

# Duncan Eva, Willis Hackett, Neal Wilson: A Symposium

by Roberta J. Moore

*At the request of SPECTRUM's editorial board, Roberta J. Moore conducted the following interviews last fall in Loma Linda during the 1974 Annual Council.*

*These three General Conference vice presidents, W. Duncan Eva, Willis J. Hackett and Neal C. Wilson, were interviewed separately. From about 70 pages transcribed from tapes of the interviews, the author extracted what she considered to be of the greatest interest and arranged the material into a symposium.*

**M**oore: What do you see as the chief concerns of the intelligent, educated young Seventh-day Adventist in his relationship with the church?

*Wilson:* As I see them, these concerns are primarily in the area of how flexible the church is to recognize that we can have some differing viewpoints within the church and still maintain a very strong degree of unity. There are certain essentials on which we must stay pretty close together, but there are other areas, organizational or philosophical, which could vary considerably.

I find, too, a desire among these intelligent,

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educated young members for more openness on the part of leadership and a longing for worthwhile participation. They feel church leaders ought to be thinking how to make this possible, not just leave it to a hit-or-miss type of situation. I think they're right; church leaders ought to be actively planning and devising ways to bring about this greater participation.

And then, perhaps in some way the result of, or at least related to, these two points, I would have to say that there is a constant question of believability regarding administrative policies.

*Moore:* Let's start with the idea of laymen's participation in matters of church policy. As a church leader, how do you see that?

*Eva:* Church leaders deeply appreciate the interest and involvement of laymen in church matters. The Adventist church has always believed that it will never be able to fully discharge its commission until laymen and ministers unite to finish "the work." We have always believed, moreover, that God will recognize and honor such consecrated cooperation "by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure."

And before you point out that I have not exactly answered your question, let me explain that I see "matters of church policy" as related purely and simply to the church's task of taking God's last message to the world. The church has no other "policies." An interest in church policy, if it is not completely concerned with "the finishing of the work," is basically meaningless to layman and minister alike.

*Hackett:* I'd like to say that a problem in laymen's participation comes from their seeing the church only from the local perspective. We need to see it as a whole. I think our biggest task as leaders is to help the intellectual folk, the professionals of our church, see the church from a wider angle and then they can help us meet the problems.

*Moore:* You think, then, that they don't now see the church as a whole?

*Hackett:* I think not many do. Many see the church as United States and North America.

*"The minute laymen take over and attempt to run the church, to choose the personnel, to make the decisions, irrespective of the ministry, then they will also have to accept the responsibility. And this would mean that we would have to change our complete concept of church administration."*—Willis Hackett

*Wilson:* We have to look at the question of laymanship from a practical point of view. In other words, how could we make it work?

Sometimes, I have said to my colleagues in church administration, "It seems to me that we could spend a profitable three or four days in some kind of conference, made up of those interested in this kind of thing—that is, church leadership and lay participation—and say, 'How are we going to do it?'" I think unless something like that happens, we'll stay in the area of theory and never get into practical application.

I think there are many areas where participation can come about: committees, discussion groups, groups grappling with particular issues in the church. And if we really tried it, I think it would pay off handsomely. But we dream about it as a possibility for tomorrow and keep putting it off for some time in the future.

*Moore:* So you haven't figured out how to accomplish it. Do you have any ideas about how it could be accomplished? What procedures could laymen follow, for example, to gain some input?

*Hackett:* I think support of the local church is the first step. When laymen support their local church strongly, the church will recognize their capabilities; it won't be long until they will be in leadership positions of the church locally.

At the General Conference, we often call in people who are outstanding in some of our institutions—for instance, in our universities. We're calling them so much now, in fact, that the universities and colleges cry, "Look, don't call them any more! We've got a teaching job for them to do!"

*Moore:* So the way you see it, then, the invitation comes from church leaders to the laymen?

*Hackett:* That's right.

*Moore:* Then the layman really can't do anything to initiate this?

*Hackett:* He can be a leader where he is. That's the first thing to do. If he is recognized by his local church as an outstanding leader, we'll soon get the message on the top levels.

*Eva:* Lay "input" is obviously most effective at the local church level. But consecrated laymen can and do make a most valued contribution at other levels, too—on conference, mission, union and other executive committees, and on institutional boards.

There are, moreover, laymen's advisory committees. They are organized especially to provide a channel for lay input into the operations of the church on conference and mission levels at times other than the usual session of the conference or mission.

Furthermore, there is value in direct counsel from thoughtful laymen to conference, union and other officers. I look back over 40 years of service to the church and recall many occasions when I have greatly valued the help given me by laymen. I have not always agreed with everything they said, but I have been greatly enriched and strengthened by their counsel.

*Wilson:* Let me comment on how I think a layman can gain this input we're talking about.

Individuals who are interested in certain issues that they see in the local church or that they recognize in an institution, or the conference, or in the North American Division, or even in our international family—if these individuals would let some of us at the General Conference know of their interest, this would help.

We often bring together groups for a couple

of days, to identify a problem. We parcel out assignments, and then members of the group go back home and work on it for a few weeks or a few months. Then we call another meeting, and the members of the group come together again, to make a report to each other. Usually, we get together three, four times, maybe more before we are through.

Take, for instance, the committee that studied divorce and remarriage. We brought them together many times, but there were quite long periods in between, when they were modifying, refining, doing additional study.

I think the way for laymen to start would be to let us know their particular areas of interest and expertise. This would work at all levels—local, conference, union, General Conference and division levels. When someone has worked with a committee at the local level, he

would be among the first the General Conference would try to pull in.

*Moore:* Are you saying that any layman who wants input should simply let church leaders know of his interest and the areas where he has particular competence?

*Wilson:* Well, we like to find those who are willing to give and take. When there are a number of differing opinions to be considered, we have to find a common ground, unless there's a very clearly articulated doctrine over which there is little controversy. We've got to find persons who can feel a part of a group, moving towards a solution. I think human judgment and wisdom and the collective strength of the church must be brought to bear, to find a way through issues that confront us.

*Moore:* Since we're talking about laymen's input at the local level as a starting point, I

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## Duncan Eva: Years of Upheaval

The Evas were among the earliest English settlers in South Africa, arriving there in the 1820s. More than 100 years later Duncan Eva, then 13, was baptized as a result of tent meetings in his hometown of Aliwal North. It was a town of perhaps 3,000 English and 3,000 nationals. His father worked on the railroad.

Eva studied at Helderberg College and began his career with the denomination in 1934 as an elementary schoolteacher in a single-teacher school. Later, he did mission work among the Indian population in South Africa at Natal.

For the past 30 years, he has been in administrative work.

Eventually, Eva came to the United States to complete his college education in 1949 at Walla Walla College and an M.A. degree from the seminary in 1950.

Division-level work has brought him some of his greatest satisfactions. His longest term of service at this level was with the Trans-Africa Division as secretary from 1954-1965. During seven of those 11 years, Robert H. Pierson was president.

"In the General Conference, you can become isolated and insulated," he says, "but in the division you are next to what's happening and your work has a wide scope."

Eva's service between 1954 and 1965 coincided with years of political upheaval in Africa that brought many difficulties for the Adventist Church. As secretary of the Division, Eva was at the center of every major issue.

Those who worked with him there believe that his great contribution to the church during these years was in his ability to discern the crucial issues in complex situations and provide clear and workable solutions, particularly in rewriting policies, constitutions and organization procedures.

In 1973, Eva became the General Conference vice president assigned specifically to administering the flow of church business coming into the headquarters office. While others travel the world attending business sessions, Eva keeps the wheels turning at home, making sure that decisions get made, and that once made, they get carried out. His fellow workers regard him as very human and approachable. When away from work, his chief interest is working with wood in a little basement shop.

His concern for the church is one he cites from Revelation 4 and 5—that the church find complete devotion to Jesus Christ. "We're not to be preoccupied with saving ourselves or even other people, but in glorifying God," he says.

would like to ask what you think about the question of laymen's having something to say in the choice of their own leaders: pastors and conference officials.

*Wilson:* Well, I've found that when laymen realize that we aren't trying to put something over on them, that we don't have a predetermined choice, there is a meeting of minds and a working together in these matters. I have discovered that laymen not only ask for but also appreciate the counsel and advice of leadership. I remember sitting for almost three hours with a nominating committee, listening to them analyzing some of their needs in that conference, some of their hopes, some of the vision they had.

I don't find it strange at all for there to be a desire for input in the choice of leadership in the local church or, in fact, at any level of the church. I think we miss a lot when we try to move things through so fast that we don't take time to develop rapport between members and leaders.

*"I find a desire among intelligent young members for more openness on the part of leadership and a longing for worthwhile participation. They think church leaders ought to make this possible. I think they're right; church leaders ought to be devising ways to bring about greater participation."*—Neal Wilson

You know, the longer I work with people the more I see that interaction isn't something that develops in just a couple of minutes in a group that have never worked together. This takes a little time. And, of course, we all have to realize—leaders and laymen—that in a committee or in the selection of people we can't always have the ideal. In the final analysis, we've got to be practical about this, but let's come as close together as possible in deciding what we ought to do.

*Hackett:* I'd like to say something about this point. I know that many laymen feel they do not have enough say in what's going on. We need

a balance in that, and I think we're trying to get that balance. Our lay advisory committees, which are totally laymen except for conference officials, are one way to get that balance.

But as long as we hold ministers responsible for the success of the church, they must have authority as well.

If you hire me to run your business and you say to me, "I'm going to hold you responsible, but I'm going to make the decisions and choose the personnel," I'll say to you, "Excuse me; you run your own business."

You see, we have a trained ministry; we hold them responsible for the success of the church. Ministers, of course, report back to the laymen, to our constituencies. But the minute laymen take over and attempt to run the church, to choose the personnel, to make the decisions, irrespective of the ministry, then they will also have to accept the responsibility. And this would mean that we would have to change our complete concept of church administration.

*Moore:* You're saying that there are limitations on the input laymen can have in church affairs, such as the choice of ministers?

*Hackett:* There are limitations on how far we can go in separating the ministry and the laymen. There must be an input from both. But the responsibility for the success of the church rests with the ministry.

*Moore:* Is it possible to find out what laymen would like in a pastor and perhaps even whom they would like?

*Hackett:* I think so. And we do that.

*Moore:* What dangers do you see in the participation of laymen in decision-making?

*Hackett:* I don't think there are dangers as long as we have a balance between laymen and ministers. We're all working together for the same objectives.

*Eva:* I do not know that I see any dangers in the participation of laymen in the formation of church policies and decision-making. They should participate, and their growing interest and concern is something that church leaders value increasingly.

However, we must not forget that the more fully one becomes acquainted with the problems and responsibilities in a certain area, the more his opinions and even convictions are modified. It may not be so clear in the United States, because of its form of democracy, but we have

all seen how irresponsible some politicians can be when in opposition and how much like those they oppose they come to be when responsibility once again rests on their shoulders! This may illustrate what can happen as laymen become better acquainted with some of the situations that church leaders face.

*Moore:* Do you see any dangers in lay participation, Elder Wilson?

*Wilson:* No. In fact, I see a lot of strength. I find no great clamor and no great feeling of uneasiness on the part of laymen where there is open communication by leadership. A leader has to work at that—I mean, to learn how to communicate. It is possible for a leader to be saying a lot and using many words but still not communicating with people. He needs to stop talking and listen. Listening is a part of communicating. When you have made it clear that

you're willing to listen, there's generally a very relaxed feeling; then laymen feel they are participating on an ongoing basis and don't have to demand participation.

*Moore:* Let's look at another area for a moment. What about our overseas programs? To what extent are church leaders seeking input from Seventh-day Adventist laymen who could make a contribution in planning or carrying out overseas missions programs?

*Eva:* We have several programs in which laymen are giving help in overseas fields. There is a plan known as Adventists Abroad, for example, by which the church seeks to make discreet use of the services of such people. Then there are also the Adventist Volunteer Service Corps and our student missionary plan. Of one student missionary I was told, "Send us as many like

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## Willis Hackett: Scrutiny of Doctrine

**T**he father of Willis J. Hackett held seances and never failed in contacting the spirit world. He was a public hypnotist and spiritist.

That was long ago. The girl Hackett was later to marry urged him to attend tent meetings being held by Luther Warren in Pennsylvania, and they both became Seventh-day Adventists.

After one-half year of college, with the Depression bearing down upon his family, Willis Hackett took a job teaching the largest one-teacher school in the Colorado Conference. There were 26 students in all eight grades. At the end of the year, an Adventist contractor, M. E. Carlson, offered to sponsor him back to college if he would take the ministry. Hackett agreed.

Following graduation from Union College in 1939, he began his ministry as a pastor in Texas.

Looking back over his career, which has included 30 years of administrative work, Hackett still feels the six years of pastoring were the most rewarding.

In administration he has most enjoyed being a union president—a position he held in the North Philippines from 1956-1958, the Atlantic Union from 1958-1964, and the North Pacific from 1965-1968. The vice presidency of the General Conference is essentially a technician's job, he points out. One must work largely through other

people and committees.

Currently, Hackett is vice president for coordination of the church's education and health programs. He sits on numerous boards and committees. He also works with the Biblical Research committee and the Geoscience Foundation. Since being in the General Conference, he has helped reorganize the flow of work at headquarters by fathering a plan aimed at making sure what's been decided actually gets done.

Hackett sees himself as a team-man, one who works to weld a group together to get a job done.

A number of issues face the church in the next five years, Hackett believes. Among them: Scrutiny of doctrine, acceptance of Ellen White, the need for a worldwide unity of the church, more tensions between liberals and conservatives, the search for leadership "which will stand up and be counted," facing increasing demand for hospital and education unionization of workers, making church-sponsored education truly Christian education and, of course, economics.

Outside of his strenuous work life, Hackett takes occasional refuge in a few hobbies—a good library, a shop, tinkering with his auto, and when he can, a weekend at the lake with his boat.

David as you can find; there is always a work for them.”

In some countries of the so-called “Third World” large accessions of membership are the order of the day. Behind the thrilling reports are real problems, however. We can never consider the church’s task complete until in every land it has its roots deep in native soil. True Christian maturity will be lacking until the indigenous church stands on its own feet.

I have a growing conviction that in order to accomplish this maturity faster, it is going to be necessary for some overseas missionaries to make greater sacrifices. I mean specifically that there must be greater identification with the people they go to serve than there has been in the past. This obviously will involve a great challenge, but I believe God has His people who will meet it.

*Moore:* This is getting away from the subject of laymen’s participation in church affairs, but I wish you would tell me to what extent overseas divisions influence the thinking of leaders on issues of the church here in North America. Take, for example, such subjects as divorce and women’s role in the church.

*Hackett:* As you know, committees of laymen and church leaders have studied both subjects. The study on divorce and remarriage was done largely for North America, but reports on both subjects went to our overseas officers because anything we do here in North America in regard to either the role of women or divorce affects the overseas divisions.

I’ve served overseas, where we have a policy book for our duties. We adapt many of the General Conference policies to the division in which we work—all the divisions do that—but these policies are operational differences, not major theological concerns of the church. In these concerns, we must stick together.

**M***oore:* Let’s go from this to a related point. To what extent do you think the church can tolerate differences in theology?

*Wilson:* I think there’s something very wholesome about discussion of theology. There are many today who have questions about doctrine, who could be greatly helped if we would dialogue with them.

But we have to remember that doctrine is not

arrived at simply by popular vote. This is something which, of course, some people don’t understand. They feel that we ought to be able to vote on doctrine or theology as we vote on a lot of other issues. But I think we shouldn’t be afraid to discuss these things together.

*Hackett:* I think there’s plenty of room in the Adventist church for differences in the fringe areas of doctrine: the 144,000, for instance, and certain other areas of the three angels’ messages.

But there are certain fundamentals given to us by inspiration and well established by the church, which we all must believe to be Adventists.

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—*Duncan Eva*

I draw a small circle, and in that circle I put the things that are explicitly Bible and Ellen White; these are the doctrines that every Adventist ought to believe. Around that I draw a bigger circle, and in it are those matters that no one can pin down exactly. Some people think they’re in the inner circle when they’re in the outer. The danger, I think, is that young intellectuals sometimes become so enamoured with a concept in the outer circle that they think everybody has to believe it, and they must propagate it everywhere.

*Wilson:* We need to remember that differences of opinion don’t necessarily indicate disloyalty. I don’t find very much substitute for direct, open discussion when we differ. We need to sit down together and say, “O.K., let’s put things out on the table and see how far apart we are and why. What’s the basis? Is it philosophical, theological, or organizational?” When you trace these things back, very often you find that you’re really not very far apart.

*Moore:* What direction do you think the thoughtful young Adventist can go when he differs from the church on points of doctrine or

of church government? What possibilities are there for dialogue in our periodicals, for example?

*Hackett:* I think our periodicals may be the place for differing opinions within reason. But I would object to someone's carrying a confrontation before the whole church in one of our publications. Take SPECTRUM, for instance: I would be a little careful there because I think we have a lot of unsuspecting and unknowing people whose faith and trust and confidence in the church might be marred by carrying some controversies into the open.

*Moore:* Then what would you see as offering a forum for dissent?

*Hackett:* We have set up committees; we have one, for example, which deals with differences in opinion in the Bible and science. Then in the area of church government there are conference

committees and constituency meetings. Anyone can air his ideas in a constituency meeting.

*Moore:* What about the committees you mention—what is the procedure for getting a hearing in the committee which deals with questions about science and the Bible?

*Hackett:* The best way would be to write a paper. The paper would be aired, and the writer might be invited to discuss this with the committee, if his peers see in this something worthy of further exploring; if they don't, they would probably tell him, "Look: you're off base here and here and here. Think it over again."

I'm a little afraid of airing differences in print, however, for the simple reason that this gives the church the appearance of being frag-

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## Neal Wilson: Exhilarating Risks

Before he was five years old, Neal Wilson was learning native languages in Central Africa where his father was a missionary. His playmates were black children who taught him to make simple primitive traps to catch small birds and animals.

He attended high school and completed a junior-college education at Vincent Hill in India, where about 250 missionary children and children of well-to-do Indians studied together.

After his graduation from Pacific Union College in 1942, Wilson was married and began language study in preparation for mission work. His first assignment was with Middle-East Division. He became president of the Egypt mission at the age of 24.

If he weren't a vice president and had to choose another job for himself in the denomination, Wilson feels he would look to the religious liberty field. When he began his work in Egypt, officials told him Seventh-day Adventists had contributed nothing to their country and it was their hope to see the church organization terminated. Taking this as a challenge to his religious liberty interests, Wilson pledged to keep the doors open to Seventh-day Adventists rather than letting them slam closed. Before leaving the Nile Union in 1958, he became adviser to the governor of Cairo on religious liberty, developed

close friendships with many religious and political leaders in the Middle East and negotiated for the opening of Adventist work in Libya, Sudan and Aden. He received a citation from the Libyan government for opening the Benghazi Hospital.

Wilson became vice president in charge of the North American Division in 1966. He is known as one who "listens" and this makes him the natural target for those who are either disenchanted or who seek counsel and blessing upon new ideas. His appointment calendar is booked weeks in advance.

He is an avid mountain climber. He and his son have already seen the summits of the peaks on the east coast and the Tetons. His next objectives include mountains in Glacier National Park, and someday, Mt. McKinley. The rope-work is dangerous, he admits, but the risks are exhilarating.

The greatest challenge facing the church, he feels, is "our being able to recognize the gifts of the spirit in the church—how they can mesh and work together to offer the maximum thrust and strength to cope with the demands that face us." He adds that while Adventists must be a working church they must primarily be a witnessing church. "We must keep a balance between organization and an awareness of our purpose for existence."

mented. Often when this is done you weaken the confidence in leadership. The Lord only knows we need all the confidence we can get in this day and time, to lead our people forward into the truths of righteousness without being fragmented. Of course, a lot depends on how it's done. Many of the articles that have come out in SPECTRUM I think have been very thoughtfully done without being detrimental.

*Moore:* You seem to see what is published as having more impact than what is spoken.

*Hackett:* Yes, because it's in a smaller group when it's spoken. There's a place for everything. I think the place to bring our differences is to a small group of responsible people who are knowledgeable in the area. I tell teachers this. The place to propound a question is not before a class of youngsters; it's among your peers who are knowledgeable in the area.

*Moore:* May we go a little farther with this idea? What about presenting two sides of a question in the classroom? For example, what would you think of presenting two views of creationism?

*Wilson:* I wouldn't be at all adverse to getting two sides of the question, provided the teacher has some convictions. I feel very uneasy when the teacher has no personal convictions. Anyone will certainly discover, without any question, that I have arrived at some conclusions about creationism. I see no great problem in alerting students to many of the things they're going to confront and making them aware of the issues involved. I would hope, though, that they would not be left in a dilemma, a state of uncertainty, as to what their teacher believes.

*Hackett:* A teacher can present all the theories of the world in that class; I think this is perfectly all right. Students ought to see the various sides of a question. But when all is said and done, you're teaching in a Seventh-day Adventist school, with a Seventh-day Adventist salary, paid for by a Seventh-day Adventist constituency. That being the case, I expect you to say, "Here's where I stand." If we don't have that kind of responsible teaching, then there's no point in our paying for our school system.

*Moore:* This suggests another matter. What about those Seventh-day Adventists who are on a secular college campus, rather than a Seventh-day Adventist one? What hope do you see for redefining or perhaps extending the ministry of

the church to take in this group? We seem to be offering pretty much the same diet to everybody now. What about the needs of graduate students on secular university campuses? What about racial minorities? Professional women?

*Wilson:* I'm not sure I have the most adequate answer at this point, but I'll attempt one.

I think the Master, in His ministry and His life, which were to be an example to us, made it clear that we ought to try to meet people where they are; we ought to have something for people where they are. The trouble is that it's difficult

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to put together in one person what it takes to meet all situations. The Master could do it, but I'm not sure I can. However, I think He expects me to be discerning enough as a leader to recognize the variety of gifts in the church, and if one person can't do everything equally well, then perhaps we simply need to look around us for those with gifts I don't have.

We tend too much to restrict ourselves to a few channels; we are not doing enough in some of these areas you mention. Take the campus ministry, for example; we aren't doing much of anything there. If we recognized the variety of gifts in the church, we would see that some can meet that kind of challenge.

What I'm saying is that we stick too closely to rather circumscribed patterns of work, to the neglect of large segments of the population that we should be trying to reach.

*Moore:* To what extent do you think your answer would reflect the thought of other leaders?

*Wilson:* I don't want you to think that I am presuming to speak for the church or its leadership. I'm giving you only my own opinions.

In the basics, however, I think we would be



pretty close together. Oh, some would express it differently than I have; but while their answers would come out in a different style, the meaning would probably be about the same.

*Moore:* I would like to look at one more area. How do you react to the criticism that we're still trying to answer questions nobody's asking?

*Eva:* It is true that we can and do at times all address ourselves to questions no one is asking. We can all be completely irrelevant and amazingly blind to that fact, also.

On the other hand, we are never to judge what is really "relevant" by what the majority, or a worldly-wise minority, considers "relevant." We know Jesus asked and answered some very relevant questions that many people considered irrelevant and would have preferred Him to be silent on. While we must answer the questions that people are asking and answer them with the truth, I hope we will never stop asking and answering some "irrelevant" questions that people would prefer us to be silent on.

*Wilson:* I'm not sure what the questions are, that nobody is asking. I suppose it depends a little on what some consider to be the most pressing, urgent needs in their own experience or in their own circle.

Sometimes people are grappling with some very real situations, day by day, and we're dealing with philosophical problems. Our philosophical problems may have principles which could be applied to those day-by-day situations, but the people to whom we preach may find it difficult to see the principles and to put them together.

*Hackett:* Today we're dealing with people who don't know the Bible. I met a lady on a plane the other day; we were talking about some of these things, and when I mentioned the flood, she said, "What flood?"

*Moore:* How would you approach someone like her?

*Hackett:* I would have to start where she is and try to find a point of reference. I could start with health—everybody's interested in that. Or I could start in the area of economics. In other words, I would start in any area that troubles the person I'm talking with, and lead him into the context.

*Moore:* But as you see it, our mission is still pretty much a Bible-preaching mission? How would it differ from Billy Graham's?

*Hackett:* There's no question in my mind that we have a Bible mission to save men, to introduce them to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the special concepts of Adventism. We have doctrines that nobody else has: the sanctuary, which is the key to the whole plan of salvation, and the investigative judgment, for example.

*Moore:* Is it possible that these may be in the area of questions nobody's asking?

*Hackett:* Yes, if I began there. But sooner or later if I'm going to lead people back to God I have to cover these points.

*Moore:* To what questions do you think we should be addressing ourselves, for the most part? In other words, how do you see the mission of the church in 1975?

*Wilson:* Just what it has always been: to interpret the real character of God, and what solution He has offered for the problem of sin and its destructive results, and to show that the gospel actually works and that it's for everyone.

**E**va: I think one question to which we should be addressing ourselves is how much are we truly studying the Bible and to what extent are we letting its message speak to our hearts? There is no book in the world that is more relevant in every age than the Bible. While we sit (whether laymen or ministers) on the throne as David sat in great self-confidence and assurance, handing down our moral judgments on this and that, we had better be listening. The Bible could be saying, as Nathan said to David, "Thou art the man!"

We should also be addressing ourselves to the question of our great spiritual need and most earnestly seeking to be completely possessed by the Holy Spirit, to know the strengthening with might that comes in the "inner man," and the blessed results that flow out from that experience.

I know no questions more important than these. When they are answered in our experience, our mission as ministers and laymen will be abundantly clear to us.