventist Hospital. I present the parents with a Bible containing the baby’s footprint, with the prayer expressed that the child will learn to walk the Bible way. Already a few parents have come to Christ and have been baptized through this evangelistic tool—Pastor Tomás Recalde, Colonia Hohenau, Paraguay.

Five phases of evangelism

Here is a plan I find effective in helping pastors prepare for evangelistic crusades. Divide the church year into five concentrations of congregational focus. Each concentration is a time for events and focus of evangelistic principles based on characters of the early apostolic church.

First, Operation Peter, during which church leaders declare faith in the power of God’s Spirit to evangelize successfully, despite opposition and dissension.

Second, Operation Stephen, when the church has revival services and forms prayer bands to inspire members to partake of the Holy Spirit’s power.

Third, Operation Andrew, a time to sponsor outreach activities that enable members to find souls for Jesus, such as home Bible study fellowships, stop-smoking programs, etc.

Fourth, Operation Philip. Just as Philip explained the prophecies of Scripture, so an evangelistic reaping crusade takes place.

Fifth, we have Operation Barnabas, when new members are encouraged and commissioned into missionary service.

I have found this 12- to 16-month plan highly effective in integrating and mobilizing evangelistic principles into the life of local churches. I will be more than happy to send details about this plan to anyone upon request.—Steve Durkac, P.O. Box 12207, Rock Hill, South Carolina 29731.

Communion for children

With the rising number of unbaptized children participating in the Communion service, deacons are often confused about whom to offer the emblems. The situation could be solved if the week before Communion the church bulletin had a note tucked inside encouraging parents to discuss the matter with their children and decide at the family level whether or not the children will participate. Then when it comes time for the Lord’s Supper, the parents can take the emblems from the trays and hand them to their children, thus alleviating any difficulty for the deacons.—Dan Martella, Provo, Utah.