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## The heart of the Seventh-day Adventist health message







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12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring,  
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[www.ministrymagazine.org](http://www.ministrymagazine.org)  
[ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org](mailto:ministrymagazine@gc.adventist.org)

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### ADVERTISING

Melynie Tooley  
[advertising@ministrymagazine.org](mailto:advertising@ministrymagazine.org)  
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[subscriptions@ministrymagazine.org](mailto:subscriptions@ministrymagazine.org)  
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### SECRETARY

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### ASSOCIATE SECRETARIES

Jonas Arrais, Robert Costa, Willie E. Hucks II, Anthony Kent, Derek Morris, Janet Page

### MINISTERIAL RESOURCE CENTER COORDINATOR

Cathy Payne  
888-771-0738, +1 301-680-6508

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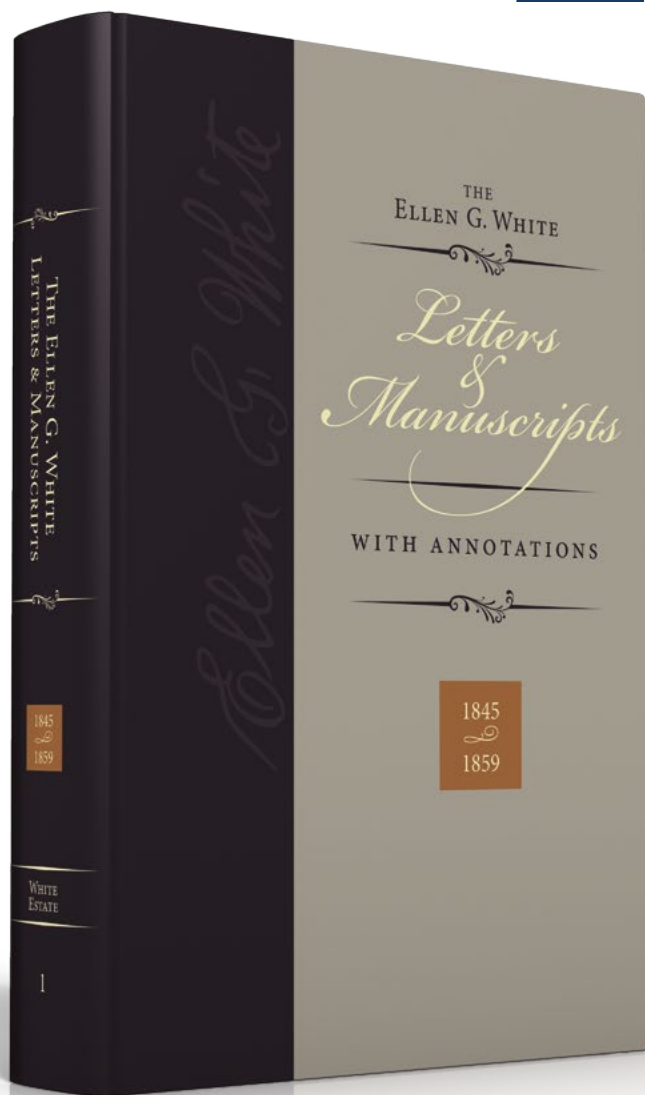
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# Read Between the Lines



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# Time to replenish

I am currently in the midst of a thoughtful book by Bill Hybels entitled *Simplify*.<sup>1</sup> My take-away lesson is both simple and priceless: take time to replenish.

One of the greatest dangers for pastors is depletion. So much is required for those involved in ministry—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We can easily find ourselves dangerously depleted like the 12 disciples after their first missionary journey, where they didn't even have time to eat. To those first followers, and also to us, Jesus says, “‘Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while’” (Mark 6:31, NKJV). In other words, take some time to rejuvenate.

Hybels discusses five major ways to do this:

1. Time alone with God
2. Quality family time
3. Fulfilling work activities
4. Recreation
5. Exercise

## Time alone with God

It is easy to assume that pastors are always intentional about taking time alone with God. In reality, pastors often get caught in the trap of ministry—so busy serving others that we have little or no personal time at the feet of Jesus. Like Martha, we can become anxious and troubled about many things and neglect that which is most important (Luke 10:38–42). Time alone with God is a wonderful way to be replenished physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

## Quality family time

During my travels, I hear too many stories of pastoral families in crisis. Pastors often feel dislocated

from their families. Many spouses and PKs (children of pastoral families) feel neglected—even abandoned. Unless we build quality family time into our busy schedules, we will shortchange those we love the most. What would your spouse and children say they need the most from you right now? It is probably not money or material possessions. Most pastoral families are craving more quality family time. Taking that time with your family is another way to be refreshed.

## Fulfilling work activities

We all have aspects of our work that are depleting. If we had to engage in those activities all the time, we would feel drained. Conversely, there are aspects of our work that replenish us, not only spiritually but even physically and emotionally. What aspects of your ministry are most fulfilling for you? I feel revived when I teach an interactive Bible study for young adults. After filming four programs in one day I am exhausted, but I am also happy and replenished! Find aspects of your work that have a similar effect for you. Do not neglect those activities or delegate them to others. Joyfully embrace work activities that fill your reserves.

## Recreation


Someone once told me that pastors do not play well. Then he asked me what I did for recreational activities. I quickly came to the startling realization that recreation was not an intentional part of my daily or weekly schedule. And yet, recreation, by its definition, is an opportunity for re-creation. Bill Hybels discovered a love for sailing. What recreational activity have you built into your weekly schedule that fills

*One of the greatest dangers for pastors is depletion.*

your reserves? My wife and I have discovered the joy of composing Scripture songs together. We sing together for our daily worship time and midweek House of Prayer, and we have found that it is a great recreational activity for us.

## Exercise

I know you are busy. But if you are too busy to exercise, then you are definitely too busy. You do not have to purchase expensive gym memberships or costly equipment. Just find a way to get moving. My wife and I have made a commitment to walk together. While we walk, we talk and pray together. Sometimes our daily walk involves getting up early or staying up late. When the weather is bad, we walk in a shopping mall or gym. When we are traveling, we walk in the airport. It is part of our daily routine that we really enjoy. It is not just about burning calories—it is about being replenished.

Ministry is difficult. Life is hard. If you do not take care of yourself, you will wither and die in some form or fashion. So, as we come to the end of another busy year of ministry, my appeal to you is simple: Take time to replenish. 

<sup>1</sup> Bill Hybels, *Simplify: Ten Practices to Unclutter Your Soul* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2014).

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**John Skrzypaszek, DMin**, is director of the Ellen G White/SDA Research Center, Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.



# The heart of the Seventh-day Adventist health message

**F**riday evening, June 5, 1863, in the house of A. Hilliard at Otsego, Michigan, United States, Ellen White received the vision on “the great subject of Health Reform.”<sup>1</sup> On that day, Ellen and James White had traveled to Otsego, about 30 miles from Battle Creek, to support the evangelistic meetings conducted by R. J. Lawrence and M. E. Cornell. They stopped with the Hilliard family where, at sunset time, a number of believers gathered to welcome the Sabbath. Ellen White was asked to offer the opening Sabbath prayer, during which she received a 45-minute vision. Was God’s choice to communicate at such a specific time, the commencement of the Sabbath, intentional? Or was it just a coincidence? A closer examination of the historical data unfolds an interesting story.

## The heart of the Otsego vision

The next day, Sabbath, June 6, 1863, she penned the following reflection: “I was shown some things in regard to my husband and myself.”<sup>2</sup> First, it appears, the impact of the vision evoked in her mind an inclusively wholistic view of the Sabbath experience.<sup>3</sup> In the message written to the church at Monterey on the

same date (June 6), she referred to the blessings of the Sabbath day that rested upon them on that Friday. “Last evening while engaged in family prayer at Brother Hilliard’s, the blessing of the Lord rested upon us, and I was taken in vision.”<sup>4</sup> This experience took her thoughts away from the frantic activities, heartaches, frustrations, and disappointments. This vision also guided her attention to what God cares about. Much later, she expressed the significance of the Sabbath as a day “designed to bring men into communion with God” and a time where “the hours provide a time for spiritual and relational healing.”<sup>5</sup>

Second, the counsel on health began with a practical lesson based on God’s case study. James and Ellen White visited Otsego to support the evangelistic tent meetings conducted by R. J. Lawrence and M. E. Cornell, scheduled to commence on June 6. While James struggled with depression resulting from overwork, they continued to focus on the activity and expansion of God’s work at the cost of personal health. In this context, God provided a case study demonstrating what matters to Him most. Ellen White wrote, “I saw that now we should take special care of the health God has given us, for our work was not yet done” and

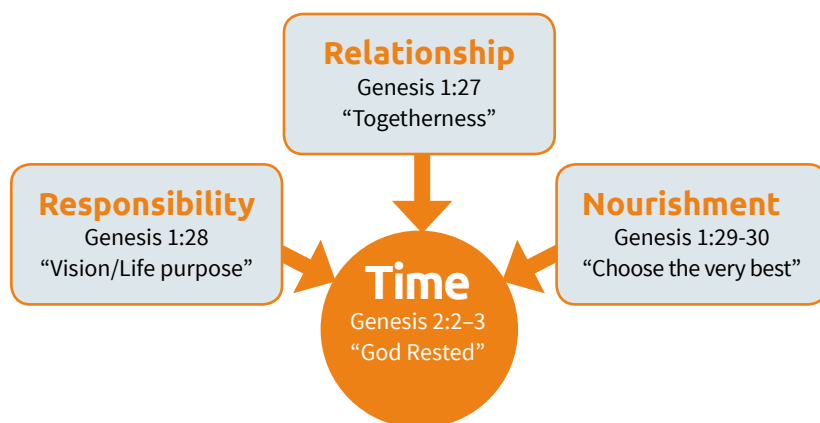
that “Satan was preserving in his efforts to destroy our usefulness.”<sup>6</sup>

Is it possible to assume that overactivity contributes to lack of usefulness and tiredness impacts the health of interpersonal relationships? “I saw that we neither understood the depth and keenness of the heart trials of the other. Each heart was peculiarly sensitive, therefore each should be especially careful not to cause each other one shade of sadness or trial.”<sup>7</sup> God’s message to James White was direct and pointed. The stresses involved with the setting up of the church organization contributed to his unhealthy mindset. He dwelt too much on the past injustice, and his mind “seemed chained to these unpleasant memories.”<sup>8</sup> In other words, lack of a well-balanced lifestyle contributed to stress, worry, negative predisposition, discouragement, and even unchristian attitudes such as an unforgiving spirit. “I saw an angel standing by the side of my husband pointing him upward, saying, ‘For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.’ . . . Jesus forgives errors and mistakes and grievous sins.”<sup>9</sup>

The timing of this vision drew attention to the key elements necessary for human well-being, namely time and relationships. Sabbath, a time-out with God, provided a space for personal and

relational healing, a time for celebration and renewal of spiritual vitality.<sup>10</sup> God rested on this day from all His creative activity to celebrate a relational togetherness with His creation.

Does it mean that during this time she remained silent on this vital subject? A careful examination of manuscripts and letters shows her ongoing concern for the spiritual well-being of



Success in accomplishing God's purpose for life (Gen. 1:28) depended on good health, a balanced lifestyle, and a happy predisposition flowing from both spiritual and physical nourishment. No wonder Ellen White was advised to "take time to devote to our health that we may in a degree recover from the effects of overdoing and overtaxing the mind."<sup>11</sup> The context of the Otsego vision experience drew attention to the value of spiritual nourishment flowing from a relational, life-changing experience with God.

## The interim: June 6, 1863 and August 1864

Even though the vision came at a crucial time, directing the church's attention to the basic health laws, Ellen White did not describe its content until August 1864, followed by a series of six pamphlets entitled "Health or How to Live" in 1865. Schwarz suggests that a "variety of reasons prevented Mrs White from publishing any extensive material."<sup>12</sup> Through December 1863, Ellen and James White traveled throughout New England. During this period the family experienced the loss of their son Henry. Further, James White wrote in November, "Her time when not in meeting or traveling, since we left Michigan in August has been wholly occupied with local and personal testimonies."<sup>13</sup>

the believers; matters associated with the attitude of the heart.<sup>14</sup> Further, in the context of frantic activities connected with the progressive growth of the church, she admonished the ministers that they were overtaxing their energies by not giving the mind time to rest. She pointed out, "The mind affects the body."<sup>15</sup> In November 1863, she referred to the importance of "plain and wholesome food."<sup>16</sup> Finally, in the fourth volume of *Spiritual Gifts*, published in August 1864, she included a full overview of the vision received in June 1863. This vision commenced with reference to God's provisions in the Garden of Eden, the reasons that led mankind into intemperance, the relationship of diet and disease, and the simple methods in combating poor health. The overall principle was straightforward: "In order to preserve health, temperance in all things is necessary. Temperance in labor, temperance in eating and drinking."<sup>17</sup>

Schwarz observes, "As soon as Mrs White began to speak and write extensively on healthful living, many persons commented on the similarity of her teachings to those of early reformers."<sup>18</sup> Soon after writing down the health principles revealed to her in the Otsego vision, Ellen and James White visited Dr. Jackson's "Our Home on the Hillside" clinic to observe his practices. Further,

they invited Dr. Trall to present a series of health presentations at Battle Creek, Michigan. More interesting is the inclusion of articles by the early reformers in the six publications "Health and How to Live."<sup>19</sup>

In contrast, Arthur White argues that the health principles shown to Ellen White were "so different from the concepts commonly held at that time."<sup>20</sup> One may ask, *In what way was the counsel similar and at the same time different to the reformers of her time?* On this point, Schwarz provides an interesting insight:

"Preoccupied with the problems of the Civil War and Reconstruction during the 1860s, Americans proved less responsive than previously to the admonition of health reformers. About the same time advances in antiseptic, bacteriology, and pathology began to steal the reformers thunder. Many of their followers now shifted their attention to the gymnastic and physical culture program of Dio Lewis. As old ideas and convictions faded into the background, the collection of reform principles that had developed during a quarter of a century seemed destined to disappear as a distinctive system. At the critical moment Seventh-day Adventists added principles of healthful living to their religious tenets."<sup>21</sup> Ellen White's focus on cleanliness, sunlight, fresh air, the value and use of water, vegetarianism, and the value of positive attitudes resonated with the voices of the American reformers.<sup>22</sup> However, at the time when the old health-reform principles seemed destined to disappear as a distinctive system, the vision given to Ellen White introduced a unique focus. Firstly, it drew attention to what matters to God most, namely, spiritual health. Secondly, it prompted an awareness of a wholistic approach to well-being.

## Wholistic approach to well-being

The Otsego vision focused on the elements necessary for the progressive development of a healthy mind, body, and spirit. Ellen White wrote, "Between the mind and the body there

is a mysterious and wonderful relation. They react upon each other. To keep the body in a healthy condition to develop its strength, that every part of the living machinery may act harmoniously, should be the first study of our life.”<sup>23</sup> For this purpose the body required the best physical nourishment. Much later she argued, “grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by our Creator. These foods, prepared in as simple and natural a manner as possible, are the most healthful and nourishing. They impart strength, power of endurance, and vigor of intellect that are not afforded by a more complex and stimulating diet.”<sup>24</sup> At the same time, the nourishment of the body required a balanced approach to diet. A return to the original diet did not apply one rule for all. Ellen White cautioned, “But not all foods wholesome in themselves are equally suited to our needs under all circumstances. . . . Our diet should be suited to the season, to the climate in which we live, and to the occupation we follow.”<sup>25</sup> Here, the selection of healthy and nutritious food should be guided by “sound judgment.”


In the framework of sound judgment and common sense, she called for a balanced approach to reforms, suggesting, “Not all who profess to believe in dietetic reform are really reformers.” She maintained, “With many persons the reform consists merely in discarding certain unwholesome foods. They do not understand clearly the principles of health, and their tables, still loaded with harmful dainties, are far from being an example of Christian temperance and moderation.”<sup>26</sup> It seemed to her that a partial knowledge of the dietary principles leads to a rigid attitude, ill health, and insensitive imposition of personal views on others.<sup>27</sup> She called for a balanced view of temperance in work, eating, drinking, and the basic care of life. Here she cautioned that health reform should not be understood as an end in itself. Rather, a healthy lifestyle provided “the best condition for the highest service to God and man.”<sup>28</sup>

The principles revealed in the Otsego vision moved beyond an emphasis on the cure of the body. It is noteworthy that the nineteenth-century reform movements in America awakened interest in various aspects relating to a healthy lifestyle. Other reformers of that time promoted vegetarianism, sanitation, water treatments, fresh air, and other public health reforms. However, God’s initiative to communicate at the commencement of the Sabbath, a time, as expressed by Ellen White, when “the blessings of the Lord rested upon us,” took the Seventh-day Adventist emphasis on health to the heart of the matter, the realm for spiritual nourishment—a place for the healing of the heart, mind, and human attitudes.

## Conclusion

God confronted the progressively growing church at the most crucial part of its journey—a need for a spiritual reorientation in preparation for its role in education (1872) and mission (1874). The emphasis on the Sabbath reminded the church that its identity was not grounded in activity but in God’s call to a journey of pilgrimage. More so, the identity was not simply a nametag but a fullness of life that germinates out of a transformational faith experience with God. Referring to the transformational nature of Christ-focused spiritual well-being, Ellen White wrote, “Marvelous will be the transformation wrought in him who by faith opens the door of the heart to the Saviour.”<sup>29</sup> Such transformation enhances the use of common sense to follow the basic principles of life—the laws of health.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, a relational experience with God, built on trust, faith, and confidence in His presence, adds a sparkle of motivational and inspirational energy. “With the power and light that God imparts, you can comprehend more and accomplish more than you ever before deemed possible.”<sup>31</sup> Here, one finds the heart of the Seventh-day Adventist health message—a motivational and

inspirational framework for God’s mission in the world. 

- 1 Ellen White, “Questions and Answers,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, October 8, 1867, 261.
- 2 Ellen White, Ms. 1, 1863.
- 3 Arthur White comments, “The sun having set Friday evening, June 5, the new day had begun. In referring to the vision June 6 is given as the date. In subsequent reporting various phases of what was revealed in the vision, both June 5 and June 6 are cited.” See *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, 390, 433, 449, 517; and *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, October 8, 1867. Arthur White, *The Progressive Years 1862–1876* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1896), 18.
- 4 Ellen White, Ms. 2, June 6, 1863.
- 5 Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), 286, 287.
- 6 Ellen White, Ms. 1, 1863.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, 286, 287.
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 Richard W. Schwarz, *John Harvey Kellogg: The Pioneering Health Reformer* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2006), 20. See also W. C. White, *Sketches and Memories*, 3, 4. While visiting the home of Dr. Horatio S. Lay, Ellen White was encouraged to share more information about the health vision. As Willie recalled, his mother objected by saying “that she was not familiar with the medical language and that much of the matter presented to her was so different from the commonly accepted views that she feared she could not relate it so that it could be understood.”
- 13 James White, “Eastern Tour,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, November 24, 1863, 204.
- 14 Ellen White wrote, “We should take special care of health.” However, in her mind health was linked with the development of “cheerful, hopeful, peaceful frame of mind” (Ms. 1, June 6, 1863). On the same date, in a message written to the church at Monterey, she addressed the issue of moral integrity (Ms. 2, June 6). The church in Caledonia listened to her admonition regarding “negative predisposition,” “lack of perseverance.” She pointed out that “self-pride destroys the true spirituality” and advised that they believed in truth but failed to practice it (Ms. 3, July 22, 1863).
- 15 Ms. 7, 1863; Ms. 11, 1863; Ms. 16, late 1863; Letter 12, June 1863.
- 16 Letter, November 23, 1863. “Those who believe the truth should practice economy, live upon plain wholesome food, always making it a rule to live within their means.”
- 17 Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4A (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press, 1864), 146.
- 18 Schwarz, *John Harvey Kellogg*, 21.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 27.
- 20 Arthur White, *The Progressive Years 1862–1876*, 21.
- 21 Schwarz, *John Harvey Kellogg*, 27.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 23–26.
- 23 Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, 485, 486.
- 24 Ellen White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1909), 296.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 296, 297.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 318.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 318, 319.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 319.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 93.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 319.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 514.

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Wagner Aragão serves as pastor in the West Central Brazil Union Mission.



# Pastoral visiting: *An irreplaceable task*

**A**n important aspect of pastoral ministry is visiting church families. Indeed, a key to ministerial success is the pastoral visit. Ellen White wrote, “A pastor should mingle freely with the people for whom he labors, that by becoming acquainted with them he may know how to adapt his teaching to their needs. When a minister has preached a sermon, his work has but just begun. There is personal work for him to do. He should visit the people in their homes, talking and praying with them in earnestness and humility.”<sup>1</sup>

## A practical plan for pastoral visitation

As pastors, we need to make time for pastoral visits, despite the many challenges we face. “Too often, our good intentions for visiting members collide with reality in the form of overcrowded schedules, urgencies trumping essentials, insufficient time for our own families, plus inadequate planning.”<sup>2</sup>

There are many suggestions for pastors concerning a visitation plan. Jonas Arrais suggests that the visits should be planned and organized in such a way that meets all the territory under the responsibility of the pastor, while giving church families the option to book the day and time for the visit.<sup>3</sup>

As a pastor of six congregations, I have tried to set aside time to visit the

families in my churches. This article comprises some relevant aspects that have helped me keep pastoral visits a priority in my ministry.

*Prepare for the visitation.* “The sense of commitment to pastoral visitation requires preparation of the whole being.”<sup>4</sup> This preparation includes taking time for prayer and Bible study and meditating on how Jesus treated people here on earth.

*Use a scheduled visit card.* The pastoral visit card has been a useful tool in planning the pastoral visit. The cards are distributed to the families of the church, who are to write on the card their preferred weekday and time for a visit. I often ask the church secretary to distribute the cards Sabbath morning. The crucial point, however you do visitation, is to make sure that you coordinate the time with the family.

Figure 1. Scheduled visit card, side one

PASTORAL VISIT			
March	<i>“I hope to see you shortly, and we will speak face to face.” 3 John 14</i>		
<input type="radio"/> 1st Week	<input type="radio"/> 2nd Week	<input type="radio"/> 3rd Week	<input type="radio"/> 4th Week
<input type="radio"/> Tuesday	<input type="radio"/> Thursday	<input type="radio"/> Friday	<input type="radio"/> Sunday
NAME .....			
ADDRESS .....			
PHONE .....			
TIME .....			

On the back of this card space is provided for notes on specific issues to be addressed during the visit. In the card I prepared, these issues are already defined (see figure 2), but they can vary according to the needs of the families and the nature of the visit.

one thing and that was visit members.<sup>6</sup> Learn to be sensitive to the needs of your parishioners.

*Do not make the plan too rigid.* Another important aspect focuses on flexibility. There will be situations when the pastor is called to some

*Last, but not least, a pastor should avoid visiting a solitary person.* One way I prevent this from happening is that I make clear to the church that I visit the family, and not just a specific member. If necessary, make special arrangements to meet in a public place, or have someone accompany you while visiting.

*Multiply the ministry of visitation.*

The pastor should not be the only one to visit church families. He must make disciples and develop in them skills for pastoral visitation. I usually start this process of multiplication by visiting the leaders of the church. This way, even the elders will have the opportunity to learn from the pastor. After that, the pastor can form a support team to help him during the year in the visitation plan. Usually, the elders and leaders who demonstrate those skills for visitation are chosen for the team. The small group leaders should also be part of the support team. It is important that the pastor meet with the visitation team from time to time to evaluate and hear a brief report on their experiences. I do not agree with the idea that only the pastor should visit church members. He or she will always need a team of support. Visitation should be under pastoral coordination.

**Figure 2. Scheduled visit card, side two**

NOTES	
Members of the Family	Communion With God
Loyalty—Tithes and Offerings	Doubts
Prayer Requests	

It is very important to approach these issues, even if doing so in the form of a spiritual questionnaire. “The pastor is a spiritual doctor, and his task becomes easier and more effective if he also asks questions in order to help identify the spiritual needs of his congregation.”<sup>5</sup> But avoid giving the impression that you are indiscreetly investigating people’s lives. Ask these questions with much naturalness and sincerity, giving members the right to, or not to, answer. Again, the crucial principle, whether you use cards or something else, is to know as much as possible beforehand about the needs of the people you intend to visit.

*Schedule only two or three visits.* I suggest that the minister plan a maximum of three visits per day. It is prudent not to be the pastor who “over visits” his members: all day long he did just

urgent matter. The pastoral visitation plan should provide a space for such contingencies. Also note that the duration of the visit will vary according to the type. When visiting a seriously ill person in a hospital or at home, do not stay too long. Other visits will require more time from the pastor so that he or she can listen and advise.

*Be careful, and act tactfully to help gain confidence and build trust.* The pastor must respect the time and privacy<sup>7</sup> of members, which is why letting them schedule the visit when they want to be visited becomes important. The pastor should also take some care with respect to certain matters discussed during the visit, avoiding deep discussions on issues not in your area and that require expert advice. The pastor would find it prudent to advise the person, when necessary, to look for a specialist.

## Goals achieved by visitation

The effect of a pastoral visit is extraordinary both in the ministry of the pastor and in the lives of the families. Here are four goals generally achieved when I visit the families from the churches under my responsibility:

*1. Encouragement.* The world we live in is full of circumstances that bring us fear, fatigue, and discouragement. Discouragement can cause a lot of harm: depression, laziness, feelings of worthlessness, unresolved past issues, and loss of focus and of goals in life. When visiting people struggling in these areas, the pastor can encourage them with the Bible. Some verses I usually use in my visits to cheer members are Exodus 14:13; Isaiah 43:1, 2; Isaiah 57:15; Jeremiah 29:11; Matthew 9:12; Matthew 11:28; Romans 8:37–39.

2. *Spiritual food.* One thing I have noticed during the visits is that many people are hungry for God, a symptom that reflects a crisis that exists today in many pulpits. The knowledge of God is increasingly superficial because, in many churches, preaching has lost its real value. “Preaching today, more than ever, requires knowing the lives of people, the listeners: not only knowing people but being part of people’s lives, being close to them.”<sup>8</sup> When I visit church families, I encounter an opportunity to enhance my sermons and provide solid spiritual food. The pastoral visit loses its value when it becomes an end in itself, but when the visit reflects excellence in the pulpit of the church, the visit reaches its goal.

3. *Greater commitment to Christ.* The pastoral visit reaffirms and raises the level of commitment of church members. It is during the visit that they are exhorted to remain faithful to the principles and values of God’s kingdom.

4. *Authentic relationships.* One of the most discussed topics in the church today and an emphasis in Christian discipleship is developing authentic relationships. I have found that the pastoral visit helps in building close relationships between members and the pastor. In a congregation with more than 200 members, the pastor finds it

almost impossible to meet everyone and build friendships with members when the pastor has contact with them only from the pulpit. When the pastor does not know the members and they do not know the pastor, pastoral care is compromised. Chances to influence the lives of members become too small, leaving the pastoral leadership impaired.

## There to serve

I always jot down the names of every person from families that I visit. I also try to know when they were baptized and their birthday. During the visit I always say that the church family is always ready to help in any situation. In visiting, the need of practical help may arise, when helping goes beyond words of advice and prayer. Pastors should never forget that their mission is to serve. “Pastors are servants who sacrifice by those who are under their care.”<sup>9</sup>

I will never forget the pastor who visited my family during my childhood. He pastored our church for six years in a row. One day he and his wife arrived at my parents’ house for his yearly pastoral visit, just as my mother was recovering from major surgery. On that occasion my father was not a Christian; indeed, he lived mired in alcohol. My mother was having a hard time taking care of my younger sister and me and

also doing the housework. I remember that day he and his wife said to my mother that they would clean the house and prepare the meal. While working on the chores in our home, he told us many stories. How we loved that pastor and his family.

## Conclusion

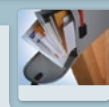
The Lord desires His shepherds to look after His sheep. They need to be guided and fed with the truth. They need rest and security. The pastor must seek the lost sheep, bandage the wounded ones, help the weak, and help bring back those in danger of wandering away. The real task of the pastor includes both care and discipleship.

For all these reasons, and others, the pastoral visit remains an indispensable and irreplaceable activity. 📖

- 1 Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), 363, 364.
- 2 James A. Cress, *Common Sense Ministry Multiplied* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 2010), 100.
- 3 Jonas Arrais, *Procura-se Um Bom Pastor* (Tatuí, SP: CPB, 2011), 76, 77.
- 4 Chor-Kiat Sim, “Reflections on a Pastoral Visit,” *Ministry*, January 2001, 24.
- 5 Arrais, *Procura-se Um Bom Pastor*, 82.
- 6 Cress, *Common Sense Ministry Multiplied*, 100.
- 7 Sim, “Reflections on a Pastoral Visit,” 27.
- 8 Júlio César Adam, “Prefácio” in Jilton Moraes, *O Clamor da Igreja* (São Paulo, SP: Mundo Cristão, 2012), 13.
- 9 Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson, *Edificando uma Igreja de Pequenos Grupos* (Editora Vida, 2003), 156.

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## LETTERS



### Special issue on the sanctuary

**M**inistry is to be commended for producing a special issue in August 2014 on our cardinal doctrines of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment. Every article on the topic is valuable, and I am sure they will be appreciated by the ministerial body, even by some non-Adventists.

Dr. Pfandl, thanks for your fresh and clear article on the pre-Advent

judgment in Daniel 7 (“‘The Books Were Opened’: A Survey of the Pre-Advent Judgment”). I am especially thankful for his references to some non-Adventist scholars. Dr. Adams, thanks for your emphasis in your article (“The Cry for Justice . . . and the Answer From the Sanctuary”) on justice—an issue so dear to me. Dr. Paroschi, thanks for showing us the link between the judgment on the cross and the judgment

according to the cross (“The Cross and the Sanctuary: Do We Really Need Both?”). Dr. Tasker, thanks for your emphasis on the heavenly sanctuary in Psalms (“The Heavenly Temple in the Psalms”). And Dr. Gulley, thanks for your systematic article on the importance of the sanctuary concept (“Why the Sanctuary Is So Important”).

—Florin Laiu, Cernica, Bucharest, Romania 📖



Lester Merklin, DMin, is director of the Global Mission Islamic Center, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.



# The mission of the remnant: *To reveal and proclaim God's glory*

As Seventh-day Adventists, we have often said that the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 contain the mission statement of the remnant people of God—those faithful to Him in the last days of earth's history.<sup>1</sup> If that is true, and I believe it is, we must be sure that our ministry is in keeping with that commission. The loud cry of Revelation 14 calls us to true worship—to give glory to God and worship Him (vv. 6, 7). A primary focus of the remnant is just that—to reveal the glory of God by attracting people to truly worship their Creator.

This article will interpret the concept of “God’s glory,” survey briefly the importance the Bible gives to the mission of proclaiming God’s glory, and deal with the practical questions of how our ministry and mission can reflect the mission of the remnant, to “give glory to God.”

## Glory to God: The basic meaning

The Hebrew word translated “glory” is *kābôwd*. Figuratively, the word means “heavy” or “weighty,” but in a positive sense it carries the idea of honor, esteem, glory, and majesty. Used in reference to God, the word signifies majesty and esteem innate to

the Person of God. Therefore, “glory” signifies both an attribute of God and our recognition of His worthiness. The Greek word *doxa* in the secular context meant “reputation” or an “opinion.” The New Testament writers used the word differently, taking their cue from the Septuagint’s use of *doxa* as a translation of the Hebrew *kābôwd*.

God’s glory is what God reveals about Himself. This springs from His love, mercy, justice, and wisdom, as well as His power. God’s revelation of Himself to Moses on Mount Sinai shows the biblical significance of this interpretation. He told Moses that He would show him “His glory” as He passed by (Exod. 33:22), and then He came declaring His attributes and character (Exod. 34:6, 7).

When God’s people reveal His glory, they help people to see what He is really like. Strauss correctly states: “To glorify God simply means to bring His innate glory to light, to expose it, manifest it, reveal it, demonstrate it, make it known. It is to put God on display and show Him off for who He is. . . . We make His attributes prominently known.”<sup>2</sup>

## The mission of Israel to proclaim God's glory

The concept of a “remnant” as the faithful people of God is a prominent

theme in the Old Testament, especially in the prophetic books. Although the prophecies warn of judgments, they also speak of a remnant that will finally fulfill the mission God had for Israel. Isaiah says, “He said to Me, ‘You are My Servant, Israel, in Whom I will show My glory’ ” (Isa. 49:3, NASB). Israel was to be the “light to the Gentiles” and a channel for God’s glory to be seen by the nations.

Jeremiah reflects this same understanding: “ ‘Then this city will bring me joy, glory, and honor before all the nations of the earth! The people of the world will see the good I do for my people and will tremble with awe!’ ” (Jer. 33:9, NLT).

Some of the most beautiful expressions of Israel’s mission for God are found in the congregational psalms. One example is Psalm 67:1, 2: “May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us; ‘Selah’ may your ways be known on earth, your salvation among all nations” (NIV).

Psalm 96 not only indicates that the character of God will be revealed through His people but calls upon the people of God to proclaim the good things about God among the nations. “Sing to the LORD, praise his name; *proclaim* his salvation day after day. *Declare* his glory among the nations,

his marvelous deeds among all peoples. Say among *the nations*, ‘The LORD reigns.’ The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity” (vv. 2, 3, 10, NIV; italics added).

It is hard to miss that this psalm calls for Israel not only to worship and “ascribe” to God the glory that is “due him” (v. 8) but also to “proclaim,” “declare,” and “say among the nations” these glorious attributes of their God.

## The mission of the church to proclaim God’s glory

Jesus, of course, was the perfect Reflector of God’s glory. One purpose of the incarnation was to communicate perfectly God’s true character to humankind. “So the Word became human and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father” (John 1:14, NLT).

The New Testament is clear that the disciples and the church are commissioned to fulfill the mission that God had given Israel: “God’s glory must be revealed.” Paul wrote of this mission to the church in Ephesus: “So that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places” (Eph. 3:10, NASB).

Second Corinthians 8:23 states that not only was this the mission of those who follow Christ but it was being done, constituting “splendid examples of those who bring glory to Christ” (NLT).

From these passages we can see clearly that part of the mission of the church is to proclaim the glory of God. Our understanding of the great controversy should convince us of this. An enemy has smeared God’s name and proclaimed a false picture of His character. God’s desire is to return His glory to this earth, to draw humanity back to Himself as they learn the truth about His character and His law, and to have a people who will join Him in making His glory known.

“Those who wait for the Bridegroom’s coming are to say to the people, ‘Behold your God.’ The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them.”<sup>3</sup>

## Practical applications for ministry, evangelism, and missions

If revealing and proclaiming God’s glory is part of the remnant commission, we will want to make sure we are doing it. We have, in many ways, already shared God’s glory with the nations. God has even revealed His glory when we did not do very well at our part of the plan—just as He did through Israel. However, I am convinced that we still have much to do to make the glory of God a priority in our ministry and evangelism. Here are some things we can do.

*Lead your church to reflect God’s glory.* Your church is not composed of perfect people. I am not suggesting that they must be perfect. One of the most compelling facts concerning the character of God is that He loves sinners; our churches will continue to reveal that truth! However, the remnant is called out to be a people who obey God’s commandments and remain faithful to Jesus (Rev. 14:12). This shows what God needs, especially in these last days: to reveal the beauty of His character *and* of His ways. This means the world needs to see God’s glory reflected in His people. God has always needed this; as He told Israel, “‘I, the LORD, have called you to demonstrate my righteousness. . . . And you will be a light to guide all nations to me’” (Isa. 42:6, NLT).

As Wilbert Shenk has indicated, “The calling of the church is to glorify the Triune God (1) by faithfully witnessing to the reign of God, and (2) by living as a sign of that reign.”<sup>4</sup> Ministry in the context of our remnant theology demands that we merge those two

aspects in order to correctly reveal God’s glory.

As Adventists, we have often done better at proclaiming *what* God wants His people to do as citizens of His kingdom than we have at showing *what* the King is like. James White worried about his church in this regard: “Our positions are fully sustained by an overwhelming amount of direct scriptural testimony; . . . but we, as a people, have evidently rested down upon a theory of truth, and have neglected to seek Bible humility, Bible patience, Bible self-denial, and Bible watchfulness, and sacrifice, Bible holiness, and the power and gifts of the Holy Ghost. . . . Hence it is said, ‘And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor and blind, and naked!’”<sup>5</sup>

We can quote from memory Ellen G. White’s comment that “if we would humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tenderhearted and pitiful, there would be one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one.”<sup>6</sup>—as if it were another device for successful church growth. We are right, of course; however, the important message is that God needs a people who reflect His glory so He can draw more people unto Himself.

Ministry basic number one, then, is revival—Holy Spirit-filled pastors and leaders leading congregations to “passionate spirituality.”<sup>7</sup> Congregations are needed who so love Jesus that they cannot help but live out His character of love and mercy and unselfishness. Disciples are needed who are praising God among the nations and living like Jesus.

*Make the goal of ministry and mission to reflect God’s glory.* If God needs disciples who will reveal His glory, the obvious goal of our mission must be to make more of the same. The organized church throughout the centuries has often felt comfortable with the “baptizing” and “teaching them all things” parts of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19, 20). These are only steps to making new “disciples,” but the commission cannot be complete until the disciples live and testify the glory

of God's character. Success, if we dare use that word for our endeavors, is found in God's kingdom only as new believers become maturing disciples and disciplers—reaching out to a lost world in the glorious name of our God.

*Build your church according to the glory of God model.* I am indebted to Pastor Kim Johnson for leading me to see the importance of building a church according to the glory of God model.<sup>8</sup> Figure 1 shows that there are two possible ways to build a church. The traditional approach has been the informational model, shown on the left side of figure 1, which is based on the philosophy of providing information “to as many people as you can as fast as you can.” We have truth to share, and we have promoted many good ways to what should be next.

The information model says that we should share those truths with the world. This is not bad, of course; but when this is the primary model, we find the church failing to fulfill the mission of every disciple giving God glory. The figure shows how this model results in the emphasis of evangelism centering on a few “professionals” who have the gifts of evangelism, preaching, and teaching. These are good gifts, but they are only a few of the gifts listed in Scripture. The result is that most members become spectators, cheering the professional from the sidelines. “Spectator” is *not* one of the definitions of a disciple!

The glory of God model on the right side of figure 1 emphasizes “building people who live God's love.” The church working from this model will reach out to people in relationships. This model

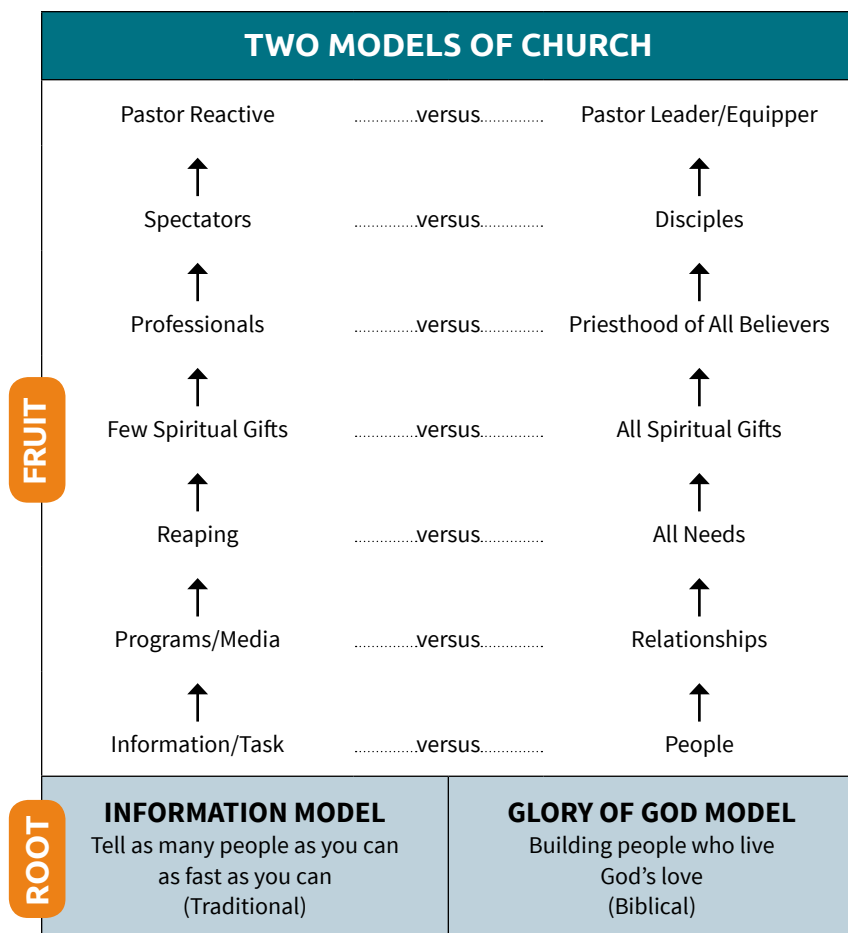
requires the use of every spiritual gift because different people are attracted to God's glory in different ways. Because no one has every gift but every disciple has at least one of the gifts, everyone in the church is involved in “evangelism” (making relationships for God), which, of course, is the essence of discipleship. Can there be any doubt that God's glory is being revealed in this church more than in a church that emphasizes programs for information distribution?

The glory of God model does not exclude communicating information. If our mission is to bring glory to God, we will find a need to communicate information about God, His plan, and His ways. But showing God's glory will be the motivation. We must share truth—by truth, we mean the truth about God and His revealed will—or we will share a false story about God (Babylon). I am not advocating a Baha'i type of manifesting God's glory—a New Age idea of being little gods manifesting the character of a big God. Truth about God can be communicated only if the truth actually reveals His glory. Information about God given at the proper time in a relationship that results in a person being drawn to worship His Creator is the kind of information sharing that the glory of God model envisions.

*Formulate ministry strategies to give God the glory.* It should be obvious by now that the so-called standard solution<sup>9</sup> is not compatible with a church whose motive is to glorify God rather than to just increase membership. The truth about God is eternal and unchanging, but the best way of “telling” that truth is as varied as relationships. A disciple in love with God will be motivated to share his or her Lord in the most favorable way possible, and this will take a Spirit-guided unique plan for each situation, for each prospective disciple and community. Sometimes spoken words might be appropriate. Other “strategies” of witness will be personal and contextual during the daily activities and relationships of church members.

There will, of course, be opportunities for church-planned programs to

**Figure 1, Models of building a church**





meet a specific need or opportunity or to help members discover and use their gifts. There will even be circumstances when the public preaching of the Word is the best way to tell of God's glory. The glory of God model, however, should remind us that preaching would be only a small part of the witnessing for God that happens in a church of committed disciples. If we truly are joining God in His mission to bring glory to His name, will the Holy Spirit not guide us in how we do His work?

Could it be that our most challenging task as leaders is not to produce good programs for our churches but to help the church look at what they are now doing and evaluate each aspect as to its place in the mission of the remnant church? Sabbath Schools may have begun a hundred years ago with God's glory in mind, but is your Sabbath School bringing glory to Him today? Pathfinders have become a

great organization for our kids, but does your church operate Pathfinders so as to enhance its glory of God's mission? God has used our schools to bring Him glory, but our schools must continually check to see whether they are doing everything to maintain that mission of God.

## Conclusion

As God's remnant people, we must be letting Him use us in His mission to draw all unto Himself. The three angels' messages tell us that a special urgency exists to proclaim God's mission in these last days. We must be the people who are faithful to Jesus, following Him completely and reflecting His character in and out of the church so that His name will be glorified, as redeemed people of all nations worship Him as their Creator and Redeemer. 📖

1 This article is adapted from a presentation given at the *I Will Go*

conference, September 1, 2010, River Plate Adventist University, Argentina.

- 2 Richard L. Strauss, "The King of Glory," chap. 24 in *The Joy of Knowing God* (Richardson, TX: Biblical Studies Press, 1997). Accessed August 23, 2004, from [www.bible.org/docs/theology/proper/joy/joy-24.htm](http://www.bible.org/docs/theology/proper/joy/joy-24.htm).
- 3 Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1941), 415, 416.
- 4 Wilbert R. Shenk, *Changing Frontiers of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2003), 15.
- 5 James White, "The Seven Churches," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, October 16, 1856, 189.
- 6 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9 (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), 189.
- 7 One of the "eight characteristics of a healthy church" according to worldwide research done by Christian Schwarz. See Schwarz, *Implementation Guide to Natural Church Development* (Saint Charles, IL: Churchsmart Resources, 2001).
- 8 I worked with Kim on a small committee that prepared discipling material for the pastors of the Southern New England Conference. The glory of God model was one of his contributions. These materials can be found in his book, *Spiritual Body Building Manual* (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2001).
- 9 Standard-solution strategies: "strategies which assume that methods that effectively work in one particular context will effectively work in other world contexts." It is the "one-size-fits-all mentality." See Gailyn Van Rhee, *Missions: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Strategies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 142, 143.

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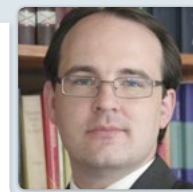


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**Denis Kaiser** is a PhD candidate, adjunct professor at Andrews University, and assistant annotator of Ellen G. White's letters and manuscripts for the Ellen G. White Estate, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.



# The Word, the Spirit of Prophecy, and mutual love: Lessons from the “daily” controversy for conflict resolution

Just as God's people in biblical times have benefited from the failures and victories of their forefathers, we, too, may learn from the mistakes of our predecessors. The conflict in Adventist history over the interpretation of the *tāmīd* (“daily,” “continual,” perpetual”) in Daniel (8:11–13; 11:31; 12:11) is a good example of what we might learn by way of lessons in conflict resolution. The *tāmīd* had traditionally been identified as pagan Rome. Shortly after the turn of the twentieth century, some leading Adventist ministers started a dispute by reinterpreting it to symbolize the heavenly ministration of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Such differences occur not only on theological and exegetical levels but also on personal levels, such as emotions, spirituality, assumptions, hidden agendas, and polemics. This article briefly discusses the spiritual climate of that debate and summarizes Ellen G. White's evaluation of and solution to the conflict. Such a discussion may provide insights for modern-day disputes.

## The characteristics of the conflict

Both parties—the one that identified *tāmīd* with Roman paganism (old view) and the one that identified it with Christ's heavenly ministration (new view)—had significant reason to believe their view was correct. Supporters of the old view noted that Ellen White had made a statement about 60 years earlier, which seemed to settle the identity of the *tāmīd*.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it felt like an adoption of the new view would question the authority of Ellen G. White and certainly challenge Christ's leadership in the Advent movement. To them the topic was one of great importance. Meanwhile, supporters of the new view argued that the topic was based entirely on Scripture and that they did not need an extrabiblical final arbiter,<sup>3</sup> apparently weakening the authority of Ellen White's writings. It should be noted, however, that while some of the proponents shared merely a few similarities and differed in other important points, they were nevertheless viewed as members of the same group—guilt by association.

Ellen White, however, was critical of both sides. To begin with, she did not approve of those who relied on her writings to settle the question: “I request that my writings shall not be used as the leading argument to settle questions over which there is now so much controversy. I entreat of Elders H, I, J, and others of our leading brethren, that they make no reference to my writings to sustain their views of ‘the daily.’”

“... I cannot consent that any of my writings shall be taken as settling this matter. . . .”

“I now ask that my ministering brethren shall not make use of my writings in their arguments regarding this question.”<sup>4</sup>

She gives two reasons for this caution. First, she says she did not receive any divine “instruction on the point under discussion.”<sup>5</sup> Second, the topic and the whole discussion had “been presented to” her as having no “vital importance” or having only “minor importance.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, although she did not have any divine instruction on the exact definition of the *tāmīd*, she did

have divine instruction about the minor significance of the topic. Therefore, even proponents of the old view who employed her writings to support their position had to admit that the topic, in and of itself, was only of minor importance.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, Ellen White criticized advocates of the new view for placing excessive focus on trivial matters and trying to sow dissension.<sup>8</sup> Of Prescott, she complained that he spent hours discussing minor points that had no real significance “for the salvation of the soul.”<sup>9</sup> She deplored his tendency to dwell on mistakes and flaws in the denominational history that resulted in confusion, unbelief, and the questioning of the simple truths of God’s work.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, some of the new-view promoters contended that Ellen White’s writings had no doctrinal significance whatsoever, that Seventh-day Adventists did not need an infallible confirmation of their teachings, and that the reasoning for the old view was absolutely absurd.<sup>11</sup>

Although she did not consider it an important topic, for some time Ellen White tried to bring the two parties together for prayer and Bible study because, in her opinion, it was through a prayerful and solemn investigation of the Word, with the Bible as the final arbiter of truth, that the exegetical and theological questions were to be mutually solved.<sup>12</sup> However, the arrogance displayed by promoters of the new view was hard to swallow for those who had helped build up the church. That may explain why, by mid-1910, the proponents of the old view refused to participate in these meetings because they believed further dialogue would be of no avail.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, it is easily comprehensible why Ellen White tried to turn the attention away from the specifics of the exegetical or theological aspects to the underlying spiritual problem. She suggested that preconceived opinions, prejudices, evil surmising, irreconcilability, unchristian conduct, callous hearts, and a lack of mutual love were preventing any real solution and true Christian unity.<sup>14</sup>

## The fruits of continuing the conflict

Ellen White was in contact with members of both groups, making them aware of their respective mistakes and delineating the actual and potential implications and repercussions of their actions and behavior. She further emphasized that the real problem was not exegetical or theological questions but spiritual circumstances.

Thus, she repeatedly urged Daniells and Prescott to cease picking flaws in significant denominational publications. She stated that even though some of the authors of these books were not alive anymore, we need to remember that God had used them and through them brought many to a knowledge of the truth. Further, she exhorted that we need to be exceedingly careful not to introduce any subjects in the *Review* that would seem to suggest “flaws in our past experience” and mistakes in how some of the leading ministers had viewed the sanctuary doctrine with respect to the nature of *tāmīd*. The inclination to “search out things to be criticized or condemned” was not inspired of God, nor a job assigned to them by the Lord.<sup>15</sup> Ellen White acknowledged that some Adventist publications that “have brought many to a knowledge of the truth” might contain some things of “minor importance” that should be carefully studied and corrected.<sup>16</sup> In her estimation, the bone of contention was, however, just “jots and tittles,” “unimportant,” “unnecessary,” “not vital,” and “not essential for the salvation of the soul.”<sup>17</sup>

Thus, it would be entirely counterproductive to overemphasize these things and draw everybody’s attention to them. Instead of having everybody—ministers, canvassers, administrators, for example—publicly debating these issues, the responsibility for looking into these matters should lie with those who were “regularly appointed” for such a task. Otherwise it would result in discrediting soul-saving literature, in providing those who had turned away from the truth with arguments against the church, and in confusing

those who had accepted the message just recently.<sup>18</sup>

Ellen White talked forthrightly with President A. G. Daniells,<sup>19</sup> who tended to put in the weight of his office “to decide the question.” White said that God had not called him to decide theological questions or meddle with the denomination’s publications. She condemned the exercise of such “dominating power” and “kingly rule,” for the president of a conference or the General Conference was not supposed to be an oppressive ruler.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, she rebuked Haskell for republishing and circulating the 1843 chart<sup>21</sup> because it tended to create confusion, quarrels, and divisions. It was a mistake that would play into Satan’s hands, who would use it to this end.<sup>22</sup>

Concentrating on the subject of the *tāmīd* would divert the church leaders’ attention from the golden moments that should be spent in familiarizing people with the message of salvation and training church members how to do the same.<sup>23</sup> White observed that both groups lacked wise actions and needed divine wisdom.<sup>24</sup> The behavior and actions exhibited by both groups in the conflict would encourage and invite satanic agencies to take even little differences and magnify these as major disagreements to produce confusion, divisions, uncertainty, loss of confidence, skepticism, doubts, questioning, and unbelief among believers and nonbelievers.<sup>25</sup> The agitation of the subject would not only unsettle minds and “place the truth in an uncertainty” but also tempt those who had not been thoroughly converted to jump to quick conclusions and to hasty decisions.<sup>26</sup> People would become uncertain about God’s leading in the Advent movement and the “doctrines that have been established by the sanction of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>27</sup> Restoring the confidence of those who had been unsettled and confused would require much time and effort.<sup>28</sup>

Beyond the injury done to church members, Ellen White also foresaw damage to the church’s evangelistic work. Time and again she emphasized that the unchristian behavior of some



of the ministers and church leaders and the loud chatter about supposed mistakes, errors, and flaws in Adventist publications and past experience only provided ammunition for Satan, the enemy of truth, to deploy opponents of the truth, people “who have departed from the faith,” and “gone out from us.” They would take advantage of the inner-Adventist conflict and make a “mountain out of a molehill,”<sup>29</sup> and, as a result, hinder the church’s divinely appointed evangelistic work, turn people away from the truth, and cause even “a worse issue.”<sup>30</sup>

### A spiritual redirection

As mentioned already, in Ellen White’s view, the theological and exegetical details of the debate were only of minor importance whereas the real underlying problem was of a spiritual nature. This is evident from her frequent mention that the leaders of both groups were encouraging “Satan,” “Satanic agencies,” “evil angels,” “the enemy,” “the enemy of truth,” and “fallen angels.”<sup>31</sup> That being the case, it is easily comprehensible why she pushed for a spiritual redirection as the solution to the conflict. Thus, she urged leading ministers and church members to humble their hearts before the Lord and pray often, though not necessarily long, in faith for the sanctification of soul and mind.<sup>32</sup> They were to follow Christ’s example and cultivate meekness and lowliness of heart (Matt. 11:29).<sup>33</sup> She frequently emphasized that the controversy about the *tāmīd* was completely unnecessary but that there was a real need for seeking the Lord for a reconversion,<sup>34</sup> a “true conversion of heart and life,”<sup>35</sup> a “daily” conversion.<sup>36</sup> Bringing self “under the control of the Holy Spirit,” members were to consecrate their hearts unreservedly to God, depend fully on Him, and cooperate with divine and angelic influences.<sup>37</sup> This individual effort<sup>38</sup> would make a “sacred impression” on the minds of fellow ministers, church members, and new converts.<sup>39</sup>

A second important aspect emphasized by Ellen White was the need for

unity. She wished to see in the ministers a desire to answer Jesus’ last prayer (John 17) and develop true Christian unity.<sup>40</sup> She asked them to bury their differences and “press together,” keep a “united front,” blend “together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,” show “respect for the men of age,” and, as far as possible, be in accord in their preaching and activities.<sup>41</sup> Interestingly, White did not call them to renounce their present distinct positions but to refrain from voicing their differences of opinion.<sup>42</sup> She explained that people were to cultivate the wisdom to know when to speak and when to be silent, what burdens to bear, and which matters to leave alone.<sup>43</sup> The avoidance of strife, openness to one another, cooperation in the work of salvation, and the preaching of the clear and common truths will have a “powerful impression on human minds” for “in unity there is strength.”<sup>44</sup>

Besides emphasizing the need for daily conversion and true Christian unity, White also urged ministers to focus on different lines of ministry—church, schools, family, and evangelism. They should preach and teach the “important lines of truth,” the “sacred truths,” and “vital subjects” in an earnest, simple, coherent, and faith-affirming way. The *tāmīd* and its related issues were not a “test question,” even though many presented this question like that, but the real “testing questions” were obedience and salvation, “the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.”<sup>45</sup> They were not only to preach to church members but also to train and mentor them. Thus, they themselves were to learn from the simple but essential teachings of Christ and also teach church members “how to give others a knowledge of the saving truth for this time.”<sup>46</sup>

In particular, the church was to make special and earnest efforts to help parents consecrate their time and strength to their children so that they might understand the need of seeking Christ for their own salvation.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, in all Adventist schools, teachers were to help their students learn how to be


saved and “put on the white robe of the righteousness of Christ.”<sup>48</sup>

Going beyond efforts for church members, parents, and children, Ellen White frequently called attention to a most neglected cause, the necessary work of evangelizing the cities.<sup>49</sup> Ministers were to carry a burden for souls with mind and heart, “preach the Word,” follow Christ’s example in saving people, and share the knowledge of Christ’s saving truth and message with those living in the great cities as well as in the worldwide mission fields.<sup>50</sup>

### Conclusion

The features of, and the solutions to, the historic quarrel about the correct interpretation of the *tāmīd* in Daniel 8 may help us in resolving disputes in our denomination today. Ellen White told the two contending parties that Scripture, the Word, should be the foundation for settling doctrinal and exegetical questions. However, resolving such questions is only possible when everyone involved comes to the table with a spirit of mutual love. Nevertheless, a lack of willingness to come to an agreement and find a biblical answer should not be an excuse for tabling a controversial topic but a call to an individual search for a new heart and spirit. If the interaction with one another is not characterized by such an attitude and spirit, a continued discussion of the subject will only make matters worse. The contending parties should turn away from the subject and focus on individual heart conversion; the training of church members; the education of parents, children, and students; and sharing the gospel message with those in need of salvation. All these lines of ministry should be pervaded by a mutual desire for unity with fellow believers and by a desire to form a close love relationship with Jesus.

Even though a mutual investigation of the subject of the *tāmīd* may have been impossible in her time, Ellen White seemed to envision that there would be, in the future, a time to study the subject further, based on Scripture, as is indicated by her frequent clarification

that the issue should be put to rest only “at this time,” “now,” “just now,” “at this period of our history,” and “at this stage of our experience.”<sup>51</sup> Still, it is clear that the spirit in which the church approaches both doctrinal and practical questions is more important than settling the issues themselves. 

- 1 Denis Kaiser, “The History of the Adventist Interpretation of the ‘Daily’ in the Book of Daniel from 1831 to 2008” (M.A. thesis, Andrews University, 2009).
- 2 For example, J. N. Loughborough, “Time Taken Away of the Daily,” *Bible Training School*, September 1910, 71; idem, “Other Views of the 1,290 and 1,335 Days,” *Bible Training School*, December 1910, 25; S. N. Haskell to A. G. Daniells, January 27, 1908; idem to E. G. White, December 6, 1909; cf. A. L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Later Elmshaven Years, 1905–1915*, vol. 6 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1982), 248, 250, 252, 253; Jerry Moon, “The Daily,” in *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, eds. Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2013), 752.
- 3 For example, L. R. Conradi to J. N. Loughborough, April 16, 1907; idem to A. G. Daniells, October 11, 1910; W. A. Spicer to L. R. Conradi, September 7, 1910; Daniel Heinz, *Ludwig Richard Conradi: Missionar, Evangelist und Organisator der Siebenten-Tags-Adventisten in Europa*, 3rd rev. ed., Archiv für international Adventgeschichte, vol. 2 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1998), 97, 98.
- 4 Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958, 1980), 1:164.
- 5 Ibid.; cf. *Manuscript Releases* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1981–1993), 9:107, 12:224.
- 6 White, *Selected Messages*, 1:164; cf. *Manuscript Releases*, 9:106, 12:224, 10:334.
- 7 Stephen N. Haskell to Arthur G. Daniells, January 27, 1908, (Silver

- Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1909); Ellen G. White to W. C. White, December 6, 1909 (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1909).
- 8 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 10:334, 359.
- 9 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 10:359.
- 10 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 12:223–225.
- 11 L. R. Conradi to Arthur G. Daniells, October 11, 1910, Center for Adventist Research, Berrien Springs, MI. [CAR]; idem to J. N. Loughborough, April 16, 1907, CAR; cf. W. W. Prescott, *The Daily: A Brief Reply to Two Leaflets on This Subject* (n.p.: the author, [1924]), 1, 13, 23.
- 12 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 20:223.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:106, 20:223; *Selected Messages*, 1:167, 168.
- 15 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 12:225, 9:106, 10:336, 20:17, 18, 20.
- 16 White, *Selected Messages*, 1:165.
- 17 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 10:359, 12:224, 9:106, 20:17, 18; *Selected Messages*, 1:167, 168.
- 18 White, *Selected Messages*, 1:165.
- 19 A. G. Daniells was president of the General Conference from 1901 to 1922.
- 20 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 20:19–21.
- 21 For more information on the 1843 chart, see Kaiser, “Ellen White and the ‘Daily’ Conflict,” 7, 8, 10, 14, 16, 19; P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 54, 310; LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 4 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1954), 547, 557, 616, 617, 638, 669, 720–722, 728, 733–737.
- 22 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:106.
- 23 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 20:17; *Selected Messages*, 1:167, 168.
- 24 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 12:224, 9:106; *Selected Messages*, 1:167, 168.
- 25 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 10:334, 336, 337, 12:224, 225, 9:106, 20:17, 18, 21, 22; *Selected Messages*, 1:167, 168.

- 26 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 12:223, 224, 9:107, 20:21.
- 27 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:107, 10:337.
- 28 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 10:337.
- 29 She employed this phrase frequently to describe the issue of the *tāmīg* and the way it was discussed by members of both parties. See White, *Manuscript Releases*, 10:334, 9:106.
- 30 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 10:336, 359, 12:224, 225; 9:106, 20:18, 21; *Selected Messages*, 1:167, 168.
- 31 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 10:334, 336, 337, 12:225, 9:106, 20:17, 18, 21, 22.
- 32 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 12:223, 20:20, 10:337; *Selected Messages*, 1:167, 168.
- 33 White, *Selected Messages*, 1:167, 168.
- 34 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 20:20; *Selected Messages*, 1:167, 168.
- 35 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 12:223.
- 36 White, *Selected Messages*, 1:165.
- 37 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:107, 20:21; *Selected Messages*, 1:165, 166.
- 38 White, *Selected Messages*, 1:166.
- 39 Ibid., 1:167, 168.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 20:18–20, 223, 9:106; *Selected Messages*, 1:167.
- 42 White, *Selected Messages*, 1:167, 168.
- 43 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 10:334, 20:18, 19.
- 44 White, *Selected Messages*, 1:168.
- 45 White, *Selected Messages*, 1:164, 165, 167, 168; *Manuscript Releases*, 12:224, 225.
- 46 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 12:225.
- 47 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 12:223, 224.
- 48 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 12:223.
- 49 White, *Manuscript Releases*, 20:18–21.
- 50 White, *Selected Messages*, 1:165, 166, 168; *Manuscript Releases*, 20:18, 19, 21; 10:335, 336.
- 51 White, *Selected Messages*, 1:167, 168; *Manuscript Releases*, 20:17, 12:223–225.

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## “All things work together for good”

Brother Corneliu, a retired engineer, has been active in the church all his life. He was a source of courage and steadfastness during the long years of communism. After his retirement, he moved to Bucharest and was a member of the largest church in that city when I became its pastor in 2005.

About three years ago, Brother Corneliu realized how different mobile devices could help him to read and listen to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy books while walking, riding the bus, or doing different things. He was so enthusiastic about this discovery that whenever I

would encounter him, he always had something to share with me from new and surprising truths he found in the old books he had read all his life. With a big smile on his face, he would speak of the new devotional life he was experiencing and its benefits.

In December 2012, Brother Corneliu was diagnosed with a cancer of the vocal cords. Making decisions for a specific therapeutic approach was a very difficult time for the whole family, but he was still confident—always speaking of his new life in the Word. He told me: “Now I will be better prepared to speak about God to people with a cancer.”

His wife, his family, and the whole church rallied around him for prayer and support, resulting in greater unity and faith. The latest medical tests indicate he has been cured. Brother Corneliu is proof “that all things work together for good to them that love God” (Rom. 8:28).

—ADRIAN BOCANEANU, MA, IS A PASTOR AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR OF SPERANTA TV FOR THE ADVENTIST MEDIA CENTER, BUCHAREST, ROMANIA.

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**Kelvin Onongha, PhD**, now teaches religious studies and serves as Associate Vice President for Student Development, Babcock University, Ogun State, Nigeria.



# A conspiracy of silence:

## *Power for missions today* (Part 2 of 2)

**T**he Adventist Church has not been entirely left out in the discussion on the need for the power of the Holy Spirit in the experience of the church. Church historian LeRoy Froom, writing more than 60 years ago, stated, “The church is up to date. She has a wonderful organization. She has a marvelous machinery. The wheels are adjusted to a nicety. But she lacks power. In spite of all our facilities, we do not have the power of conversion, which should mark the remnant church. We are faltering in the conflict with worldliness, unbelief, and unrighteousness. While the church is evangelizing the world, the world is secularizing the church. Thus her efforts are neutralized.”<sup>1</sup>

Froom warns, “We are in the gravest peril of depending on men, methods, and money, instead of on Him who alone can raise up men, direct and vitalize them, equip them with right methods, and release and bless the money needed.”<sup>2</sup>

Ron Clouzet, writing more recently, comments on the mighty works of the Holy Spirit prefigured in Acts 1:8, stating, “Just as Jehovah performed mighty miracles on behalf of the Israelite community, the church of God would demonstrate the power of God through signs and wonders.”<sup>3</sup> Comparing conventional Adventist teaching and expectations of the Holy Spirit with that of Pentecostalism,

Clouzet says, “Charismatics tend to seek for signs, non-Charismatics tend to disavow signs. Both err by not letting the Holy Spirit be sovereign in these matters.”<sup>4</sup> Also, commenting on the lure of Pentecostalism, to which Adventist members are not immune, he states, “Babylon is rising to the height of its power. Behind her is the mastermind, the prince of this world. So very many have found in Pentecostalism the answer to a dead church experience, as well as to a Christianity steeped in tradition and becoming increasingly irrelevant to people’s personal issues. Pentecostalism offers healing from disease; a real spiritual high when gathered for worship; and a powerful experience such as speaking in tongues or warm “presence” which makes experience the gauge against which religion can be measured. In addition, there is a happy religion and one that does not worry much about doctrinal differences. It means getting close to God, and that is all anyone ever needs. Isn’t it? Everyone likes miracles.”<sup>5</sup>

Another well-respected voice in the church, Jan Paulsen, former president of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, attempts to present a balanced perspective on this subject by explaining, “The Charismatics’ position is wrong, as ours would be were we to opt for the other extreme, which holds that the gift of healing has been withdrawn. God

heals today as in the days of the early believers, but His choice of means may differ with time and place.”<sup>6</sup> Paulsen rejects the suggestion that Christianity is presently in a spiritual drought that will pass, that spiritual gifts are not presently with us but that we shall have a revival of them in the future. He states that “this kind of thinking to justify our own spiritual decay is without the least shred of biblical support. God is alive and well. He is acting in His church and for His people now as He has in the past. And He will continue to do so as long as we are here. Failure in this area lies with us and not with God.”<sup>7</sup>

### Signs, wonders, and the Adventist Church

There is an obvious, delicate tension in the Adventist Church over the issue of signs and wonders. On the one hand, there are several counsels from Ellen White warning against the deceptions that Satan shall bring on the earth in the last days through lying signs and wonders (2 Thess. 2:8–10; Rev. 13:13, 14).<sup>8</sup> This may serve to explain the apparent disinterest in spiritual power evident in the lives of church leaders and members. On the other hand, her writings clearly state the impossibility for the work of the gospel to end in a manner less glorious than it began in the days of the apostles.<sup>9</sup> She states that “prayer and faith will do wonderful things. The Word must be our weapon



of warfare. Miracles can be wrought through the Word; for it is profitable for all things.”<sup>10</sup>

Decrying the condition of the church, she said, “I saw that if the church had always retained her peculiar, holy character, the power of the Holy Spirit which was imparted to the disciples would still be with her. The sick would be healed, devils would be rebuked and cast out, and she would be mighty and a terror to her enemies.”<sup>11</sup> Commenting on how the gospel task will come to a close in the last days, she declared, “Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.”<sup>12</sup>

Froom adds, “It is most improbable that the staid, rational Adventist people would be deceived into the wild vagaries of the cults. Our peril is that we may be tricked into the devil’s conspiracy of silence, either through non-investigation of the true or through disgust engendered by extremes of the false.”<sup>13</sup>

This conspiracy of silence keeps us from addressing the power needs in the lives of members in Africa struggling with issues such as witchcraft, sorcery, and demon possession. This silence has created a void largely responsible for dual allegiance reported in the churches in Africa, resulting in members sneaking stealthily to prayer houses and charismatic churches that promise to address these fears and needs the Adventist Church has ignored. The silence also makes us impervious to the needs of teeming populaces around the Muslim, and other religions, worlds, trapped in folk religious practices, in need of a fresh revelation of God’s glory and power.

This also keeps us from exploring the depths of the riches of God’s grace to respond to the growing apathy with the gospel in the West. Clouzet states, “Many churches in North America barely exist. They are reminiscent of the

valley of dry, dead bones in Ezekiel 37. They have good decent people in them, but they are devoid of the Spirit.”<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, we still keep seeking for the best human strategies for accomplishing an assignment that is divine, and which can only be accomplished through the power of God. Perhaps the truest need in our world today is for a fresh vista of a God powerful enough to respond to all the soul needs of His children. In this regard, I find no better way to sum this up than to restate, “Perhaps the most balanced conclusion is that any biblical theology of mission must put God’s power at the center of effective mission and must emphasize that prayer and dependence on God are

to come to Jesus for grace and power to live lives patterned after our Model and Example and to contend against the unseen spiritual kingdom of darkness, as we seek to advance the kingdom and prepare the world for His return. As the early church did, confronted by opposition and persecution, perhaps the time has come to pray so that the Lord of signs and wonders may quicken and empower the church for effective missions (Acts 4:29–31). He answered then, and He can answer now.

## Conclusion

Realizing the enormity of the task before us—the task of combatting spiritual hosts of wickedness; breaking

*Perhaps the time has come to pray so that the Lord of signs and wonders may quicken and empower the church for effective missions.*

foundational to the missionary task.”<sup>15</sup>

In the great controversy between the forces of good and evil, signs and wonders play a very crucial role. As has been observed, “The secularism of the modern Western worldview tends to deaden Christ’s followers to this ongoing but unseen spiritual struggle, leading to ‘practical atheism’ and a sense that all problems are psychological, social, physiological or circumstantial.”<sup>16</sup> Adventist understanding of the great controversy, a cosmic spiritual battle between God and Satan involving every person in the world, should provide the church a vantage point in engaging decisively with spiritual and power issues. These issues lie at the base of the signs and wonders debate. We, therefore, need

down spiritual ancient strongholds; opening eyes blinded by prejudice, cynicism, and unbelief; and finishing our divine mandate—we can only conclude that supernatural intervention is the church’s greatest need.


Some 14 years ago when similar challenges regarding the validity of signs and wonders in the ministry of the church faced the World Council of Churches, a Lausanne consultation on spiritual conflict was set up, titled “Deliver Us From Evil” and convened in Nairobi, August 16–22, 2000. Participants included theologians, missiologists, and ministry practitioners from around the world, including non-Western contexts.<sup>17</sup>

Perhaps the time has come for the Adventist Church to do something

similar to the 2000 Lausanne consultation. Bible conferences could be held in various regions of the world field, where careful study can be done like the early Adventist pioneers did, on the subject of signs and wonders and other contextually relevant matters. In addition, local conference organizations could convene prayer conferences where classes on prayer for special situations such as healing and deliverance are taught, including lessons on devotional piety, to enable members to live spirit-filled lives.

For any of these suggestions to be carried out, there must be collaboration between the missiologists, theologians, pastors, and administrators of the church to identify and respond to mission-related issues in the context of the lives of church members of a particular region. Biblically appropriate models of healing and deliverance should also be designed and taught

to pastors at the frontlines and to missionaries by appropriate agencies of the church, resulting from the collaboration between theologians and missiologists. There is also a need for continual review of evangelism and discipleship curricula in order to respond to the contemporary challenges of animism, spiritual warfare, secularism, postmodernism, and the surge of other established religions.

As the church proceeds on this all-important issue, may we all prepare to behold our God who is the same, yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8) and to break forth again in a mighty outpouring of His divine power—in visions, theophanies, healing, and miraculous interventions—to finish His work in the same manner with which it began, with mighty signs, wonders, and total submission to the leading of the Holy Spirit. 

- 1 LeRoy E. Froom, *The Coming of the Comforter* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1949), 131.
- 2 Ibid., 132.
- 3 Ron E. M. Clouzet, *Adventism's Greatest Need: The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 2011), 133.
- 4 Ibid., 136.
- 5 Ibid., 214.
- 6 Jan Paulsen, *When the Spirit Descends: Understanding the Role of the Holy Spirit* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2001), 86.
- 7 Ibid., 87.
- 8 One such counsel is found in Ellen G. White, *Christian Experience and Teachings* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1922), 170.
- 9 Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1945), 278.
- 10 Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), 489.
- 11 White, *Early Writings*, 227.
- 12 White, *Evangelism*, 700, 701.
- 13 Froom, *The Coming of the Comforter*, 158.
- 14 Clouzet, *Adventism's Greatest Need*, 214.
- 15 Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 252.
- 16 Ibid., 246.
- 17 A. Scott Moreau, Tokunboh Adeyemo, David G. Burnett, Bryant L. Myers, and Hwa Yung, eds., *Deliver Us From Evil: An Uneasy Frontier in Christian Mission* (Monrovia, CA: Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 2002), ix.

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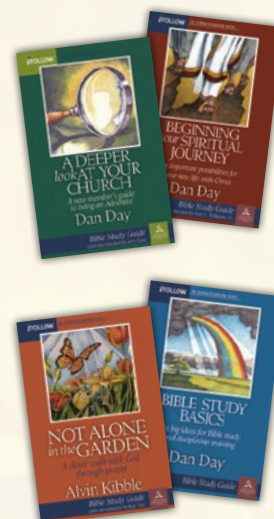
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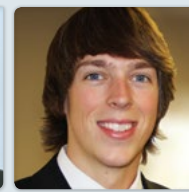
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**S. Joseph Kidder, DMin**, is professor of Christian ministry and discipleship, Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.

**Dustin Serns, MDiv**, is a missionary volunteer for SALT Ministries in Siem Reap, Cambodia.



# The forgotten movement: *Church planting trends and lessons* (Part 2 of 2)

*“Place after place is to be visited, church after church is to be raised up.”<sup>1</sup>*

—Ellen White

**C**hurch planting is a challenging enterprise. Realistic expectations are essential, and adequate support systems and coaching are helpful. Our research revealed that those who commit to church planting encounter significant obstacles, but as they depend on God, He answers with incredible blessings and rewards.<sup>2</sup>

Based on data and interviews from the top four conferences in church planting over the last decade in North America, part two of this article will address three common obstacles to church planting and show how God transforms them into amazing opportunities.<sup>3</sup>

How will God overcome obstacles to reach your city and bless your church?

## Obstacle 1: We do not have the people to plant a church

Although many smaller churches feel they need to get bigger before giving birth, many examples show that

God blesses efforts to step out in faith. In fact, faith is more important than size. Houston Northwest had about 125 people in attendance, but they went ahead and planted the Woodlands church about 20 miles north in 2007. At the end of 2012, the mother church had an attendance of 196, with 71 attending the daughter church.<sup>4</sup>

*Collaboration produces synergy.* The small McKinney Spanish Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church recognized that their city was experiencing explosive population growth<sup>5</sup> yet also saw a need for an English-speaking Adventist congregation. They had a facility to temporarily lend but no English-speaking personnel or leadership to plant a church. Just to the south, the Richardson SDA Church had the personnel and leadership to start a church but no place to worship. The collaboration of the two churches in 2012 produced a healthy new daughter church while adding excitement and vitality to the parent churches.

Pastor Dan Serns shared, “I’m praying that God impresses five percent of my members to become a part of the McKinney English SDA Church.” He shared the importance for congregations working together to reach more people: “While some might feel like planting another Seventh-day

Adventist church would hurt other area churches by competing for members, in fast growing metro areas, there is plenty of population to reach for Jesus.”

*Growth by multiplication: God’s free refills.* God rewards mother churches that step out in faith by bringing them new people. The McKinney English SDA church plant was the tenth that Richardson SDA has been involved with in the past 14 years. When the Richardson SDA church started planting new churches in January 2000, its attendance was 551 people. After planting four churches and helping start six others, its attendance at the end of 2012 was 598.<sup>6</sup> The combined attendance of all 11 churches at the end of 2012 was more than 1,700 people. Also, 1,257 people were baptized between 2002 and 2010.<sup>7</sup> In July 2013, Richardson brought in its 800th member and currently holds the highest membership in the church’s 50-plus year history. From 2000 to 2013, the North Dallas population grew by about 12.5 percent<sup>8</sup> while the Adventist membership grew 209 percent as a result of church multiplication. Richardson SDA is working to launch their next church plant soon.<sup>9</sup>

Many examples attested that established mother churches grew back to their original size and more within six months to two years of planting. The

McDonald Road SDA Church was a church of 800 to 900 members, located a few miles outside of Collegedale, Tennessee, in a rural area. They wanted to grow, so they selected a community and began outreach and Bible studies there. Four years ago, they planted the East Ridge SDA Church, with a core group of 80 to 100 people. Today, the church plant is healthy and growing, and God has given the McDonald Road SDA Church a free refill and more. Of all the churches we looked at, God refilled every mother church that moved forward in faith and planted a church.

### Obstacle 2: We do not have the money to plant a church

Most conferences do not have extra funds to hire more pastors to plant churches. Mother churches often are concerned with losing the financial resources of their active members who leave. Our research revealed that church planting does not cause adverse financial effects to the conference nor the mother church but produces many opportunities for growth in faith and finance. Overall, the conference benefits from church planting.

*God pays lay planters.* Conferences do not have to rely on hired professionals to plant new churches. Of the top four conferences in church planting in the North American Division (NAD), all of them heavily utilize a lay-led church plant model. Allan Machado indicated that Florida has 87 lay pastors. Many of them have started new churches. Collectively they produced over \$3 million in tithe, while the total cost of training, resources, and mileage compensation came to about \$400,000 in 2012.<sup>10</sup> Church planting was an investment for the Florida conference resulting in a net gain of over \$2.5 million.

*God gives yield on the investment.* Gerson Santos, executive secretary of the Greater New York Conference at the time of the interview, said that three years ago, when the conference was experiencing severe financial difficulty, they decided to place an even

stronger emphasis on church planting. They doubled the money allocated to evangelism and special projects. He started a small group for leadership development to train pastors and lay leaders to plant new churches.

In the 18 months before our interview in October 2013, they planted 17 various types of churches, including youth-led churches, ethnic churches, multiethnic churches, traditional churches, and urban mission centers.<sup>11</sup> At least one-third of them seek to reach secular, postmodern professionals. Santos emphasized that the only costs incurred during their church planting thrust were the meals provided for the leadership development small group and mileage reimbursement for lay planters. Though the conference sacrificed financially, God blessed: 70 percent of their debt was paid back during that time. The most exciting part for Santos was not the financial growth but the Kingdom growth they experienced. “Baptisms are going through the roof! Last year was the best year in the New York mission ever!”<sup>12</sup>

Churches that plant generate more money to be used in God’s mission. For example, in the Texas Conference, the tithe of the Richardson SDA church was \$688,253 in 1999 (\$948,492 adjusted to 2012 dollars) before being involved in planting 10 churches in 14 years. At the end of 2012, the combined tithe of all 11 churches was about \$2.24 million in 2012.<sup>13</sup> In all four conferences we studied, God provided significant financial dividends on their investment in church planting.

*The local church benefits from church planting.* God does not need money. Tom Evans, who oversaw the planting of more than 100 churches in the Texas Conference, confirmed that: “Church planting does not have to cost the mother church anything. Some choose to assist in paying for the first evangelistic meeting, resources, or a few months of rent to jumpstart the daughter church, but many successful church plants begin with nothing.”<sup>14</sup>

In San Antonio, Texas, the Scenic Hills SDA Church planted the Fil-Am

International SDA Church in 2003. Although the mother church did not give any financial support to the plant, both mother and daughter churches have thrived. Sam Palomero, the lay leader of Fil-Am International, said that, though they started with 25 people—now, ten years later, they have 185 in attendance. “We are packed to the max now.”<sup>15</sup> Palomero stated that in 2012 the church produced over \$180,000 in tithe and \$62,000 in local church budget.

Like many churches, Scenic Hills was afraid of losing the financial support of key leaders who were going to plant the new church. They were in the middle of a building project, and some felt they needed to keep all the personnel and resources they could. Despite this obstacle, they decided to go ahead, in faith, with the plant. Rodney Mills, current pastor of the Scenic Hills SDA Church, said: “Planting did not make a dent in the finances of the mother church. In fact, through planting we grew in both finances and members.” Now the attendance of the mother church is around 400. They are launching a Spanish church of about 120 people in March 2014 and have formed a Portuguese group.

Our research of the top four conferences in church planting revealed that from 2000 to 2012, while at times temporary financial sacrifices were made, no mother church experienced unrecoverable financial difficulty because of planting a new church.

### Obstacle 3: We are too busy with our programs to plant a church

Many churches pour significant time, energy, and resources into a wide range of programs and activities. While constructive programs are necessary for every church, it is important not to lose sight of their purpose. We discovered that church planting is the best “program” a church can do for (1) evangelism, (2) discipleship and spiritual growth, and (3) reclaiming inactive members.

*The best program for evangelism.* Church planting provides clarity and



focus in mission. The potential to reach the harvest is the best reason to plant a new church, both for the mother church and the daughter church. Extensive research in the Texas conference revealed that church plants had significantly better health than did established churches, rating among the top 15 percent of all churches surveyed in the United States. Their strongest category in the Natural Church Development (NCD) survey<sup>16</sup> was Needs Oriented Evangelism, with top questions affirming, “We encourage new Christians in our church to get involved in evangelism immediately;” and “I try to deepen my relationships with people who do not yet know Jesus Christ.” The church plants’ priority of evangelism was also reflected in their church budgets. Evans noted that “most church plants in Texas contribute at least 25 percent of their local church budget for evangelism. . . . Most established churches allocate less than five percent of their budget to evangelism.”<sup>17</sup>

Although smaller and newer churches may not use the same kinds of programs as larger, established ones, they actually have higher potential to grow. The vice president of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, Jerry Fore, has an extensive analysis of his conference for over a decade that confirmed this phenomenon: “I discovered that the more established the church, the more members it takes to produce one baptism. On the other hand, the younger the church, the higher their potential for growth.” This could be due to a number of factors, such as the necessity of reaching the harvest, vitality in the young church’s life cycle, and flexibility in methods and approaches.<sup>18</sup> Just like children, churches can best hit their “growth spurt” while they are still young.<sup>19</sup>

*The best program for discipleship and spiritual growth.* Church planting is a breeding ground for leadership development in both the plant and the mother church. “Our main goal,” said Santos, “is making disciples. As people grow, you need to put them in a place where they can use their passion and

new skills that they will develop. That would be a new church.” He told about a church of elderly people in New York City that decided they wanted to do something for young people, so they offered their chapel downstairs. Within months, Fusion, a youth-led church, was planted, and young disciples stepped up into leadership roles. “The head deacon is 16 years old and the head deaconess is 13.”

Their involvement in street corner ministry has resulted in many conversions and baptisms, even from people involved in gangs. The church started with 19 members and now has an attendance of 60 actively involved young people. “You remain in the church if you are involved. If you are not involved in ministry, you will come as a visitor.” Within one year, Fusion planted the Zion youth-led church across town in Broadway Manhattan.

Members find spiritual growth through involvement. Walton Zibanayi told that his whole experience with God has grown in many ways through being involved as the leader of the McKinney English SDA plant. One of these areas was giving. “When I was at Richardson with 750 members,” he said, “it was easy to give the offering call and still not be convicted personally to give more.” He returned tithe but felt his finances did not permit him to give any more for offerings. “With the new church, we realized that we had to personally give to pay our bills. We started giving tithe plus an extra 10 percent for offerings. Three weeks later, I got a new job that gave an 80 percent increase in my salary.” He said that though he was hoping only for an extra 10 percent salary increase, God gave him so much more. “Our family always struggled to pay all the expenses before. Now we don’t even worry about it so much. God has taken care of us.” Walton rejoiced how God had taught Him to be faithful.

*The best program for reclaiming inactive members.* Churches across North America struggle with the reality that many of their members have become disenfranchised, disconnected, or inactive. Church plants give those

individuals a mulligan—a chance to start over again.<sup>20</sup> Jerry Fore shared his research from analyzing church plants in his conference: “It is harder for people to move into a mother church that is so well established in the status quo. New church plants have the opportunity to establish different structure and titles for programming.”

New plants are attractive to people because they are generally open to new ideas and provide opportunities for spiritual growth but without any previous unfavorable memories or baggage. When the Collegedale Community church planted a new group less than ten years ago in an area surrounded by Adventist churches, some were afraid of losing members and tithe to the new plant. Collegedale Community specifically sought to reach inactive Adventists in the community; it now has an attendance of over 1,200. Eventually all the churches in the area recovered and continued to grow. “Looking back,” Fore noted, “there have been no catastrophes in tithe or membership like some expected. In fact, there has been no decline in the Collegedale area at all.”

In all the conferences we studied, God used church plants to reclaim inactive members. Palomero, the lay pastor of the Fil-Am International Church in San Antonio, Texas, acknowledged that many of the members of his church were inactive before coming and finding a place to connect with God.

## Conclusion

We have looked at three significant obstacles to church planting: lack of people, lack of money, and busyness with programming. We saw that when churches were faithful to God, He transformed their obstacles into opportunities and blessed them with more than they ever had before. Planting a church requires a tremendous step of faith, but the opportunities God provides far outweigh the risks. Through church planting, God adds people to His family, provides more money for mission, brings effective evangelistic focus, fosters spiritual growth, and reconnects

people to Him. Church planting is and has always been the most effective way to reach the harvest and move forward in mission. If we are faithful to God, He will be faithful in using us to accomplish miraculous things. 📖

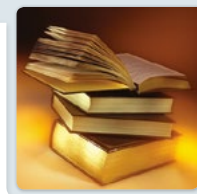
- 1 Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), 353.
- 2 The challenge of reaching the rapidly growing population in North America is calling for a massive Seventh-day Adventist church planting movement to awaken on all levels of the church. Part one of this article, published in the October 2014 issue of *Ministry*, analyzed the net growth of Adventist churches compared to population growth in the last century. To gain a realistic view of a church planting movement, we conducted research on the top four conferences in church planting in the last decade in the North American Division (NAD). In the process of analyzing these conferences (Texas, Georgia-Cumberland, Greater New York, and Florida), we discovered powerful ways that God overcomes obstacles to move His work forward.
- 3 For additional reading about perceived obstacles to church planting, see Russell Burrill, "Myths of Church Planting," *Rekindling a Lost Passion*, (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center, 1999), 98–101.
- 4 *Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Statistical Comparison by Pastoral District*, December 2012, 10.
- 5 McKinney grew a total of 204 percent from 2000 to 2009 and was ranked as the second fastest growing city in the United States. For the full article, see Dan Eakin, "Frisco, McKinney Top Two Fastest Growing Cities in America," *Star Local News*, February 14, 2012, accessed October 15, 2014, [go.dallasnews.com/news/2012/feb/14/frisco-mckinney-top-fastest-growing-cities-america/](http://go.dallasnews.com/news/2012/feb/14/frisco-mckinney-top-fastest-growing-cities-america/).
- 6 *Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Statistical Comparison by Pastoral District*, December 2012, 5.
- 7 It generally takes a new church plant a year or two to become established and bring results. The first church that Richardson planted was Metro North (since renamed Fairview Mosaic) on January 1, 2000.

- 8 We limited our study of North Dallas, Texas, to include Richardson, Plano, McKinney, and Frisco because that is where the churches were planted. Data from City-Data.com, accessed January 28, 2014, [www.city-data.com](http://www.city-data.com).
- 9 The Richardson SDA Church is one example that has followed the principle of church multiplication. Ed Stetzer argues that churches should not only plant daughter churches but aim to become "grandparent churches." See Stetzer, *Vital Churches: Helping Church Planters Become Movement Makers* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 31–47. Ellen White affirms, "As churches are established, it should be set before them that it is even from among them that men must be taken to carry the truth to others and raise new churches." White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3 (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1872), 205.
- 10 Allan Machado, interview with author, September 10, 2013.
- 11 This strategy is in harmony with Stuart Murray's argument that multiple kinds of churches are needed to reach different kinds of people, especially in a postmodern age. See Murray, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations* (Scottsdale, AZ: Harold Press, 2001), 156–80.
- 12 Dr. Gerson Santos, telephone interview with author, October 4, 2013.
- 13 *Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Statistical Comparison by Pastoral District*, December 2012, 5, 6.
- 14 Tom Evans, interview with author, October 21, 2013. This observation confirmed the continued validity of Dudley and Gruesbeck's findings in 1989. In a comprehensive study of the Seventh-day Adventist church plants in the 1970s and 1980s, they discovered that receiving financial aid from another church did not make a notable difference on the growth and success of the church plant. "The differences given are too small to be significant" and "only a minority of churches surveyed received such aid." Roger Dudley and Clarence Gruesbeck, *Plant a Church, Reap a Harvest* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1989), 39. Lyle Schaller argues, "The less we make our church plantings dependent on subsidy, the more dependable they'll be. . . . Direct or indirect financial aid can be additive to both the givers and receivers." Schaller, *44 Questions for Church Planters* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1991), 141.
- 15 Sam Palomero, telephone interview with author, October 4, 2013.

- 16 NCD is a Natural Church Development survey that checks the health of a church and its potential for growth. The higher the church score, the healthier it is. When the church tests high in the area of evangelism, it is an indication that it is evangelistic in nature. Church plants usually score very high in this area. For more information regarding an Adventist version of the survey, contact the North American Division Evangelism Institute (NADEI), [www.nadei.org](http://www.nadei.org).
- 17 Tom Evans, *Implementation of a Conference-Wide Church Planting Strategy With the Texas Conference*, (SDA Theological Seminary DMin. dissertation, 2013), 115, 116.
- 18 Dudley and Gruesbeck also discovered that newer churches had flexibility and vitality and were able to effectively reach the harvest. See Dudley and Gruesbeck, *Plant a Church, Reap a Harvest*, 17–27. Russell Burrill writes about the life cycle of a church and how as it grows older it will ultimately need revival. See Burrill, *Waking the Dead* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2004), 31–35.
- 19 Aubrey Malphurs also outlines this phenomenon in his description of the life cycle of the church. See Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 32–34.
- 20 Our research affirmed this well-established church planting concept. Dudley and Gruesbeck observed, "Numerous studies have shown that 60 to 80 percent of new adult members of new congregations are persons who were not actively involved in the life of any worshiping congregation immediately prior to joining that new mission. . . . Some of these new adult members are youth who once dropped out of the church in their teens or early twenties. Later, as parents, they want their children to have some religious training. Preferring not to attend their parents' church, these young adults look for new types of worship and new experiences of renewal. Other former attenders do not want to come back to the church where they are embarrassed to return or fear that other members will not accept them. On the other hand, such people find acceptance in a new congregation where believers are used to welcoming new members." Dudley and Gruesbeck, *Plant a Church, Reap a Harvest*, 20. See also Lyle Schaller, *44 Questions for Church Planters*, 27, 28.

## Ten simple ideas *to get started in the local church*

1. Develop a heart for the lost. They matter to God and must matter to us.
2. Cultivate a church-planting philosophy. Study the subject in the Bible, the writings of Ellen White, and some practical books to develop your church's position on church planting.
3. Keep praying that God will enlarge your territory by expanding your influence and evangelistic outreach through church planting.
4. Educate your leaders and congregation about the value, needs, and benefits of starting a new church through sermons, board meetings, newsletters, etc. Commit as a church to work toward planting.
5. Claim the promise in Matthew 9:37, 38 that God will "send out workers into the harvest field" by bringing you leaders who will take on this project. Invest deeply in their spiritual growth and leadership development.
6. Identify, elect, and mentor the church-plant leader and core group. The core group can begin planning, evangelism, and recruiting future members while continuing involvement in their home church(es).
7. Get the training you need. For training events and resources, go to [www.nadei.org](http://www.nadei.org).
8. Study the demographic needs and trends of your area to determine the best location to plant a new church. The only way to reach the people in any community is to plant a church there. Work to connect any Adventists in that area with the new plant.
9. Set aside some resources to help the young church secure a building to buy or to rent and/or to purchase evangelistic supplies and equipment.
10. Develop the strategy that best fits your church. Set it in motion and move forward in faith. Pray consistently for the harvest and for God's leading and blessing.



## Preaching in an Age of Distraction

by J. Ellsworth Kalas, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014.

After teaching courses on biblical preaching for ten years, I returned to the pastorate, where I preached more than 100 sermons per year. I discovered, to my surprise, that it is a lot easier to teach preaching than it is to preach well. Preaching is hard work and challenging, especially in an age of distraction.

J. Ellsworth Kalas, senior professor of homiletics at Asbury Theological Seminary in Lexington, Kentucky, United States, addresses this challenge in his latest book, *Preaching in an Age of Distraction*. Before I began to read, the following comment caught my attention on the back cover: “Preaching is difficult enough under the best of times. But what are we to do when it seems that all of us—hearers and preachers alike—are constantly distracted.”

The author notes that there have always been distractions both for the speaker and the listener. He recalls a time when a bat visited their worship service one Sunday morning, swooping down time and time again while Kalas tried in vain to keep the attention of his dodging hearers! We have all had to contend with crying babies, rustling papers, and blaring sirens. Distractions are not a new invention.

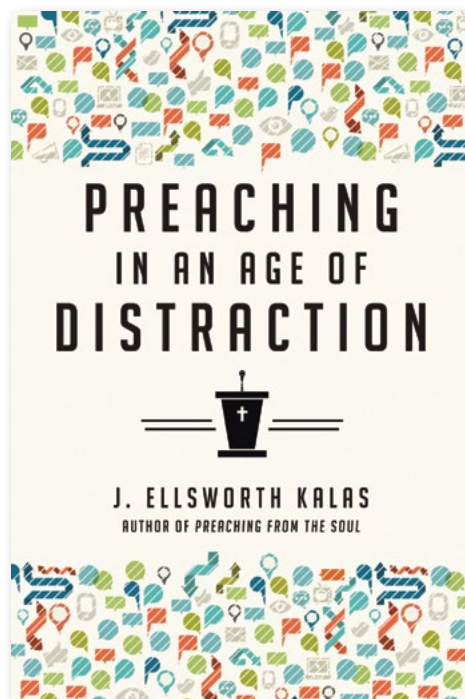
But Kalas maintains that things are different in the second decade of the twenty-first century. While there have always been distractions, we live in an age of distraction. We are part of the “always-on, always-connected digital world” (10). For preachers, the author maintains, this age of distraction is a double problem. We not only speak to distracted listeners but are distracted ourselves. He notes, “Some of the most

creative and imaginative minds in our culture have a full-time assignment to get our attention and to move it away from other matters” (17). He also states explicitly something that we already know intuitively: “The greatest source of interruptive distraction in our time is not the telephone or the friendly drop-in but the various forms of the Internet” (45).

So, how is it possible to preach in an age of constant, organized, intentional distraction? Kalas challenges us “to winnow and sift our distractions so that we invest our time in matters that are good and productive yet not eliminate those distractions that stimulate creativity” (66). If positive distractions can be what Kalas refers to as “the growing edge of life” (76), “we need therefore to have some general guidelines to help us avoid distractions that deter us and use those that will bless us” (76).


1. “Does this distraction incline me toward Christ or away from him?” (77)
2. “Will this distraction bless me so that I will bless others or will it diminish me so that I will enjoy diminishing others?” (77)

The author maintains that two of the greatest assets for a preacher in an age of distraction are excellence and creativity. Excellence never becomes obsolete, and a fresh creative approach will always demand a hearing. And



through it all, the secret resource of dedicated Christian preachers is the enabling presence of the Holy Spirit who “knows the human mind and soul most intimately” (159). Think about it. Our task of preaching in an age of distraction has become a most challenging one. But then think about the resources at our disposal. Kalas concludes with this thought-provoking statement: “The secular experts would sell their souls to get the resources that come to us with our calling” (159).

This book touched my heart and mind. I suggest you get a copy and read it for yourself.

—Reviewed by Derek J. Morris, DMin, editor, Ministry. 

## ► Adventist Church sets vote on women's ordination for July 2015

**Silver Spring, Maryland, United States**—The Seventh-day Adventist Church, as early as next July, may decide to take a historic vote on whether to allow women to be ordained ministers.

During the 2014 Annual Council, with 243 votes in favor and 44 against, and at the end of daylong deliberation, the Executive Committee agreed to place the following question on the agenda of the 2015 General Conference (GC) Session in July, which sets policy for the entire church:

“Is it acceptable for division executive committees, as they may deem it appropriate in their territories, to make provision for the ordination of women to the gospel ministry? Yes or No.”

If the question about the theology of ordination is put up for vote and passes, then leaders in each of the church's 13 world regions may decide whether to ordain women in their territory.

The proposal, voted by the Executive Committee today, was brought to the assembly floor as a recommendation from the church's top officials and could be considered a creative way of dealing with a thorny issue by taking a neutral-leaning stance. Some proponents of women's ordination voted in favor of the motion but expressed strong concerns that the proposal before the Executive Committee lacked a formal recommendation for or against ordination. Proponents fear the issue will carry less weight when the question comes up at the General Conference Session that meets July 2–11, 2015, in San Antonio, Texas, United States.

“I think this body needs to give direction to the world church,” said

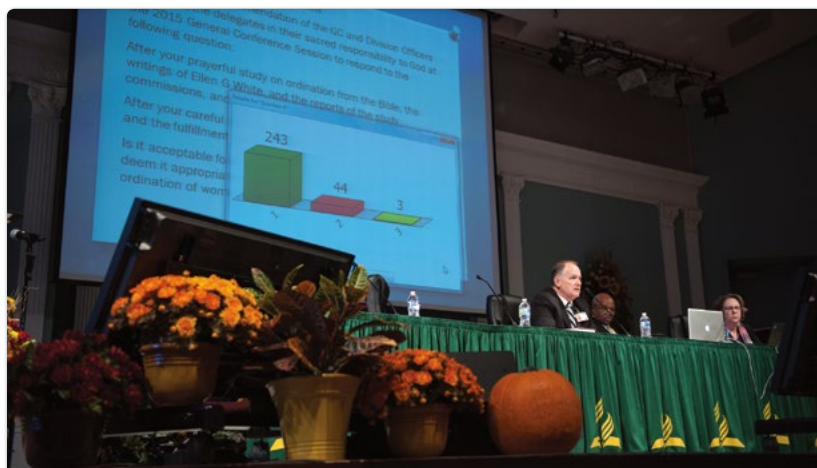
**David Weigley**, president of the North American Division's Columbia Union Conference. “We are missing a golden opportunity to give direction. Leaders lead; they give direction,” he said.

“Based on what I see from the history of this particular issue, it seems that the Annual Council has always played a very prominent role in what is passed on to the GC session,” said **Heather-Dawn Small**, Women's Ministries director for the Adventist world church. “I've seen from the past that what this Annual Council decides influences the GC Session.”

Vice President Michael Ryan, who chaired the day's session, suggested that the recommendation needed to be unbiased and that the ordination question was best suited for the delegation at the session.

More than 20 people spoke on varying sides of the issue. **Alberto C. Gulfan Jr.**, president of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, said he appreciates the contribution of female evangelists, but his region's constituency “is not ready to move towards the ordination of women pastors.” He added, “We are also supporting this recommendation to bring this to the General Conference in Session and let the world decide on the issue once and for all.”

General Conference President **Ted N. C. Wilson** did not express his opinion during the meeting but indicated before the discussion that he would be willing to adjust his stance. “If this body accepts the recommendation to place a question before the General Conference Session and that session, after prayerful consideration and review, votes something,” Wilson announced, “I pledge to you I will follow what the General Conference votes. I want to ask each of you to do the same.” [Edwin Manuel Garcia/ANN]



Adventist Church Vice President Mike Ryan chairs the Annual Council on Tuesday, October 14, as delegates overwhelmingly voted to place an item on the agenda of next year's General Conference session asking whether regional divisions may allow women to be ordained as ministers. The vote was 243 to 44, with 3 abstaining.

[photo: Vivienne Martinelli]





## ► Two presidents open five-bed Highlands clinic

**Papua, New Guinea**—A five-bed rural health clinic with two staff houses and a church has been officially opened at Minjmu, Jiwaka, in the western highlands of Papua New Guinea.



Photo Source: TPUM | Pastors Townsend and Lawson cut the ribbon.

The clinic has been in operation for a few years, but the rest of the complex has only just been completed. Representing Murwillumbah and officiating at the event were two Australian conference presidents: **Brett Townsend**, president of the Northern Australian Conference and former pastor of Murwillumbah church, and **Justin Lawman**, president of the North New South Wales Conference.

Pastor Lawman noticed the need for a clinic four years ago when he



The new clinic

led a team to Minjmu, Jiwaka, for an evangelistic series.

Pastor Townsend told the crowd who gathered for the opening that “this clinic becomes a service to the entire community” and “may it continue to be a witness to His love.” Townsend also acknowledged the members of Murwillumbah church who tirelessly sold secondhand clothes to raise funds for the project.

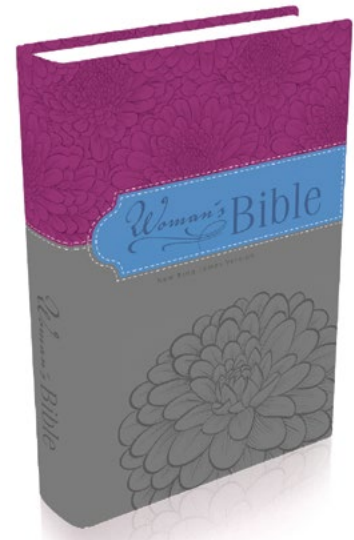
The clinic has a ward with five beds, and a room each for emergency, examination, and labor.

**Terry Koim**, who was the director when the clinic was erected, commended the volunteers for a job well done and for their commitment and effort, which saw the clinic built in just eight days. It will operate under **Regina Abane**, an experienced health extension officer, assisted by two nurse aids. Western Highlands Mission Chief Financial Officer Bray Yomba has pledged to add a few more staff. *[Jim Wagi]*

## ► A Bible for women

**T**he first Bible (NKJV) just for women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been produced by the Safeliz Publishing House in Spain and the General Conference Women’s Ministries. It was created to encourage women globally in their walk with God, to motivate women who may not regularly read the Bible, and to give women tools for use in personal Bible study and when giving Bible studies.

Following are some of the Bible’s numerous features:



- Available in French, English, and Spanish
- Words of Jesus printed in gold
- More than 100 pages of tools and resources such as teachings and beliefs, Bible studies, lists of Jesus’ miracles and parables, signs of His second coming, and maps
- Thirty beautifully illustrated pages featuring well-known women of the Bible, with interesting reflections about their lives and teachings
- More than 100 commentaries, appearing alongside Bible text and written by recognized authors, about issues related to women such as weddings in the Bible, rape and violation, levirate marriages, and women prophets
- Special introductions to each section explaining the role played by women of the Bible and how they fulfilled their special mission
- Articles on more than 60 virtues and the women who best represent them
- General articles on well-known and lesser-known women of the Bible and practical lessons we can learn from them

Contact your nearest Adventist Book Center for availability.



# The Good Preacher\*

When Jesus spoke, it was not with hesitating uncertainty; his words came with an earnestness and assurance appropriate to their importance and the momentous consequences involved in their reception or rejection. . . . When before the people, speaking to them the words of eternal truth, with what earnestness he watched the chang-

ing countenances, the cold, stern, forbidding look, which told that the truth was unwelcome. . . . His work was to lay down in simple lines, yet so as to be clearly understood, truths that if obeyed would bring peace and happiness to the soul. . . .

As the arrows of truth pierced the hearts of Christ's hearers, breaking through the barriers of selfishness, and working humiliation, contrition, and finally gratitude, the Saviour's heart was made glad; for it was just such cases that he came to seek and to save. When his eyes swept over the throng of listeners about him, and he recognized among them the same faces that he had seen on former occasions, joy was expressed in his countenance, that they were hopeful subjects of his kingdom.


The messengers of Christ, those whom he sends in his stead, will have the same feelings, the same earnest interest. . . .

Ministers need to have a more clear, simple manner of presenting the truth as it is in Jesus. They themselves need to comprehend more fully the great plan of salvation. There are many among their hearers who want a plain, clear explanation of the steps requisite in conversion. The great masses of the people are more ignorant on this point than many suppose. . . . That which would have touched the hearts of the hearers would have been to show them Christ upon the cross of Calvary to bring redemption within their reach. They need to be taught as children how to make Jesus their friend, how to bring him into their life-work. . . .

Some ministers make a mistake in the preparation of their discourses. They arrange every minutia with such exactness that they give the Lord no room to lead and impress their minds.

Every point is fixed, stereotyped as it were, and they cannot depart from the plan marked out. This course, if continued, will cause them to become narrow-minded, circumscribed in their views, and will soon leave them as destitute of life and energy as were the hills of Gilboa of dew and rain. They must throw the soul open, and let the Holy Spirit take possession to impress the mind. When everything is laid out beforehand, and they feel that they cannot vary from these set discourses, the effect is little better than that produced by reading a sermon.

God would have his ministers wholly dependent upon him, but at the same time they should be thoroughly furnished unto every good work. No subject can be treated before all congregations in the same manner. The Spirit of God, if allowed to do its work, will impress the mind with ideas adapted to meet the cases of those who need help. But the tame, formal discourses of many who enter the desk have very little of the vitalizing power of the Holy Spirit in them. The habit of preaching such discourses will effectually destroy a minister's usefulness and ability. . . .

God's watchmen must not study how they shall please the people nor listen to their words and utter them; but they must listen to hear what saith the Lord, what is his word for the people. If they rely upon discourses prepared years before, they may fail to meet the necessities of the occasion. Their hearts should be laid open, so that the Lord may impress their minds, and then they will be able to give the people the precious truth warm from heaven. 

\* These excerpts are from Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1915), 260–264.

*God would have his ministers wholly dependent upon him, but at the same time they should be thoroughly furnished unto every good work.*

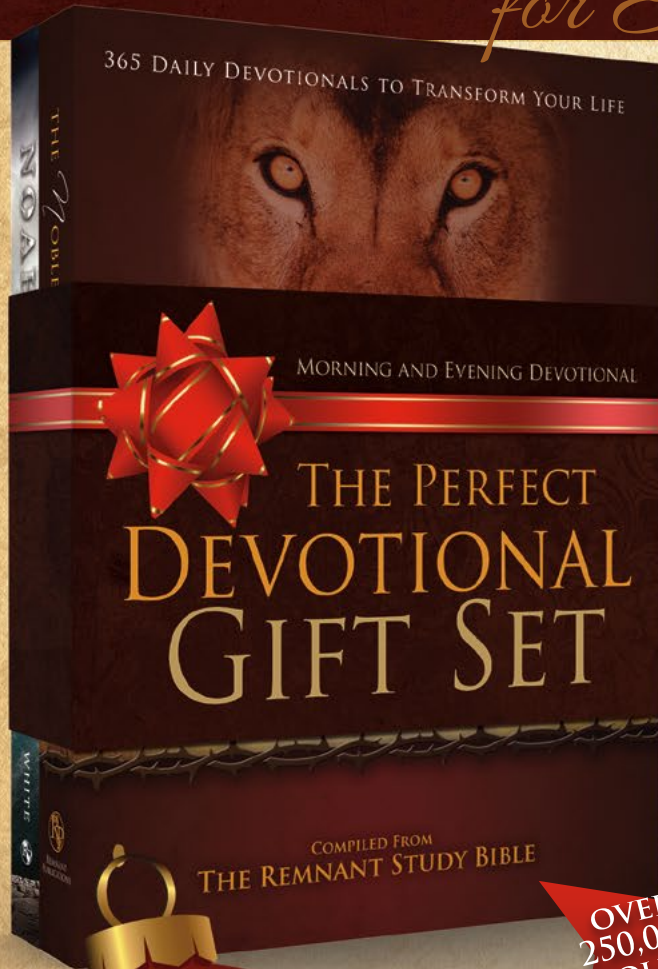
ing countenances of his hearers. The faces that expressed deep interest and pleasure as they listened to his words, gave him great satisfaction. But when the truth, plainly uttered, touched some cherished sin or idol, he marked

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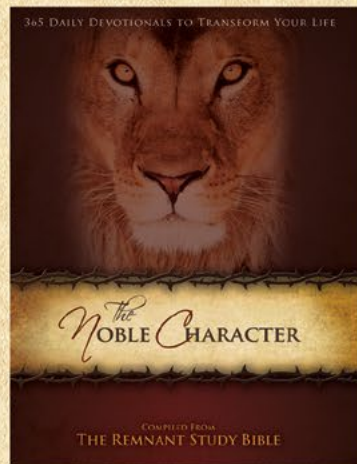


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