

# FAMILY OUTREACH & EVANGELISM

MANAGING FAMILY-RUN MINISTRIES  
CENTERS OF INFLUENCE



JAIME ESPINAL

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CENTERS OF INFLUENCE

## **JAIME ESPINAL**



***Family Outreach & Evangelism***  
*Managing Family-run Ministries Centers of Influence*

by Jaime Espinal

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank God for His matchless love and fidelity, as well as for His call, protection, and provision.

I thank God for my wife Marjorie who has been an undeserved gift, with all her care and patience, as well as my children: Jonathan, Anamaria, Elizabeth, and Abigail.

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I thank God for everyone placed in our path to encourage, support, and advise us and also for the pleasant moments lived together.

I thank God also for all those to whom we have ministered in one way or another; we have learned from them as well.

# DEDICATION

In memory of the billions, all through history, who have suffered and perished for lack of a home dedicated to serving God through a covenant and family ministry.

I dedicate this book to the Source of all wisdom, the only wise God, Ruler of all the earth, and our Creator. Only through Him can we think, speak, and act. Praise God!

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“The strength of an army is measured largely by the efficiency of the men in the ranks. A wise general instructs his officers to train every soldier for active service. He seeks to develop the highest efficiency on the part of all. If he were to depend on his officers alone, he could never expect to conduct a successful campaign. He counts on loyal and untiring service from every man in his army. The responsibility rests largely upon the men in the ranks.” (*Gospel Workers*, 351).

“We must live a twofold life—a life of thought and action, of silent prayer and earnest work.” *Prayer*, 25

# FOREWORD

HAD A WRONG IMPRESSION... When I started reading the book *Family Run Ministries* that was written by my good friend and brother in Christ, Jaime Espinal, director of CMS (Centro Misionero de Salud), I thought it was one more book about the family. Although that is important, there are already plenty books about that subject. But I was wrong. The manner and approach that Jaime gives in this book is that of a family ministry—the involvement of the family in God's service and in His Church, seeking to be the family God intended for us to be, and also serving the community in a special way, as Christ did. It is a call to the ministry that God wants every church member to develop; it is Christ's method in action.

*Family Outreach and Evangelism: Family Run Ministries* does a great job keeping its focus on a ministry so necessary and urgent in our church, using for its basis the family. The way that it unfolds is logical, simple, and to the point. As the author goes through each component, he always leans on the Word of God and the Spirit of Prophecy, which gives a special strength and weight to the message. He concludes with the need to develop a family ministry, enlisting every member in the wonderful work that aims to use Jesus Christ's method to deliver the wonderful message of God's love, restoration of health, and especially salvation in Jesus. I highly recommend this valuable tool that can revolutionize the lives of all who read it and practice its advice.

Armando Miranda  
General Vice President  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists



# INTRODUCTION

## *God's Plan*

**O**ne of the most exciting topics for this writer is the family that serves its Creator from the Bible perspective. Genesis 1 and 2 establish two sacred institutions: marriage and the Sabbath. These two institutions were intended for man's happiness and the exaltation of the Creator. The fullness of man and woman is achieved only within the Creator's plan for the family. To understand and experience this plan should be the ultimate goal of every family. There is absolutely nothing designed by man that can approach happiness better than God's original plan provided for His creatures through selfless service. Every family must decide whom they will serve. The Bible presents us with only two options: serving God or not serving Him. Failure to serve God automatically puts us in the second option.

As a consequence of an act of rebellion by Israel, God allowed them to experience the second option in order that they might know the difference; that is, that they might know what it means to not serve God. "However, they will become his servants so that they may recognize the difference between serving Me and serving the kingdoms of other lands" (2 Chronicles 12:8, HCSB). One of society's current problems is that most families only know the second option we have been talking about it: not serving God. This is considered normal in our current society. A family that decides to serve the Creator is no longer seen as normal. The reality is that this is more fascinating than anything else in the world. As Joshua would say, "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.... But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15, NIV). God's plan for man has no rival.

After conducting a family ministry ourselves for nearly twenty years, we have found more and more families who would like to embrace a family ministry if they only had some guidance, training, and encouragement. On the other hand, we have met with families who have already decided to get into ministry but are struggling with issues that perhaps could have been prevented. The family has always been under attack, but in these last days, it is getting even worse—especially now with the cities and all their negative influences. The communities should be strengthened and focused on the ministry of love and service for God's cause and for their own sake as well. The church also needs the strength and courage that family run ministries can provide. Hopefully, this book will meet those needs to a small or great degree.

### ***The Family Ministry, the Church, and the Community***

A whole-hearted family dedicated to serving its Creator—what a great privilege! A family run ministry in the church is an influence for revival. The family can go from being a passive and self-centered family to a family with a defined mission and a strong and clear purpose to serve God full time. This will not only bring life to the church and community but will give more satisfaction to the members who passionately wish to hasten the soon return of our Lord. Also, a family dedicated to God's service will become like an ark in itself. When we follow the divine counsel, just as Noah and his family were protected from the wickleness of society and the judgments from God, so the family that is consecrated to God through a ministry of service can be preserved.

### ***Three Ways to Minister***

There are at least three general ways to serve God as a family ministry. First, there are those who are called to serve as officers of the organized church. They work as pastors, administrators, etc. Their salary is provided through the administration of the church.

Second, others are called to serve God in their jobs and with their testimony, being active in the church, supporting its growth, and in their free time, doing some missionary work as best they can. This is the least that God expects of each individual or family.

However, there is a third way, and that is developing a full-time ministry to God as a family, supporting their local church, and

depending on God for sustenance through some family business, industry, or donations.

All three are important and have their place. In future chapters I will be more focused on the third one; in part, because it is the least popular and requires the most faith. However, any family or individual, regardless of their type of ministry, will be greatly benefited by reading this book.

### ***Family Ministry Creates Active Citizens***

Imagine a community which, instead of having mostly passive citizens, has a majority of members who are not only active but leading his or her own family ministry. Pastors and church administrators should take a closer look at the family run ministries.

Church members have been sitting still for a long time. Many of them want to participate more fully or even full time in the Lord's work if only they had the proper training. Instead many are tied to customs, fashions, and debts which prevent them for seeing the urgency of the times we live in, much less being prepared to proclaim the loud cry. The gates of our minds and our churches should be open to the influence of the family ministry revival somehow taking the place of the average passive family in the church. The family ministry creates greater ownership of the message and of the commission entrusted to each individual.

### ***The Time Is Urgent***

We have reached a time when every member should expand his or her influence and territory beyond what giving a single Bible study can accomplish. A true family run ministry would not only give Bible studies but would be preparing themselves and others for the tough times ahead, the proclamation of the loud cry, and the wonderful encounter with Jesus.

### ***Family Ministry Not a New Concept***

The administration of family ministries is not new. We can go back to Eden and see how Adam and Eve developed a family ministry. Genesis 1:27–28 says:

“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then

God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over [it]" (NKJV).

Adam's family ministry influence was quite extended since Adam lived for nearly a thousand years. His objective was clear.

"He had been commanded to instruct his posterity in the way of the Lord; and he carefully treasured what God had revealed to him, and repeated it to succeeding generations. To his children and childrens children, to the ninth generation." (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 82)

### ***Separation From God Discouraged Family Ministry***

Unfortunately, throughout the years, the families learned to live independent of a loving God and of unselfish ministry to God, just as they do today. There is an enormous gulf between God's plan for families and our reality, as we have divorced ourselves not only from His presence but also from His commission to us.

This phenomenon has become so widespread in Christianity that even for most Christian families it is rare to develop a full-time ministry for God. In the average Christian family living in the city, both father and mother are working and little time is spent caring properly for the children. The children are immersed in the school, neighborhood, and media; they are absorbing precisely the influences that place them further from God. Under these circumstances, the dedicated time to know more about God is limited or nonexistent, and the most important decisions are made in the context of the surrounding ungodly environment. Incomplete education, debts, vanity, fashion, entertainment, and confusion make up some of the ingredients that are slowing the work of transformation that God wants to make in our lives before the second coming of Christ.

We may relate this situation to the "foolish man who built his house on sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it (Matthew 7:26-27).

The platform designed by God for the family is based on love for Him and for our neighbors through the ministry of selfless service. Everything else will follow. "But seek first the kingdom of God

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and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33, NKJV).

Unfortunately Satan has provided another platform in which the average family today is based on everything else. Survival and pleasure are primary, and if we have time, we attend church, give some Bible studies, or do some charity work.

### ***Family Ministries in the Bible***

Let's look at some examples of family ministries in the Bible and see what we can learn from them. Of Enoch we are told that:

"He did not become a hermit, shutting himself entirely from the world; for he had a work to do for God in the world. In the family and in his intercourse with men, as a husband and father, a friend, a citizen, he was the steadfast, unwavering servant of the Lord." (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 85).

Noah also managed a family ministry that is a perfect example for today. Jesus Himself said, "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man" (Matthew 24:37, NIV). God assured Noah, "But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee" (Genesis 6:18). Noah accepted the covenant and obeyed. "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Genesis 6:22). God prospered, sustained, and blessed this family enterprise. "And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him" (Genesis 9:8). The family business and the preaching of the gospel were not separate. The lessons we can draw from the ark family are very valuable in these last days. We can relate the ark to God's plan for families in the last days. After all, the ark was God's plan for the salvation of this family.

In both these examples, we are given admonition. We see clearly that God not only called them to develop a particular ministry, but that he also sustained it.

These ministries were sustained by God. Today we call such ministries self-supporting ministries to distinguish them from the church organized support given to certain projects around the world. But they are actually divinely supported ministries.

God guided and upheld Abraham's family ministry while at the same time transforming his heart to the point that his relationship

with God was closer and deeper. In the process, Abraham made mistakes, but God's faithfulness always sustained him and his family. He received great promises and revelations about the plan of salvation and got to know more intimately the divine principles.

“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ And he was called the friend of God” (James 2:23, NKJV). You see that faith was working together with works, and that faith was perfected by works (James 2:22). Abraham’s family ministry was not one of belief alone, but also of action.

### ***Creating an Institution***

It is equally important to recognize that an institutional ministry may arise from a family ministry. God indicates when a family ministry should switch to an institution. We will refer to this concept more later on. However, it is important to recognize that in the times we live, it is becoming more complicated to administer an institution, especially if it is large. Government laws in many countries, shortages of materials, rising costs, control of markets, and the lack of commitment of the human being to the Lord’s work, etc., are becoming increasingly acute. However, these factors can create an ever growing opportunity for family ministries to spring into action.

### ***Whats Ahead?***

During the journey through these pages, we will make reference to other biblical people and issues that will help us illustrate God’s plan for our families being actively involved in their respective family ministries.

We will refer also to the businesses approved by God and outline how they can become a blessing for the family and for the cause of God.

Different factors over the years have created a gulf between what we conceive as a business and a ministry. Although there are differences between them, the ultimate goal of both the business and the ministry should be the same: to honor God and to reach as many souls as possible for the kingdom of heaven.

When a true Christian has given his heart and all his possessions to his heavenly Father, the business becomes a ministry. If a ministry develops into a good business that generates good income and is well managed, it can expand the influence and territory of both.

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This is not intended to cover everything about family ministries, since that would be impossible for the finite mind. However, we can not limit God for He has infinite ways to call, train, and sustain a ministry for the family. But for a family that wishes to participate in the divine plan of service, this will hopefully be a useful guide to family run ministries.

“At this time God’s cause is in need of men and women who possess rare qualifications and good administrative powers; men and women who will make patient, thorough investigation of the needs of the work in various fields; those who have a large capacity for work; those who possess warm, kind hearts, cool heads, sound sense, and unbiased judgment; those who are sanctified by the Spirit of God and can fearlessly say, No, or Yea and Amen, to propositions; those who have strong convictions, clear understanding, and pure, sympathetic hearts; those who practice the words, All ye are brethren; those who strive to uplift and restore fallen humanity.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 7, 249. See also pp. 246–249).



# CHAPTER 1

## The Family: A Divine Institution

“Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength.” (Psalm 96:7)

**N**o institution has been under attack as much as the family. As the core of society, the family has been more infiltrated, fragmented, and affected than society has been affected by gangsters, terrorists, and some governments together throughout history. We are impacted by events such as 9/11 and the wars in the Middle East, but the reality is that although we regret the barbarity and injustice of these events, the family was, from its very beginning, the focus of the enemy of everything good.

The great controversy that rages in every individual is, to whom will I give my complete adoration? This controversy has significant meaning within the home. In past generations, parents have failed to teach their children the fear of God and today we are reaping what we have sown. Worldwide reported attacks by children and youth are increasing in frequency and magnitude. Countries like Mexico have had to resort to changing the age at which they begin to apply the criminal and legal law because many attacks are carried out by minors. Incidents of children killing their parents, teachers, and others are reported more and more frequently. The educational systems of various governments seem desperate to integrate moral values again as a part of education. Additionally, some sectors are concerned about the health of students and specifically about what they eat. The incidence of diabetes and childhood obesity have increased by leaps and bounds. Family abuse is another area where governments and private institutions would like to do more in promoting the rights

of women and children. The list is long. Overall, we see government institutions and individuals wanting to do something about these problems. Often they blend other interests with their efforts. But in the interim, many families suffer and are destroyed.

Stepping away from God, His principles, and His advice is the main factor in the decline of values, families, institutions, and governments that we see today. One of the most effective tactics of the enemy has been to exchange or void the respective family order God ordained for each member; that is, the roles of men and women have been distorted. What we see in the media and much of society is that men and women leave their respective roles and responsibilities in the home without a clue of the regrettable consequences in the future. Nothing about these role changes can be further from the truth. God Himself instituted marriage and has placed in His Word clear guidelines as to the duties of men and women in the home. Although this book is not specifically focused on solving problems at home, it is important to identify and resolve at least some issues that could help restore and establish families, especially if we are thinking about developing or participating in some kind of ministry.

Remember that the first and most sacred responsibility of ministry is to do well to those in the home. It is not surprising then that the darts of the enemy are aimed specifically at destroying this sacred institution established by God (Genesis 1:27; 2:24). When one of the spouses disagrees about starting a full-time activity for the service of God, whether starting a ministry or by joining an existing one, it is a good indicator that something is not quite ready. It is very important to overcome this situation with the help of God before proceeding. It may be a lack of commitment to God or conversion of one or both of the spouses. It may also be a lack of effective communication, understanding, initiative, etc. Often, the cause of this situation is that the one who took the initiative in the first place did not properly share with his or her spouse so that it can become the initiative of both partners instead of just one. The spouse who feels that he is not taken into account enough in the decision making process usually will not be comfortable with the project, especially if that spouse is the man. In many cases, the woman seems to be more sensitive to God's call but does not know how the man functions. Instead of being encouraged to go in that direction, he objects either verbally or by his actions. Having both partners on board is vital before continuing.

Many a woman has been carrying the burden of a ministry or project alone because she did not know how to engage her husband successfully in the project. The same applies to the man who has not properly approached the matter with his wife and family, and as a result, the divine call is stopped or delayed.

The children according to their ages should also be involved so that they are taken into account in the initiative and not just made to go with their parents because they have no other option.

Although it seems ironic, there are cases in which the person who is considered more spiritual and involved in church affairs fails on this point, but instead of praying for each member of the family in order for God to start preparing them slowly, he or she ventures to impose the project. Sooner or later many problems will come up that could have been avoided by patient preparation. The consequences can even be total failure.

There are many families who wish to engage in some type of ministry, but they really are not ready because their own home is in danger of failing, and they urgently need to be ministered to before they can minister to others.

Although some marriages can benefit by being in a more peaceful place in the field of a ministry, the general rule is that the family should be prepared and strengthened before they go to a specific kind of ministry. A weak marriage should not be exposed to the hard, depleting task of starting a major project or missionary enterprise, or joining a ministry where the heavy responsibilities they will encounter will weaken the situation further. As leaders at Centro Misionero de Salud (CMS), we have been able to help couples who recognize their respective problems and who promptly sought advice versus couples who appeared to be fine although their marriages were already weak even before arriving at CMS. Zeal for God's cause by one spouse or both without humility and tact can lead to trampling the individuality of the other family members. Respect is a divine principle.

The lack of communication and consideration may lead to a relationship where spouses are affected to the point at which they lose their emotional and/or sexual intimacy. God has wonderful purposes for developing marriage. His ideal is high and He longs to develop characters that can reflect Him and that are prepared to dwell in the heavenly mansions. The enemy desires to hinder this holy work.

Some individuals go to an extreme with sex, which strengthens a carnal nature and prevents us from developing a spiritual nature. Others are taken to other extreme of not meeting the normal requirements of this nature and this can promote, along with other factors, a moral fall by either spouse. Remember that in ministries there are no exemptions from tragedy, and abuse can create a failure in either extreme case. The balance can be achieved with the help of God, good communication, and special consideration. The need for spiritual growth, the times we live in, and the urgency of the divine call can provide us with an appropriate framework for the proper balance on this issue for our married life.

Another issue, more important I think, is the emotional intimacy. Many marriages become conditioned to live without this. The absence of emotional intimacy can take away the essence of happiness in the marriage relationship. My wife and I lecture on family guidelines in different places. We have found that many households, even Christians, are trying to swim in the sea of their homes with their hands tied up. This is because they bring many unresolved issues from childhood. Added to their spouse's unresolved issues the situation becomes an even more complex issue. These issues must be identified and resolved biblically so they can be truly free and experience unity, not only physically, but also emotionally and spiritually that will enable them to be in a solid marriage physically and emotionally.

Further, the greatest foundation for the family can be given only by Christ and His righteousness. In many homes, justification by faith is no more than a theological concept and not a constant thought and personal experience. Christ died for each of us. Only His innocent blood can atone for our sins and fit us to be presented before God as righteous. This requires an act of faith.

Christ is the only righteous being, and He offers us His righteousness so we can then be acceptable to God. Even though we are sinners and unworthy, God sees us as His children without sin; righteous, not because of any merit or worth of ours, but as a gift of God. How wonderful! What love! In this thought, there is power and hope for the repentant sinner. We die to the idea that there is good in us for salvation, and we live in the merits of Christ. We die to self and live for Christ. "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20, NIV).

This is the secret of success and power for a Christian. Without this everything else is just profession, weakness, and delusion. A marriage in which the partners have died to self is a marriage where the power of the Holy Spirit is present. Beholding the life of Jesus Christ, especially the final scenes of His death, is how we can truly die to self. For this we need faith, time, discipline, and above all, the help of the Holy Spirit.

Remember that the process of dying to self may differ from that of your spouse. Everyone has in their own mind and heart created by not only what their parents, teachers, and family members transmitted to them, but also what they themselves have decided to contemplate. Moses took 40 years to unlearn what he had contemplated in his first 40 years, and then he was able to learn to die to self. David spent 10 years preparing before he could assume his kingship. Moses was in the Egyptian courts, David following the sheep. The apostles beheld Jesus for three and a half years and learned to die to self so the power of the Holy Spirit could find room in their hearts at Pentecost. The length of time and what we behold can influence the process of dying to self so God can really use us in such a way that all the glory will be for Him and not for us.

One of the most insidious attacks the enemy has made on the family is to confuse the function or responsibility of each family member. This situation may cause confusion, or delay a family preparing for ministry. Although it is not my intention to cover this issue in its entirety, I want to touch on some basics that will help us to better prepare for the ministry as a family and obtain greater happiness in the home. It is important to recognize that in today's world there is a crisis with men and women that has led many to desert the position or responsibilities clearly established by God in His Holy Word.

### **The Real Man**

When I talk about the real man I don't mean one who is such simply because of his gender. I am speaking of a man who carries out the God ordained duties of his gender. Through generations, the development of the male pattern has been lost. As a result each new generations does not have a balanced and appropriate pattern to follow.

The media has distorted the true function of a man. Today we see novels, movies, and commercials that show a weak, disposable man who can be pulled about or changed at any time, a man who can be easily replaced and surpassed by a woman. Additionally, a woman not knowing how to help the man, usurps his place and does his God given work for him, therefore blocking him emotionally and taking on herself extra loads that will not make her fulfilled or happy. The children see this pattern and think that this is the way it is done, and therefore, they are ready to replicate this pattern.

In their marriage roles, the functions of man and woman, father and mother become muddled and confused. The wife and children, by nature, hope that the husband and father will meet his duties as a real man; and not only meet his duties but do them well and enjoy doing them.

The compass of security in the wife and children is oriented to the true man, and this compass in turn must be oriented in an absolute dependence on God. Thus if the husband and father is missing for reasons beyond human control, his family can go to the source of all security and livelihoods. A real man accepts the responsibility and challenge of sustaining, guiding, and protecting his family while constantly leading them to God.

As a spiritual leader, he begins every morning looking to God in prayer. He is first to encourage the study of the Holy Scriptures by his example, considering its teachings as a source of true education and true success in life. With tenderness and firmness he gathers his family steadily and happily every day to offer God an act of worship in the morning and at night. This act of worship should be the happiest moment of the family, and to achieve and maintain it will be the result of a total dependence on God who gives wisdom to every home in its own context so it can be achieved.

Paul, in Ephesians 5:21–33, states clearly and concisely that the man is the head of the household. On what basis should he develop this role? On the basis of love in subjection to Christ. The fact that in todays society man has been unable to achieve a balanced and efficient leadership does not mean we should give another interpretation to what God has already made clear in His Word.

It is true that there is a crisis in masculinity in todays society when we see so many homes destroyed by the absence of the husband and father. The average man of today is weak, spineless, and

afraid to make a complete surrender of the heart to God and to his family.

Aubrey Andelin in his book that I highly recommend, *Man of Steel and Velvet*, expresses it as follows:

“There are men who fail to take their position as head of the household, allowing women and children to push them around, not wishing to accept the responsibility which is rightfully their own. Some blatantly encourage their wives to assume this burden. Many of our so-called jokes center around the wife *wearing the pants*. Her husband is portrayed as a bungler, inept and incompetent to understand or control his family.” (p. 8)

It is vital to balance the modern man with one who fears God. Let us see briefly what Aubrey tell us in his book are the two aspects that produce a successful balance. The man of steel has the following characteristics:

“Our crucial times require men of strong minds, kind hearts and willing hands, men who find joy in labor, men of courage, honor and strong opinions, clear minds and high goals, men who are not afraid of responsibility, men who are dedicated to a task and will surrender their selfish desires and pursuits to a life of service. These are men whose word can be depended upon.” (Ibid., 10)

“The ideal man has the strength, endurance and temperance of fine steel. He is a composite of many sterling qualities. Foremost among them is his willingness to assume masculine burdens, to *earn his bread by the sweat of his face*. He provides for himself and family with pride as he fulfills this masculine duty. He delights in this opportunity to serve, and does so enthusiastically. He doesn’t face his responsibility sullenly, as though there were no escape. He is not looking to others to do what he should be doing. When his problems become difficult, he takes pride in trying to solve them. Only in emergencies does he look to others for solutions. He shoulders this obligation, not only for the moral

responsibility to do so, but because of the positive masculine feeling he has in doing it. If placed in a position where he cannot function in this important capacity, he is most uncomfortable. His acceptance of this responsibility adds substance to the faith his wife places in him when she leaves the security of her parents home to make her way with him. She must rely on his sense of duty to provide for her, to shield her from the harshness of the world, and to strengthen her in her new experience.

“Not only does he assume responsibility for himself and family, but he is also a *builder of society*, a contributor to the welfare of others. He recognizes the worlds urgent needs and, with a sense of social responsibility, contributes his measure to making the world a better place.

“He is not afraid of responsibility, even when it requires time, toil and personal sacrifice. All this he does because he feels a moral obligation to others. He helps without complaint. A man of steel is a masculine man. He is aggressive, determined, decisive, and independent. He is efficient in a mans world, demanding quotas of himself in reaching his objectives. He is competent in a task, fearless and courageous in the face of difficulty, and master of a situation.

“He has convictions and steadfastly holds to these convictions. He sets high goals, goals which require dedication and patience. He is not afraid of strain and diligence. He rejects softness and timidity. When he has made a decision based on his best judgment, he is unbendable as a piece of steel. These qualities set him apart from women and weaker members of his own sex.

“A man of steel has a sterling character. He remains steadfast to his convictions even under pressure. He is a man of honor and integrity. He is fair, just and honest in his dealings, possessing moral courage and self-dignity and those diamond traits which make a strong character. He is master of himself because he has learned to discipline himself.

When subjected to pressures, he stands firm. In addition to all of this, he has achieved a feeling of confidence and peace *because of his victory over himself*. And physically, the Man of Steel has a body of strength and skill.” (Ibid., 12–13)

Now let's see the velvet man:

“But along with this fiber of steel, there must be a gentle nature. We need men who can appreciate the beauties of nature, men who love their families with passion and honor, men who adore womanhood, yet dislike weakness or coyness. We need men with compassion, sensitive to the needs of the less fortunate, men who are tender with their wives and children, men who have developed an ability to love.” (Ibid., 10–11)

“The velvet qualities include a man's gentleness, his tenderness, kindness, generosity and patience. He is devoted to the care and protection of women and children. He understands and respects their gentle nature and recognizes it as a complement to his masculinity. He is chivalrous, attentive and respectful to women and has an ability to love with tenderness. He has an enthusiastic and youthful attitude of optimism which he maintains in spite of increasing years. Humility is also part of the velvet, subduing the masculine ego as his rough nature is refined.” (Ibid., 13–14)

My favorite writer, Ellen White, puts it as follows, referring also to the need for real men:

“God wants minute-men. He will have men who, when important decisions are to be made, are as true as the needle to the pole; men whose special and personal interests are swallowed up, as were our Saviour's, in the one great general interest for the salvation of souls.” (*Gospel Workers*, 377)

“The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin

by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.” (*Education*, 57)

“But such a character is not the result of accident; it is not due to special favors or endowments of Providence. A noble character is the result of self-discipline, of the subjection of the lower to the higher nature—the surrender of self for the service of love to God and man.” (*Ibid.*, 57)

Unfortunately, the models found in the media do not help us to develop this balance. Several decades ago, for many people, the model of man was John Wayne. Today there is a wide range of models that have nothing to do with a real man. Where to find a true role model?

Only such men as achieve a balance of the steel and velvet stand securely on an unshakable pedestal. At the apex of this relatively small group of individuals stands Jesus Christ, who was the epitome of all that was good and strong. In no area was He lacking. A study of His life reveals an intriguing demonstration of the steel and velvet. He never lost sight of His responsibility *to complete the work he was sent to do*. He maintained His devotion to it until the end when He said, *It is finished*. He was a leader of men, women and children—true to His convictions until death. He had the moral courage to introduce ideals and standards which were in conflict with popular teaching of His day. He dedicated His life to the service and salvation of others, lifting people to higher plane of thought and living. He was a builder of society. And He was masculine, possessing courage, determination, fearlessness, decisive judgment, and aggressiveness. He was skilled and masterful in a difficult situation, never afraid to face the hardness of his enemies. His character was spotless, built on the highest of moral principles and standards of perfection. He was eager and enthusiastic about life, promising, *I am come that ye may have life and that ye may have it more abundantly*.

“Yet with all of His strength and courage, there was about Him a gentleness that drew to Him children. Women wept at His feet and children surrounded Him. With all of this He had humility.” (*Man of Steel and Velvet*, 15–16)

Although there are few who have come close to this model, we can all turn to Him.

When we talk about the husbands absence we refer not only to his physical absence, but also his absence from the responsibilities of providing for his family. The woman has had to come to the rescue and help in this area, and by doing so, she is deserting her home. A home without a mother in it is a tragedy. Some of this is thanks to the poor decisions of the administration of President Richard Nixon of the USA. Due to the deficiency of men in their role and to woman embracing the feminist movement and deserting her post of duty, he pushed for government child care. Consequently, we see a mess in current families. Of course, all of this also comes as a result of separation from God and His principles.

A woman outside of her home, assuming a role that is not hers, is regrettable, but there is little she can do about it. Eventually she will not feel satisfied and accomplished. If men and women leave their respective roles in the home, we will get not only chaos in the home but also chaos in society.

It is very important that a family who wants to serve God through a full-time ministry evaluate their functions. "The man who fails to stand up as the head of the family creates trouble in his home. There is a lack of order. The weak-kneed father also creates the dominant mother" (*Man of Steel and Velvet*, 9). In this way, the children are prepared to follow the same pattern when they themselves form their own families.

The family crisis that permeates society does not need to occur in the ministry for one simple reason: God has a plan to restore the individual and the family. God has no limits on developing this restoration in individuals and families. Some places and processes are more suitable than others, and a move could make this process more efficient for those who desire such an environment. However, restoration depends not so much on the place but on the disposition of the heart of a couple. However, a secluded spot in the country may be more favorable than the confusion and bustle of a congested city. There are couples who have benefited tremendously from joining a ministry for some time before starting their own ministry. Great care must be taken in either case not to get overloaded with work to the point that they don't have much time left to dedicate or permit such restoration.

Let's remember some instruction for men from the Bible:

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.” (Ephesians 5:25–28)

“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” (1 Peter 3:7)

Priorities are something that should be targeted in a family, especially if they desire to devote themselves full time to the service of God. We clearly understand at least the first three that follow. The first place belongs to God, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). Second place belongs to the family, “And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man” (Genesis 2:22). (See also 1 Peter 3:1, 7 and 1 Corinthians 11:11–12). The third place belongs to work or study as the case may be, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might” (Ecclesiastes 9:10). Failure to set these priorities will result in problems and difficult situations. There are enough problems, by the nature of the ministry, that are already coming.

In a special way, the family suffers and breaks when overwork causes inattention to proper care. Unattended children in a ministry are being prepared to be distanced away from God and from any type of ministry in the future. We must remember that the immediate family is the first ministry for which we must give account on the day of judgment. Where is the flock entrusted to you? It will be difficult to answer this in court for anyone who neglects his family.

## **The Virtuous Woman**

“And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; *I will make him an help meet for him.*” (Genesis 2:18, emphasis supplied)

God saw fit to complete the human creation by providing a helpmate for man. When this original purpose is achieved or regained, we experience true marital bliss. The blessing of God rests on such a couple with happiness and peace that could hardly be achieved otherwise. The woman was made from mans rib, and she was *brought unto man* (Genesis 2:22).

When she meets her original purpose, the woman is happy and feels fulfilled. Unfortunately, just as Satan attacks manhood which ends in a masculine crisis, he also attacks womanhood and brings her into a feminine crisis. The purpose of Satan is clear: move men and women out of God’s original purpose. Once this is achieved, it results in the floods of family problems we see today.

It is logical then to carefully consider the restoration of the divine purpose for a married couple who wishes to pursue a ministry to serve God and neighbor. Weve already analyzed some aspects of how man can be integrated back into the divine purpose. Now, let’s discuss some aspects that can help the woman return to her wonderful and original plan designed by God Himself.

Throughout the entire Bible, God speaks again and again of the qualifications, principles, and functions of both spouses. For example, when we look at Proverbs 31:10–31, we can see the attributes of a virtuous woman, or a woman who is inside of God’s original plan. The wise Solomon, before he describes such a woman, asked a valid question even for our day: “Who can find a virtuous woman?” (Verse 10). As I read the following verses of this chapter, I notice that this woman has worth and value, is trustworthy, generous, and constant, practices the principles of service, has a good disposition, is intelligent, hardworking, business-minded, courageous, not lazy, practices sacrifice, takes care of her family and possessions, is kind, thoughtful, aware of the value of her family, is strong, courageous, analytical and successful, altruistic, does not discriminate against people, is cautious, proactive, is aware of the needs of others, is of refined taste, resourceful and successful in her activities, dresses well, is modest and trusts in God, does not talk nonsense or foolishness,

is gracious, has discernment, has managed to win the love of her family, is faithful, is the helpmate of her husband, fears God, harvests what she sows, and is a doer of the Word of God.

The understanding of a man's nature is delicate thing in a marriage relationship. Remember that women are different from men in temperament and nature. The man does not react, think, and act as the woman does or have the same needs.

Helen Andelin in her book *Fascinating Womanhood*, tells us that even the needs which are similar for both, vary in value.

For example, love is essential to both; admiration is essential to both; but *love is more important for women and admiration is more important to a man*. Because we fail to understand these differences, we sometime provide men with the things we need, rather than the things they need. (p. 40)

I recommend this book widely because it truly helps women to develop the features I believe were originally designed by the Creator. A set of rules is proposed in this same book (also on p. 40), for the successful relationships of women with men. Let's take a quick look:

1. Accept him at face value.
2. Appreciate his better side.
3. Admire his manliness.
4. Make him number one.
5. Let him be the guide, protector, and provider.
6. Let him manage the money.
7. Don't wound his sensitive masculine pride.
8. Be sympathetic and understanding.

Consider that if a man is not able to perform certain functions, the woman should first help him so that he can meet those functions instead of assuming them immediately herself. This requires a lot of patience, wisdom, and prudence since just telling him what his weaknesses are and where he needs to improve will not ensure that he will do it. In many cases, the way you tell him is enough to cause him to never do it. The most effective way, in many instances, is manifesting trust and admiring his strong areas while very carefully making suggestions that could stimulate an area that needs to

be reinforced, or manifesting kindly help in certain areas that with God's help he can perform. God will give you wisdom.

An analysis of changes in society leads us to confirm the veracity of the Word of God when He tells us that in the last days people will call good evil and evil good and also that there will be people abhorrent of the good. Satan's implementation of his schemes in these last days has led society from one extreme to another. The man was taken to an extreme as he considered himself superior to woman, abusing her and underestimating her. Then Satan seduced woman to leave her position at home, employ day care services, espouse the feminist movement, and start taking on functions contrary to God's original plan. The man, weakened by these changes, crashes and loses the notion of his function as a man. The woman instead of helping man to develop his role, usurps his place in the home, and more often, now we see the man doing the functions originally vested in the woman.

“She shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.” (1 Timothy 2:15)

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.” (Colossians 3:18)

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church.” (Ephesians 5:22, 23)

“But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God.” (1 Corinthians 11:2, NKJV)

Verses as clear as these and more are being interpreted differently due, for the most part, to the changes and pressures of society. Even in the church itself, a similar interpretation is being given as that which society is pressing for. If you take these verses as clearly as they are understood, then you may be accused of discriminating against women. Obviously, all the Bible indication for woman and man is based on love and must be properly balanced in submission to Christ. However, the feminist movement does not accept that God

gave specific functions and different roles to women and men. The issue is not that one gender is of more value than the other before God. All are equal before God. But God in His authority, wisdom, and love designated specific functions for each. So today we can have a dominant woman and a weak and lacking man.

But this is not the only attack that family is suffering today. The children are being raised by television, friends, and babysitters. Great chaos is created by taking the woman out of the home. This evil work started several generations ago and is now producing full fruit.

Now Satan is busy marrying same-sex couples. Whoever sees this as evil will be immediately judged by society, authorities, and certain Christian movements as a discriminator. In the same way as the man who defends his position at home is misjudged, anyone who will not accept homosexuality will be misjudged. Satan is way ahead of us in his attacks. When we are just realizing what he has done with the feminist movement and we have spent decades wondering if God really meant what He clearly said in His Word to woman, Satan is already making plans to pass laws for the adoption of children by homosexual couples.

But thank God for His Word. The Bible can keep us in the lead if we take it for what it is, without being influenced by society and its pressures.

And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them. (Deuteronomy 28:13)

Society has pushed woman to perform very differently than what the Bible teaches.

First Peter 3:1-6 speaks very clearly to women on divine principles:

“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit,

which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement."

It is important therefore that women and men stick to the Bible and not to what society demands, in spite of the fact that many demands of society are already rooted in the church. Thank God for His Holy Word that can protect us from the darts of the enemy. Especially if you're looking to serve God through a full-time ministry, you should follow His commandments, precepts, and counsels. "Religion consists in doing the words of Christ, not doing to earn God's favor, but because, all undeserving, we have received the gift of His love" (*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 149).

On the other hand, a woman already working in a full time ministry should be very careful how she manages her time. A woman should have very clear priorities and not allow the ministry workload to prevent her from developing her most essential work, her home, so that she can care for her husband and their children properly. As queen of the home she must have her time provided for in this respect so that her house is neat, clean, and attractive.

The husband often is moving on, focused in the direction of the ministry, and can easily be pulling all the family with his zeal to serve but not giving due attention to his wife and children. Here the woman as his helpmate must call a halt and help him see and remember that the priority is the family and not the work of the ministry. Effective communication and trust should provide her the capacity to freely speak to her husband. She needs to present to him how she feels as mother and wife, about her health, and about the children. Also that they, as a couple, can obtain time to cultivate the marriage and family relationship. On the other hand, women should be careful not to demand more than she should, obstructing the development of the ministry to which they are called.

The wife and mother is a teacher and must be vigilant to ensure health for the family. She should be properly trained in the culinary and nutritional arts and be able to communicate this knowledge to her children. With all the demands that a ministry can present, a

woman must guard against being taken from her home and neglecting herself and her family. A woman who neglects herself and her duties may discourage her husband.

She must have the time for her spiritual life and growth as she also ensures the same for those in her home. She must have the time she needs for her personal care and for her personal goals so that she can feel fulfilled as a person without neglecting her home. God will give her special wisdom to ensure a proper balance and to joyfully serve the Lord without neglecting her priorities.

Even single mothers can embrace a self-supporting ministry and be sustained by God as she ministers to her children and does His work. God's promises are bountiful in this special situation when the mother yields her heart to the Lord and serves Him.

A key thought for men and women:

"At this time God's cause is in need of men and women who possess rare qualifications and good administrative powers; men and women who will make patient, thorough investigation of the needs of the work in various fields; those who have a large capacity for work; those who possess warm, kind hearts, cool heads, sound sense, and unbiased judgment; those who are sanctified by the Spirit of God and can fearlessly say, No, or Yea and Amen, to propositions; those who have strong convictions, clear understanding, and pure, sympathetic hearts; those who practice the words, All ye are brethren; those who strive to uplift and restore fallen humanity." (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 7, 249)

"Men and women are wanted now who are as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men and women who will work without having their way smoothed and every obstacle removed." (*Colporteur Ministry*, 68)

### **The Children**

Children are a responsibility who are often neglected, and once they are grown there is little that can be done for them that is of eternal value. As plants, they need a constant and tender care. As intelligent beings it should be explained to them what a family ministry

is all about. This should be done in an attractive and realistic way and appropriate to their ages as well. When properly integrated into the ministry from early childhood, keeping them in ministry will be easier it will be when they get older.

Depending on their age and maturity they should be brought into account as part of the family ministry. They may be considered for participation in certain decisions. Often they can provide brilliant ideas and solutions that can surprise us. In our experience, God has spoken to us sometimes through our children, and we have received relief, light, comfort, and strength. They should feel part of the ministry. More importantly, they should understand that the family and ministry depend entirely on God, and therefore, they must learn to listen to His voice by the study of His Word and constant communion with Him. God is the boss, the teacher, the doctor, the protector, the counselor, the guide, and the best friend.

We are in a great war and the enemy is always ready to destroy all that is good, especially a family run ministry. Often he takes advantage of children and young people to interfere with God's work. We must ask God for wisdom to treat each case with the help of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is willing to work with parents who ask for His help. When our children have doubt, discontent, dislike, sloth, anger, resentment, etc., and we try to solve it by ourselves, we often do much damage and make the situation even worse. But when the Holy Spirit does it for us, everything is different. The Holy Spirit can work in the hearts of our children as we never can. Many times we have encountered situations like giant walls that want to separate us from our children, but the Holy Spirit collapses those walls and makes them disappear in an instant, and it is wonderful.

When we have teens and we are just thinking about developing a ministry, we must be cautious and prepare the terrain for our children so that they are attracted to and want to follow voluntarily in this wonderful experience. Depending on their age and maturity, they may be counterproductive if we embrace a family ministry against their will. However, not because of their whims are we going to stop participating in the greatest privilege that humans can have.

Once we received a family with teenagers. The parents wanted to serve the Lord, and even more, they wanted their children to change the worldly course they were following. Their children had not been

prepared to be involved in ministry, and it was the last thing they wanted to do in this life. There were difficult months for all, and finally they had to go back to their country of origin in probably a more difficult situation.

If our spouse or our children are not ready to start a ministry or join one, we must be careful, patient, and be in much prayer so God will give us wisdom and grace to advance in the process of preparedness. In this preparation, we refer not so much to developing practical trades in ministry, but rather a willingness to serve God and our neighbor in some way as the common goal of the family. That is, more willingness to pursue a life of sacrifice and service instead of a life of pleasure, and a life of worldly and selfish purposes.

It is important to remember that our children have needs different from ours and those needs should be met at each stage. We must not make the mistake that because we are working for God, we can be indifferent to their changing needs. We must encourage them to be hardworking, diligent, and good stewards.

One way to encourage participation in a ministry when they are growing is to allow them to receive money and to get their own small, useful industry going. Real things can be learned, and their ability to reason from cause to effect can be developed. Help them to establish their priorities and to feel that in some way they are part of the ministry to the honor and glory of God.

The academic education of our children is not only important, but it is something that we should consider by all means when starting or joining a ministry. Although we will refer to this later in another chapter, I want to mention that as parents we must be aware of what God expects from us in regard to education. Remember that we have to give account in the heavenly court for what we did with the flock entrusted to us. We should not take this lightly and send our children to any public school and let them get whatever influence they receive. We must seek the best school that will be identified not only with our beliefs but also with our lifestyle. In many cases, the home school is the best and only option. This involves preparation and extra effort on the part of parents but it can be worth it, especially if it is done properly in all areas including the social aspect.

As we distribute our time, let's remember the priorities we have set. The mission work never ends, but our children will grow up someday and make their own decisions and depart. We must set

aside time to spend with the family not only every day, but we must also set aside a special time weekly. I was always amazed by the positive reaction that our children had to the family hour. Each day it was something they anticipated with much joy, and I must also confess that as parents, we did not always take advantage of that beautiful moment.

The outings from the ministry or campus are relaxing and sometimes necessary. Because we can fall into the situation of being away from the family for too long without leaving the ministry, the wife and family can become very stressed and their time monotonous. If the ministry is being developed in the city, let's take the family to the country on the weekends and obtain recreation. Perhaps we can plan to move into a more relaxing neighborhood or a nearby rural area.

Vacations could become very beneficial, especially if they are properly oriented to missionary activities, services, or training. As a family, we all enjoy when we attend the annual ASI (Adventist-laymens Services and Industries) Convention. We always come away from these conventions with renewed vigor and are inspired to keep going. Our children enjoy them to the fullest and anticipate where the next convention will be. They anticipate seeing their friends and participating in special programs according to their ages. If you are not very informed about ASI, I invite you to learn more at [www.asi-ministries.org](http://www.asi-ministries.org). Since these conventions change sites each year, sometimes we are able to visit relatives in the area and fellowship with our families as well. But if you are not able to attend these conventions, you still can plan in such a way that you can have special time with your family while doing missionary service.

Remember that our families are our first and most sacred ministry. If we neglect our families, whatever ministry we perform will be affected in some way. There is no sermon more impactful than a united family dedicated to the Lord and to His service. There are many things to do within the counsels of God, work that humanity needs, work which we have the capabilities to perform, but that God has not commanded us to do. In our zeal to serve God, we can get into enterprises that can become a burden and affect our health or our family relationships.

In our experience several times, wanting to do something in the cause of God, we ended up neglecting our family, although much good was done for other people. After a while though, we came to

the conclusion that it was something that we placed on ourselves, not that God called us to do. Satan can take advantage of the zeal that someone may have for the work of God. Thank God that in His mercy, He leads us back and helps us in repairing the damage, although sometimes it may take a long time and can be painful; but praise the mercy of a loving God!

# CHAPTER 2

## The Call: Faith, Availability, and Sacrifice

“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.” (Isaiah 6:8).

**A** divine call is one of the greatest privileges a human being can ever have. Just think for a moment, the Creator of the universe, the Creator of earth, sea, and heavens, your Creator, sending you a special and personal invitation not only to follow Him, but also to work with Him in the most special, transcending, and fascinating enterprise ever. What a profound event to be involved in, the greatest of all endeavors on the planet and in the history of mankind. I’m as excited now as I was when I got the call back in 1990 when I was behind bars. I have not been able to find anything that can compare to it that is more satisfying or rewarding—nothing.

Remember that if you are going to work effectively for somebody, you need to have a close communication, a growing relationship, and trust. In other words, you will ask yourself at the end of the day, “Did not my heart burn within me, while he talked with me by the way, and while he opened to me the scriptures?” (Luke 24:32).

A definite divine call can be revealed gradually or immediately. We cannot limit the countless ways God has to transmit, disclose, or confirm a call to an individual or a family. Remember that God’s thoughts and ways are different from ours (Isaiah 55:8). We are just human beings (Psalm 100:3). While there are calls God makes to individuals or family members to work independently of other family members, as in the case of Abraham, there are also calls to work with other family members who share the faith and desire to obey and serve God, as in the case Moses with his brother Aaron and sister

Miriam. But we must be willing to obey God's call to whatever end, unimpeded in any way.

When God calls us, He can use the talents, resources, business, etc., given to us in the past, but none of these qualify us to receive the call. Rather, the willingness and desire to serve is what God sees.

Let's not get impatient if we do not have a well-defined call. He will confirm us if we allow Him to. This process can vary with the time it takes for each individual. God can only show us what we can understand at any given time. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12).

Some examples of the many ministries to which God may call a family are a basic education elementary school or a kindergarten which can be a family ministry, especially if one or both spouses are teachers by profession. A comprehensive vegetarian restaurant or bakery can be a business and a family ministry. A missionary training center, a fitness program, leading a small group of evangelism, starting an evangelism work where there is none, or adding the nature of a ministry to your existing business or profession can all be ministries.

"Educated workers who are consecrated to God can do service in a greater variety of ways and can accomplish more extensive work than can those who are uneducated. Their discipline of mind places them on vantage ground. But those who have neither great talents nor extensive education may minister acceptably to others. God will use men who are willing to be used. It is not the most brilliant or the most talented persons whose work produces the greatest and most lasting results. Men and women are needed who have heard a message from heaven. The most effective workers are those who respond to the invitation, Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me (Matthew 11:29).

"It is heart missionaries that are needed. He whose heart God touches is filled with a great longing for those who have never known His love. Their condition impresses him with a sense of personal woe. Taking his life in his hand, he goes forth, a heaven-sent, heaven-inspired messenger, to do a work in which angels can co-operate.

"If those to whom God has entrusted great talents of intellect put these gifts to a selfish use, they will be left, after a

## THE CALL

period of trial, to follow their own way. God will take men who do not appear to be so richly endowed, who have not large self-confidence, and He will make the weak strong, because they trust in Him to do for them that which they cannot do for themselves. God will accept the wholehearted service, and will Himself make up the deficiencies.

“The Lord has often chosen for His collaborators men who have had opportunity to obtain but a limited school education. These men have applied their powers most diligently, and the Lord has rewarded their fidelity to His work, their industry, their thirst for knowledge. He has witnessed their tears and heard their prayers. As His blessing came to the captives in the courts of Babylon, so does He give wisdom and knowledge to His workers today.

“Men deficient in school education, lowly in social position, have, through the grace of Christ, sometimes been wonderfully successful in winning souls for Him. The secret of their success was their confidence in God. They learned daily of Him who is wonderful in counsel and mighty in power.”  
(*Ministry of Healing*, 150–151)

Fasting, prayer, and study of His Holy Word as well as a consistent life in tune with what we profess will help the reception and confirmation of the call. Remember that God will not only confirm the call but also help us to consolidate it and perhaps expand the call as well. A sober and bustle-free life can help us better hear God’s voice. The country is a good place to be more in communion with God and be attentive to His voice, though God is not limited to places.

At CMS we have had doctors, pastors, and others with defined professions or vocations who have accepted God’s call to expand their ministry with additional knowledge of therapies and natural remedies. God calls us not based on our ability, skill, or profession, but on our willingness to serve and be taught and trained by Him. God wants His name to be honored through the ministry to which we are called. If we are not ready to give Him all the glory, He will continue to work with us until we do permit it.

Once this point is reached, He can use us mightily. God will put us in situations where we will be more and more tired of extolling our ideas, talents, and accomplishments and where we will

increasingly prefer to praise God and give glory to Him. Pride significantly interferes with our perception of the call, and this is one of the reasons why the call may be gradual. God does not call the qualified, but rather, qualifies the called. Once we are certain that God has called us, we must move forward in faith, trusting that we have secured our training.

Dying to self enables us to better hear the voice of God and the Holy Spirit's direction. It is a process which heaven is keen to achieve. To help us die to self, God will allow us to experience situations that we ourselves create, but that are not necessarily God's will for us. He will help us to get back on track if we let Him. Some of these situations will place us where we must choose to die to self or to continue with our own ideas. If we humbly choose to die to self, the kingdom of heaven advances. If we choose otherwise, we will delay the work of God in our hearts and in the ministry that He wants to develop through us.

God often calls us to a place or to a specific work for the sole purpose of taking us to a different place or work. However, in this process we must remember the attributes of God's character, that is, how He works. God is a God of order, respect, consistency, and transparency who builds and restores and who is governed by principles and not by emotions. It is very important to consider all of this since the enemy of every good thing, Satan, wants to confuse us by causing us to make our decisions based on our emotions.

We often see people who want to serve God failing because of their inconsistency in missionary work, thus bringing reproach upon the cause of God. They go to a place to work or to get training. Suddenly, somebody passes an invitation or speaks to them enticingly, and they exit leaving behind jobs and courses unfinished. Others get up one day discouraged and leave with the first person who passes by. They hop from one place to another, thinking they are accomplishing a lot, but they are actually bringing reproach upon the cause and fleeing from the work God wants to do in their hearts. Many people who have had to leave things unfinished because of family situations such as finances, interpersonal problems at home, emotional or sentimental situations, and especially for the health reasons of someone back home later realize that it was not the will of God to have stopped God's call. Satan knows very well how to interfere with or hinder a call from God.

Others allow Satan to irritate them with the everyday situations that happen in their surroundings such as backbiting, gossip, and complaints. Thus they do not get along well with others, and to avoid problems, they leave causing hindrance to God's work again. Others get into romances too quickly or without following God's counsel, distracting themselves and others from the very work God wants to perform in them and through them, and once again God's work is slowed down.

Another one of Satan's devices is to interfere with our relationship with God and our ability to find God's call for us by not letting us wake up early in the morning to worship and commune with God. Early morning is the time when no other voice is speaking to us and when we can more clearly hear God's voice as we study His Word and commune with Him in prayer. "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me" (Proverbs 8:17). Especially those who live in the cities will find a lot of distractions at night so they cannot go to sleep early. Therefore, they cannot wake up early and seek God. Remember what the apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:11–13:

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

Here is a thought that is very pertinent and relevant about the call:

"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isaiah 30:21). I know that human beings suffer much because they step out of the path that God has chosen for them to follow. They walk in the sparks of the fire they have kindled themselves, and the sure result is affliction, unrest, and sorrow, which they might have avoided if they had submitted their will to God and had permitted Him to control their ways. God sees that it

is necessary to oppose our will and our way, and bring our human will into subjection.

“Whatever path God chooses for us, whatever way He ordains for our feet, that is the only path of safety. We are daily to cherish a spirit of childlike submission, and pray that our eyes may be anointed with the heavenly eye salve in order that we may discern the indications of the divine will, lest we become confused in our ideas, because our will seems to be all-controlling. With the eye of faith, with childlike submission as obedient children, we must look to God, to follow His guidance, and difficulties will clear away. The promise is, ‘I will instruct thee and teach thee...: I will guide thee with mine eye’ (Psalm 32:8).

“If we come to God in a humble and teachable spirit, not with our plans all formed before we ask Him, and shaped according to our own will, but in submission, in willingness to be taught, in faith, it is our privilege to claim the promise every hour of the day. We may distrust ourselves, and we need to guard against our own inclinations and strong tendencies lest we shall follow our mind and plans and think it is the way of the Lord. ....

“Our heavenly Father is our Ruler, and we must submit to His discipline. We are members of His family. He has a right to our service, and if one of the members of His family would persist in having his own way, persist in doing just that which he pleased, that spirit would bring about a disordered and perplexing state of things. We must not study to have our own way, but God’s way and God’s will.” (*That I May Know Him*, 249)

“To everyone who offers himself to the Lord for service, withholding nothing, is given power for the attainment of measureless results. For these God will do great things. He will work upon the minds of men so that, even in this world, there shall be seen in their lives a fulfillment of the promise of the future state.” (*The Ministry of Healing*, 160)

“There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon

his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. All who consecrate body, soul, and spirit to His service will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical, mental, and spiritual power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own Spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in mind and heart. Through the grace given us we may achieve victories that because of our own erroneous and preconceived opinions, our defects of character, our smallness of faith, have seemed impossible.” (Ibid., 159)

Since the call is not isolated from a life of faith, sacrifice, and availability, we must consider the other family members in accepting the call. We should not impose what we think is the call on the other family members. If the spouse and/or children do not agree to undertake this adventure, chances are they are not ready and the need becomes evident to work and pray more in the incubation of the ministry and specifically with each member who, perhaps, is not well informed or has not been a part in making the decision in this regard. Obviously, the childrens contribution on making the decision is dependent on their age. With teenage children we must be very careful because if they are not properly managed, it may delay or obstruct the ministry. In most cases, if a single family member is not ready it may be a good indication that perhaps the family is not ready rather than just that one member.

Faith and determination are crucial in the call.

“The message of God came to Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy fathers house, unto a land that I will show thee. In order that God might qualify him for his great work as the keeper of the sacred oracles, Abraham must be separated from the associations of his early life. The influence of kindred and friends would interfere with the training which the Lord purposed to give His servant. Now that Abraham was, in a special sense, connected with heaven, he must dwell among strangers. His character must be peculiar, differing from all the world. He could not even explain his course of action so as to be understood by his friends. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and

his motives and actions were not comprehended by his idolatrous kindred.” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 126)

The fact that Terah, Abraham’s father, had gone with him despite God’s clear command, Go from the house of your father, may have been a factor in the delay and confusion of Abraham with his call. Since Terah served other God’s from Mesopotamia (Joshua 24:2), it is very likely that this was one of the reasons, if not the main one, why Abraham stopped at Haran, an idolatrous city, for a few years (we do not know how many) until Terah died. Again God reminded Abraham that it was to the promised land of Canaan he needed to go. But after continuing his journey and arriving in Canaan where he was supposed to be (Genesis 12:5), he kept going and went south to Egypt (verses 8 and 9), where God had not called him. Not only did he lie at least two times in Egypt, but he unnecessarily wore himself out along with his numerous family with their children, servants, and animals since traveling by camel and walking was the only mode of transportation.

But God did not abandon him. He was patient and even blessed him greatly. Sometimes, in the process of dying to self and better understanding the voice of God, God allows us to be in circumstances that are not necessarily the will of God, but our own. This causes a lot of wear on the family which could have been avoided. But God uses this for our benefit and development of character, if we let Him.

Later on, Isaac, Abrahams son, was in a similar situation (Genesis 26:1–2). Fortunately, Abraham did a good work in transferring knowledge that eventually passed from God to his son, and Isaac was then prepared to distinguish the voice of God which told him, Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you (Verse 2, NKJV). God does not like for us to go down to Egypt, to the south, to the world, to sin, which he did not call us into, or to dwell in Haran, a place of comfort, stagnation, and death. In all this, we see God’s mercy, patience, compassion, power, and great love for us. God will show us the way to go even if we are clumsy. “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee” (Psalm 32:8–9).

However, Abraham developed an incredible faith in God, knew God intimately, and distinguished His voice among the voices in

his own carnal nature and the devil. He was called the father of the faithful and the friend of God. He could distinguish the voice of God when told to sacrifice his own son, and his only heir of the promise. He also learned that “the happiest place on earth for him was the place where God would have him to be” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 126).

On this same page, we are provided with valuable advice:

“Many are still tested as was Abraham. They do not hear the voice of God speaking directly from the heavens, but He calls them by the teachings of His word and the events of His providence. They may be required to abandon a career that promises wealth and honor, to leave congenial and profitable associations and separate from kindred, to enter upon what appears to be only a path of self-denial, hardship, and sacrifice. God has a work for them to do; but a life of ease and the influence of friends and kindred would hinder the development of the very traits essential for its accomplishment. He calls them away from human influences and aid, and leads them to feel the need of His help, and to depend upon Him alone, that He may reveal Himself to them. *Who is ready at the call of Providence to renounce cherished plans and familiar associations? Who will accept new duties and enter untried fields, doing God's work with firm and willing heart, for Christ's sake counting his losses gain? He who will do this has the faith of Abraham, and will share with him that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, with which the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared.* (2 Corinthians 4:17; Romans 8:18) (Ibid. 126, emphasis added).

Finally, let's remember that the human “heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9). Therefore, let's open up and yield to humility, always contemplating Christ.

Those who are true to their calling as messengers for God will not seek honor for themselves. Love for self will be swallowed up in love for Christ. No rivalry will mar the precious cause of the gospel. They will recognize that it is their work to proclaim, as did John the Baptist, ‘Behold the Lamb of

God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (John 1:29). They will lift up Jesus, and with Him humanity will be lifted up. 'Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones' (Isaiah 57:15). (*The Desire of Ages*, 179)

"John had been called to lead out as a reformer. Because of this, his disciples were in danger of fixing their attention upon him, feeling that the success of the work depended upon his labors, and losing sight of the fact that he was only an instrument through which God had wrought. But the work of John was not sufficient to lay the foundation of the Christian church. When he had fulfilled his mission, another work was to be done, which his testimony could not accomplish. His disciples did not understand this. When they saw Christ coming in to take the work, they were jealous and dissatisfied.

"The same dangers still exist. God calls a man to do a certain work; and when he has carried it as far as he is qualified to take it, the Lord brings in others, to carry it still farther. But, like John's disciples, many feel that the success of the work depends on the first laborer. Attention is fixed upon the human instead of the divine, jealousy comes in, and the work of God is marred. The one thus unduly honored is tempted to cherish self-confidence. He does not realize his dependence on God. The people are taught to rely on man for guidance, and thus they fall into error, and are led away from God.

"The work of God is not to bear the image and superscription of man. From time to time the Lord will bring in different agencies, through whom His purpose can best be accomplished. Happy are they who are willing for self to be humbled, saying with John the Baptist, 'He must increase, but I must decrease.' " (*The Desires of Ages*, 182)

# CHAPTER 3

## Education: Bible, Horticulture, and Medical Missionary Training

“Now, as never before, we need to understand the true science of education. If we fail to understand this, we shall never have a place in the kingdom of God.” (*Mind, Character, and Personality*, Vol. 1, 53)

### TRUE EDUCATION

**M**oses spent 40 years in the desert unlearning the false education he acquired in Egypt and learning the true one. It was only then that God called him to lead the army of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. The learning process in the divine school is a lifetime process here and for eternity. Even during the Exodus, God needed to train him further. He needed to die to self even more, so he could behold more and more the glory of the Lord and learn from His instructions. One time he had to wait six days on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:16) before God, wrapped within the cloud, could speak and convey many instructions to him for forty days and forty nights (Exodus 24:18; also, Exodus 25–31).

Elijah had to wait seven times after praying for the rain to descend (1 Kings 18:42–43). Elisha, with the Shunammites son, had to make several attempts before finally the child sneezed and was resuscitated (2 Kings 4:31–35). John the Baptist was in the wilderness in preparation for his mission (Luke 1:80). Jesus Himself was in the wilderness for forty days and forty nights before beginning His ministry (Luke 4:1–2). Once anointed David did not ascend to his call immediately. He spent ten years in training before becoming the king (1 Samuel 16–2 Samuel 2). These experiences were written

for our admonition (2 Timothy 3:16). It is clear, therefore, that God wants to train us in order to carry out the work entrusted to us. This is wonderful! Be taught by God (Psalms 16:7; 32:8).

Greater still is the fact that in this process of education, it is essential to obtain an experimental knowledge of God and the recognition of our weakness and of our great need of Him, so that God can receive all the glory and not us. Therefore, the delay we see in some cases—either in response to our prayer, or in confirming our call, or in obtaining a training—is part of God’s plan so we can die to self, develop our character, and bring honor and glory to the One and Sovereign God of the universe.

“True education means more than taking a certain course of study. It is broad. It includes the harmonious development of all the physical powers and the mental faculties. It teaches the love and fear of God, and is a preparation for the faithful discharge of life’s duties.” (*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 64)

“[It] includes not only mental discipline, but that training which will secure sound morals and correct deportment.” (*Ibid.*, 331)

“Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. This is made plain in the law that God has given as the guide of life. The first and great commandment is, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength” (Mark 12:30). To love Him, the Infinite, the Omnipotent One, with the whole strength and mind and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being—the body, the mind, as well as the soul—the image of God is to be restored.

“Like the first is the second commandment, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself’ (Mark 12:31). The law of love calls for the devotion of body, mind, and soul to the service of God and our fellow men. And this service, while making us a blessing to others, brings the greatest blessing to ourselves.

Unselfishness underlies all true development. Through unselfish service we receive the highest culture of every faculty." (Ibid., 32)

In relation to education or preparation for self-supporting missionaries, Sutherland wrote about events that happened in the nineteenth century that can help us understand the divine process in our times.

"It was the divine plan that the midnight cry and the third angel's message should be carried to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. God wanted an army trained to carry forth this practical religion to a world which had been educated away from the gospel order by the pagan and Papal systems of education.

"We have seen that Christian education, as developed by the educational reformers in every Protestant denomination, made possible a mighty laymens movement. We can understand how these self-supporting missionaries could quickly carry the message to the world. It was Satan's studied effort to thwart this self-supporting laymen's movement. He accomplished his desired results by exalting worldly literature to a place above the Bible; by consuming practically all the students time in mental effort, and leading him to depreciate the practical in education; by leading to a gradual substitution of athletics, sports and games for manual labor. Satan is endeavoring to deceive the very elect, the remnant church." (E.A. Sutherland, *Studies in Christian Education*, 42)

"The Protestant denominations could not carry the message of present truth in all its fullness to other countries, because they did not first break every yoke of worldly education; they did not come into the line of true education; they did not educate to prepare a people to understand the message, and then give the message to the world." (Ibid.) (*Madison School*, 28)

“That Church Triumphs which breaks the yoke of worldly education, and which develops and practices the principles of Christian education.” (Ibid., 3)

Right where Protestant denominations failed to give the midnight cry is where the church of today must have success to give the loud cry of the three angels and the fourth angel of Revelation 18. The reformers of that time saw that the educational system in vogue in the Protestant churches was totally inadequate to prepare a missionary to dare to carry an unpopular truth contrary to the will of the leaders in those denominations (Ibid. 43).

*The Great Controversy* in the chapter “A Warning Rejected” tells us more about what happened at that time. Let’s see:

“We have had the fact before our minds, that, in general, the Protestant churches of our country, as such, were either apathetic or hostile to nearly all the moral reforms of the age.... We have also another corroborated fact: the almost universal absence of revival influence in the churches.... Very extensively, church members are becoming devotees of fashion,—join hands with the ungodly in parties of pleasure, in dancing, in festivities, etc.... the *churches generally are becoming sadly degenerate*. They have gone very far from the Lord, and He has withdrawn Himself from them.” (*The Great Controversy*, 377)

Such a condition never exists without cause in the church itself.

“But the churches generally did not accept the warning. Their ministers ... [had] signs of the times.... The fact that the message was, to a great extent, preached by laymen, was urged as an instrument against it.... Multitudes, trusting failed to learn the truth either from the testimony of the prophets or from the implicitly to their pastors, refused to listen to the warning.... The message which God had sent for the testing and purification of the church revealed all too surely how great was the number who had set their affections on this world rather than upon Christ.” (Ibid., 380)

The question for us in our time would be, is there any difference in our present condition? Hardly. I think our current education system cannot prepare us fully to give the loud cry and be strong in the time of trouble. Remember that “The time is soon coming when God’s people, because of persecution, will be scattered in many countries. Those who have received an all-round education will have a great advantage wherever they are” (*An Appeal for the Madison School*, 2).

However, God has told us that “There is a large field open before the self-supporting gospel worker” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 355). It is of paramount importance to understand what true education is and break the yoke with the false one, in order to assimilate the training that God wants to give parents, youth, and children of today. This would avoid wasting time, resources, and energy on something that in the end is not God’s ideal for His children, especially in the last days in which we live.

When thinking about a family ministry, the education of our children is something of great importance that should be contemplated and planned. It may be difficult to find a suitable school for our children in the times we are living. However, we must try and make every effort so that our children get a true education. This should be not the best option but the only one. In some cases, home-schooling would be ideal. Even this requires preparation and great effort from parents and children. However, each case has its own context, and God will show the most suitable course.

Public and private educational systems are being pressured by government entities with agendas contrary to God’s plan. This will exacerbate the situation for many of God’s people who do not know what true education really is.

Moses spent forty years unlearning so he could learn in the school of Christ. We may have to unlearn many things before we can learn the simple but unique teachings that come from the Source of all wisdom.

One of the things that God wants to teach any person or family who wants to engage in His service is dependence on God and not on ourselves. The false education often teaches us that we must rely on our skills and abilities. But in the school of Christ, it is different. We need true humility to sit at the feet of Christ and not only listen, but believe and do; namely, learning in its fullest meaning.

Saul of Tarsus, with all his self-confidence and talents, was ready to teach and give directions. But he had to be thrown on the ground and unable able to see for several days, fasting and praying in order to be ready to listen and learn from the Great Master. Then he became Paul, the great apostle. I do not know from what great horse or height you need to be brought to the ground, or how big a blow must be delivered to your head to be willing to be taught by God. A sure promise is that God will give us wisdom if we ask (James 1:5), but we must do so with humility and true willingness to unlearn and relearn from the Source of all wisdom.

“The system of education instituted at the beginning of the world was to be a model for man throughout all aftertime. As an illustration of its principles a model school was established in Eden, the home of our first parents. The Garden of Eden was the schoolroom, nature was the lesson book, the Creator Himself was the instructor, and the parents of the human family were the students.” (*Education*, 20)

We need to develop a teachable spirit; otherwise, if we learn something, it will be learned the hard way.

## THE BIBLE

“The Word of God presents the most potent means of education, as well as the most valuable source of knowledge, within the reach of humanity.” (*From the Heart*, 15)

“The Bible contains all the principles that men need to understand in order to be fitted either for this life or for the life to come. And these principles may be understood by all.” (*Education*, 123)

“Your school is to be an example of how Bible study, general education, physical education, and sanitarium work may be combined in many smaller schools that shall be established in simplicity in many places in the Southern States.” (*Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 11, 190)

The Word of God, the great textbook that God has left for our instruction along with the books of inspiration should be our everyday study. There we will find a sure foundation for any of the branches God wants to prepare us for. Remember that whoever God calls He will enable and train. Whether Providence allows you to study a career or not, our foundation must be in Christ and in service to Him. Often, many well-meaning Christians studying to complete a career end up away from the school of Christ. The school of Christ must be our primary focus; we should hang on to it with responsibility, consistency, perseverance, and faith for without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6, NIV).

### **WRONG INFLUENCES AND ARGUMENTS**

Many calls and/or trainings have been delayed, interrupted, or have failed due to the influence of family or friends. Remember that we are in a spiritual war. As soon as Satan sees efforts by someone who wants to serve God, he (Satan) opposes them in many ways, including personal illness or illness of a family member. Notice what is said of the great patriarch when called and trained:

“In order that God might qualify him for his great work as the keeper of the sacred oracles, Abraham must be separated from the associations of his early life. The influence of kindred and friends would interfere with the training which the Lord purposed to give His servant.” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 126)

While this is not always the case, and we are even talking about family ministries, we must be very careful with this issue. The Lord Himself tells us in Matthew 19:29 and every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my names sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. We must pray earnestly and fast in order to know clearly what is the will of God.

Once a couple of girls came to be trained as young missionaries. They were very devoted to the Lord and had wonderful gifts. As they completed the training, their parents urged them to return home to help them in the city. They agreed even though they had several calls

to serve God. After a year these girls were trapped in the practices of the world, living in sinful pleasures, and unable to help their parents either, even though they were living with them. What a tragedy.

In turn, we should be cautious lest, prompted by a zeal to work for the Lord, we neglect the sacred ministry to our family and by so doing bring shame to the gospel. I have also known people who have left their home and their responsibility as husband or wife, thus leaving children and home under the banner of zeal to work for the Lord, when the Lord did not really want that.

The training that God can give His children is not limited to a specific place, as good as this may be. God can train us where we are, by the faithful performance of our duties and with special attention to His providence.

“The Lord places us in different positions to develop us. If we have defects of character of which we are not aware, He gives us discipline that will bring those defects to our knowledge, that we may overcome them.” (*That I May Know Him*, 282)

If we are in the school of Christ, whether in a learning institution or elsewhere, we can be trained according to His will.

We may be taking a course in an institution for missionaries and yet not be in the school of Christ, if we are not submitted to Him. If we are in the school of Christ, whether we are in an institution or in another place, we are being transformed into His image and likeness despite the shortcomings of the place where we may be. More important than the knowledge of how to work the land, heal the body, educate children and young people, preach the Word, etc., is the transformation of the heart and the human mind into the likeness of God. If we fail to allow God to do this process in our life, we have failed.

But we do not need to wait to be perfect in order to work for God, knowing that the work is a tool God uses to accomplish His purpose. I once met a person so dedicated to God and very qualified to do much good for mankind, but in his opinion, he was far from being ready and able to serve God. He spent decades with the same argument until later, advanced in years, almost powerless, he could not do what he was able to do for God all his life. What a waste.

## HORTICULTURE

As part of the training, horticulture is indispensable. The ABCs of true education provide us with a variety of benefits. Being involved in nature can provide a training that you can hardly find elsewhere. Not only can we learn profound lessons and practices on this *divine book*, but we can also obtain comprehensive health. When God created nature, placed us in an orchard, and provided us with useful exercise, food, management, and revelation as well as an intimate communion with Him, we had peace and happiness. Before sin entered the world, the work on the land was already part of God's plan (Genesis 2:15).

God, having created all things, allowed humans to participate with Him in the procreation of certain things such as to conceive and raise a baby, plant and harvest fruits, etc. Great is the privilege of mankind to participate in the emergence and care of a plant that later will give us a fruit to nourish the body providing good blood and health. Even the gospel is revealed broadly in the death of a buried seed to germinate and give life to human beings. Christ died and was buried, rose again to give us eternal life. How profound and wonderful!

In the section "Recommendation of Published Works," you can obtain information from books that can help you in a clear and practical way to prepare and nurture the soil, plant, water, and grow to harvest good fruit. Unfortunately man has divorced himself from this art that has always been in God's plan as part of a healthy lifestyle for His children. Statistics from over twenty years ago tell us that of a hundred people who eat, only one is involved in planting. Children who grow up in cities can only trace food from their table back to the supermarket. In most schools, students have been conditioned to throw a ball at whoever gets in the way, instead of using their energies profitably by growing products in the garden and enjoying the privilege of procreating highly complex products and incomparable technology. The wonderful physical and chemical composition of the products of nature have always been and will always be ahead of scientific research. Its peculiar secrets and interactive effects will be known more fully in the post-human era. That is, they are so beyond human knowledge that only in eternity will we be able to understand what today science, with all its technology, cannot tell us.

“He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread” (Proverbs 28:19). We are fast approaching the time when “no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Revelation 13:17) for which we need wisdom and understanding. The Lord’s methods are simple and easy to assimilate. His Word is full of tips about how to cultivate the land and draw lessons from it. Isaiah 28:23–29 says:

“Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech. Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him. For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.”

Instructions and applications are extended by the inspired pen:

“Let every church member consider the breaking up of the fallow ground, the careful cleansing of the soil, and the depositing and harrowing of the seed, which is the laborious work of the husbandman. It is a rough and searching process. The harrowing of the seed is not always pleasant to the receiver, and sometimes disabling to him because he does not sense the virtue of the Word and become submissive under the tilling process in spiritual life. The sins committed require the sincere repentance that needeth not to be repented of, but when the hard soil is broken up and the stubborn clods are broken to pieces then the precious seed can be sown and harrowed into the soil. This represents the severe discipline of God. Often rebellion is manifested, and

the discipline of God must continue until the determined will is broken and the end is gained.

“In things spiritual as well as natural this work must be done. Often severity is needed to bring in the spiritual harvest. It is God’s great law that without the proper sowing of seed and the tillage there will be no harvest in sheaves. An experience is lacking. Divine blessings wait only for human spiritual working of the soil of the heart and the industry to care for the soil while the Lord is sowing His seed.

“As a man soweth he shall also reap. All who study the Word with full purpose to cleanse away from the life all sin, and who search the Scriptures to learn what is truth, will welcome the truth of the Word as a Thus saith the Lord. They will repent under the sharp reproofs of Bible truth. ... If a man sow true repentance he will reap the reward of sound good works. If he continues in the faith he reaps peace. If he becomes sanctified and cleansed from his appetite for cheapness and folly he shall ... reap righteousness and perfect love. ... A continuance in the well doing in overcoming makes him a daily victor because he keeps the mark of Christ’s perfection ever before him.” (*That I May Know Him*, 281)

“Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.” (Hosea 10:12)

## **MEDICAL MISSIONARY WORK**

Medical missionary work with publications are the ministries that will remain until the end.

Three important aspects or principles of this work in accordance with W. D. Frazee are:

1. Motivation: Must be founded on selfless love, sacrifice.
2. The method: Of bringing people into harmony with the obedience of the laws of health, education, focused on obedience, is more important than any apparent result and;

3. Goal: Soul-winning, then, is the goal of all true medical missionary work. (From a sermon by W. D. Frazee, *What Is Medical Missionary Work?*)

Temperance plays a more significant role than many would think in the medical missionary work for the last days.

“As a prophet, John was to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. In preparing the way for Christ’s first advent, he was a representative of those who are to prepare a people for our Lord’s second coming. The world is given to self-indulgence. Errors and fables abound. Satan’s snares for destroying souls are multiplied. All who would perfect holiness in the fear of God must learn the lessons of temperance and self-control. The appetites and passions must be held in subjection to the higher powers of the mind. This self-discipline is essential to that mental strength and spiritual insight which will enable us to understand and to practice the sacred truths of God’s word. For this reason temperance finds its place in the work of preparation for Christ’s second coming.” (*The Desire of Ages*, 101)

God in His infinite mercy has left a health plan that for its simplicity and effectiveness many do not appreciate.

“God’s remedies are the simple agencies of nature that will not tax or debilitate the system through their powerful properties. Pure air and water, cleanliness, a proper diet, purity of life, and a firm trust in God are remedies for the want of which thousands are dying; yet these remedies are going out of date because their skillful use requires work that the people do not appreciate. Fresh air, exercise, pure water, and clean, sweet premises are within the reach of all with but little expense; but drugs are expensive, both in the outlay of means and in the effect produced upon the system.” (*Selected Messages*, Book 2, 287)

**“Use the Simplest Remedies**—Nature will want some assistance to bring things to their proper condition, which may be found in the simplest remedies, especially in the use of natures own furnished remedies—pure air, and with a precious knowledge of how to breathe; pure water, with a knowledge of how to apply it; plenty of sunlight in every room in the house if possible, and with an intelligent knowledge of what advantages are to be gained by its use. All these are powerful in their efficiency, and the patient who has obtained a knowledge of how to eat and dress healthfully, may live for comfort, for peace, for health; and will not be prevailed upon to put to his lips drugs, which, in the place of helping nature, paralyzes her powers. If the sick and suffering will do only as well as they know in regard to living out the principles of health reform perseveringly, then they will in nine cases out of ten recover from their ailments.” (Ibid.)

“Medical missionary work brings to humanity the gospel of release from suffering. It is the pioneer work of the gospel. It is the gospel practiced, the compassion of Christ revealed. Of this work there is great need, and the world is open for it. God grant that the importance of medical missionary work shall be understood, and that new fields may be immediately entered.” (*Medical Ministry*, 239)

“The medical missionary work is of divine origin, and has a most glorious mission to fulfill.” (Ibid., 24)

“Health reform is to stand out more prominently in the proclamation of the third angel’s message. The principles of health reform are found in the word of God. The gospel of health is to be firmly linked with the ministry of the word. It is the Lord’s design that the restoring influence of health reform shall be a part of the last great effort to proclaim the gospel message.” (*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, 75)

“The right hand is used to open doors through which the body may find entrance. This is the part the medical missionary work is to act. It is to largely prepare the way for

the reception of the truth for this time.” (*Counsels for the Church*, 311)

“This is a work that the churches in every locality, north and south and east and west, should do. The churches have been given the opportunity of answering this work. Why have they not done it? Some one must fulfill the commission.” (*The Review and Herald*, May 25, 1897)

“We have come to a time when every member of the church should take hold of medical missionary work. The world is a lazaretto filled with victims of both physical and spiritual disease. Everywhere people are perishing for lack of a knowledge of the truths that have been committed to us. The members of the church are in need of an awakening, that they may realize their responsibility to impart these truths.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 7, 62)

These are just a few quotes that can help us to see the importance of implementing the medical missionary work. As family ministry this work is very useful. Let’s see one of E. G. White’s experiences in this regard:

“The Lord gave me great light on health reform. In connection with my husband, I was to be a medical missionary worker. I was to set an example to the church by taking the sick to my home and caring for them. This I have done, giving the women and children vigorous treatment.” (*The Review and Herald*, July 26, 1906)

“As religious aggression subverts the liberties of our nation, those who would stand for freedom of conscience will be placed in unfavorable positions. For their own sake, they should, while they have opportunity, become intelligent in regard to disease, its causes, prevention, and cure. And those who do this will find a field of labor anywhere. There will be suffering ones, plenty of them, who will need help, not only among those of our own faith, but largely among those who know not the truth.” (*Counsels on Health*, 506)

“We shall see the medical missionary work broadening and deepening at every point of its progress, because of the inflowing of hundreds and thousands of streams, until the whole earth is covered as the waters cover the sea.” (*Medical Ministry*, 317)

Cities are places greatly in need of medical missionary work.

“The ordained ministers alone are not equal to the task. God is calling not only upon the ministers, but also upon physicians, nurses, canvassers, Bible workers, and other consecrated laymen of varied talent who have a knowledge of present truth, to consider the needs of the unwarned cities. There should be one hundred believers actively engaged in personal missionary work where now there is but one. Time is rapidly passing. There is much work to be done before satanic opposition shall close up the way. Every agency must be set in operation, that present opportunities may be wisely improved.” (*Medical Ministry*, 248)

“Our ministers are to work on the gospel plan of ministering.... You will never be ministers after the gospel order till you show a decided interest in medical missionary work, the gospel of healing and blessing and strengthening.... The Lord wants every one of His ministers to come into line. Take hold of the medical missionary work, and it will give you access to the people.” (*Counsels on Health*, 533)

“There is no change in the messages that God has sent in the past. The work in the cities is the essential work for this time. When the cities are worked as God would have them, the result will be the setting in operation of a mighty movement such as we have not yet witnessed. (*Medical Ministry*, 304)

The medical missionary work is a door through which the truth is to find entrance to many homes in the cities. (*Counsels on Health*, 556)

“Henceforth medical missionary work is to be carried forward with an earnestness with which it has never yet been carried. This work is the door through which the truth is to find entrance to the large cities, and sanitariums are to be established in many places.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, 167)

In addition to these thoughts we also have the revelation that soon there will be no work done in ministerial lines but medical missionary work (*Counsels on Health*, 533).

How can we prepare for medical missionary work? There are training centers for medical missionary work in many countries. For more information visit the website of Outpost Centers International (OCI) at [www.outpostcenters.org](http://www.outpostcenters.org) where you will find a large number of ministries that offer training of this kind. Additionally, there are courses available online and at Wildwood and Uchee Pines. However, if you are unable to attend these courses, God can train you where you are if you enter and discipline yourself to His school. I say this because this has been my personal experience, and it has been wonderful. He is the great medical missionary and has no limits to teach through His Holy Spirit. “He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16:14).

“There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God.” (*Maranatha*, 103)

“The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children.” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 50)

“To everyone who offers himself to the Lord for service, withholding nothing, is given power for the attainment of measureless results.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 7, 30)

The Bible and the inspired books form the basis of the text books that can help you train. Additionally, there are other books in the section “Recommendation of Published Works” that may be useful.

You can also contact the ministry LIGHT, a ministry that offers medical-missionary training programs worldwide, in your local area. The seminars are six months long. Their website is: [www.lightingtheworld.org](http://www.lightingtheworld.org).

The curriculum of the training course we offer at CMS, Missionary Health Center, Galeana, Mexico, can be helpful to get an idea of the basic classes in missionary medical training, organic agriculture, true education, music, Bible doctrines, house-to-house children's public evangelism, canvassing, preaching, basic principles of anatomy and physiology, nutrition and management, healthy lifestyle, health laws, hydrotherapy, massage, poultices, detoxification, health-exposition, vegan cooking and bakery, first aid, survival, etc. In addition we offer a specific training program for families who want to embrace full-time ministry that includes all of the above plus other subjects. For more information visit the following page: [www.cmsmex.com](http://www.cmsmex.com) and Facebook: Centro Misionero de Salud.

Being at a ministry you will also find opportunities to learn various trades such as carpentry, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, construction, etc., which can be very useful in medical missionary work.

Remember also that the skills or experiences that God has allowed us to obtain in the past can be of great blessing in a ministry as new skills can also be incorporated, becoming a blessing for the present and future as well.

“All improvements we make here of our mental powers, all the high attainments we make in refining and elevating ourselves by connecting closely with heaven, will be translated with us, while if we dwarf our capabilities by inaction, if we deteriorate our talents, which are susceptible of the highest cultivation, we cannot in the better world redeem that past neglect of self-culture, that great loss.” (*Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 9, 21)

“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.” (1 John 2:6)

“Workers—gospel medical missionaries—are needed now. You cannot afford to spend years in preparation. Soon doors now open to the truth will be forever closed. Carry

the message now. Do not wait, allowing the enemy to take possession of the fields now open before you. Let little companies go forth to do the work to which Christ appointed His disciples. Let them labor as evangelists, scattering our publications and talking of the truth to those they meet. Let them pray for the sick, ministering to their necessities, not with drugs, but with natures remedies, and teaching them how to regain health and avoid disease." (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, 172)

"And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick." (Luke 9:2)

# CHAPTER 4

## Location: City and Country

“There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.”  
(Psalm 72:16)

**T**he location is a space always linked to man. Everything requires a location. The house, business, school, church, etc., require the best location according to circumstances and needs. There will always be more favorable locations than others, depending on the intended purpose.

In the business world, there is a feasibility test which means a test that should be performed at the designated location prior to the assembly of a certain business. This test determines if the location is the most convenient for the success of the company. Obviously, the success of any business depends on several factors, and the location can be one of them. To establish a family ministry there may be locations more favorable than others. Here are some aspects that can help determine which place is best for the ministry.

Elijah was out of place fleeing from the location God had in mind for him. “What are you doing here, Elijah?” was the question God asked him several times (1 Kings 19:9, 13). Jonah was sent to Nineveh, and he embarked for Tarshish (Jonah 1:2–3). Abraham was instructed to go to Canaan, but he stayed in Haran for several years and then went through Canaan south to Egypt, where God had not called him to go (Genesis 11:31, 12:8–9). It is so easy for humans, clouded by sin, to choose another place contrary to God’s plan. In fact, our senses can deceive us especially when we want to please

them. “A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire” (Proverbs 18:1). We can easily arrive at the conclusion that we don’t know what place God has for us unless He shows it to us. Therefore, we should seek entirely from Him in this respect. We are working for Him anyways; He has the final say as to where we should be. Don’t you think so?

There is no better place to be than in the center of God’s will, whatever and wherever that may be. Humanly it may seem barren, devoid of many things, or away from our friends and family, but it is the best place to be, and we should never doubt the ongoing provision and protection of God.

When someone recommended that we start CMS (Missionary Health Center) in Galeana, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, we felt the location was pitiful and thought it would be the last place we would choose to perform this type of work. But, we prayed for a while, and the more we prayed the greater the conviction was that this was where God wanted us: in the semi-desert with rocky, bare hills, and its many shortcomings. Thousands of people have come through and have been greatly blessed to His honor and glory.

Many blessings can be missed by being impatient in the place we are and heading south where God has not called us. It is worth remembering, however, that God is a God of love and mercy. Elijah had to walk forty days and forty nights with one meal up to Mount Horeb. Jonah had to be thrown overboard and spend a very private three days inside of a fish before he was willing to head for Nineveh. When Abraham went south to Egypt, God never abandoned him. He was patient with him and helped him head back where he should have been. He even blessed him abundantly in the process.

However, Abraham had to mobilize many people, animals, and equipment, and the time spent was wasted. He ended up lying and putting his life in danger. God used this situation to teach Abraham to hear His voice better and to trust Him more. Being from a family of idolaters (Joshua 24:2), Abraham did not have the privilege that his son Isaac had. Isaac more easily heard the voice of God when he was about to do something similar: “Go not down into Egypt” (Genesis 26:2).

Our life of selfless service to God can help our children in many ways, but especially to know and hear more clearly the voice of God. Many parents refuse the idea of dedicating their lives to serving God

full time because they yearn to leave their children material goods and pleasures at the expense of being able to leave a knowledge of God which will help them make the right decisions in their lives. Although material things are not wrong in themselves, what good will they be if we cannot hear the voice of our heavenly Father guiding us even after our earthly parents go to rest? We need humility to silence the voice of self and to hear the voice of God.

For the most part, we must have a clear call in order to better identify where we will be working. On one hand, it seems that Abraham had a very clear the call about the location although both were described in parallel (Genesis 12:1–2). On the other hand, while advancing to the right place, God was confirming, establishing, and expanding the call. We should never limit what God may be calling us to do.

Of course, faith plays an important role in identifying the location. “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going” (Hebrews 11:8, NKJV). We must, however, be careful with this text that can be used by some people with great zeal and without a defined called, wandering from one place to another, bringing reproach upon the cause of faith. The high expectations of the place should not be part of our baggage, because we could be disappointed. The fact that Christ had a life of sacrifice and humility should be present in our consciousness all the time.

While we may hurry to choose one place and then regret having done so, God in His mercy wants us to wait patiently for Him with faith, fasting, and much prayer. In addition to that, as we study the Bible, God’s providence will confirm the place.

Often times God leads us to the right place, but we quickly abandon it because it is a place God has chosen to refine our character. Many times I have told people visiting CMS that the greatest blessing they can have as evidence is precisely that they are having constant conflicts. If with humility and patience these trials are successfully overcome, you would receive many blessings, blessings that you may attempt to find in another place but without results.

Leaving the place God has chosen and avoiding the process of being refined only delays the work of God in our heart. Remember, what God desires the most is the transformation of our heart, even more than the ministry you may be involved with. “My son, give

me thine heart" (Proverbs 23:26). The location of our hearts in His hands is more important to God than our hands in ministry. The clock is ticking, and we must not procrastinate but hasten the coming of our Lord. "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:12).

While God can lead us to a new place, He may also want us in the place we already are. The apostle Paul was told to start in Damascus, the city where he was (Acts 9:19). In either case, remember that while the call is being confirmed as part of our training, we could already be in established institutions or ministries and support them for a while. God may be calling an individual or a family to support a ministry that has already started rather than initiate one themselves.

To start a ministry can be relatively easy compared with what it takes to maintain one. There are many ministries which receive little or no help that, if they had help, could benefit God's work more than the start of a new ministry. After all, what matters is that we are where God wants us to be, working for Him, and where He may be working more favorably in our hearts.

Whether to work in the cities or in rural areas living in the country is a question answered by what is the most suitable according to God's counsel. The emphasis on this aspect is often stressed by the Spirit of Prophecy. I only will mention a few quotes among the many. Remember that God wants to take us back to Eden in many respects. Besides diet, country living will provide great blessings for our families, not diminishing that the restoration of character and service is the most important to God.

"Out of the cities, is my message at this time. Be assured that the call is for our people to locate miles away from the large cities. . . . The Lord calls for His people to locate away from the cities, for in such an hour as ye think not, fire and brimstone will be rained from heaven upon these cities." (*Last Days Events*, 95)

"O that God's people had a sense of the impending destruction of thousands of cities, now almost given to idolatry!" (*Ibid.*, 111)

## LOCATION

“Light has been given me that the cities will be filled with confusion, violence, and crime, and that these things will increase till the end of this earth’s history” (Ibid., 110)

“It is not God’s will that His people shall settle in the cities, where there is constant turmoil and confusion. Their children should be spared this, for the whole system is demoralized by the hurry and rush and noise.” (Ibid., 98)

“There is not one family in a hundred who will be improved physically, mentally, or spiritually, by residing in the city.” (Ibid., 98)

“Again and again the Lord has instructed that our people are to take their families away from the cities, into the country, where they can raise their own provisions, for in the future the problem of buying and selling will be a very serious one.” (Ibid., 99)

Fear or panic should not be our motivation when making this decision, but rather a consideration of the benefits and the obvious counsel of God.

## THE WORK IN THE CITIES

“In preparation for the coming of our Lord, we are to do a large work in the great cities. We have a solemn testimony to bear in these great centers.” (Ibid., 118)

In these major business centers, there is much work to do before it’s too late. But remember that God’s plan is that we live not in cities but outside them.

As God’s commandment-keeping people we must leave the cities. As did Enoch, we must work in the cities but not dwell in them.” (Ibid., 96)

“The cities are to be worked from outposts. Said the messenger of God, ‘Shall not the cities be warned? Yes, not by

God's people living in them but by their visiting them, to warn them of what is coming upon the earth.” (Ibid., 96)

However, for those who are very attuned to the work of the city, who will find it difficult for now to be located in the country, they should seek the suburbs or more green areas and tree-lined, quiet places.

“Whenever possible, it is the duty of parents to make homes in the country for their children.” ( Ibid., 118)

For those which have to live in cities for a longer time, the ministry should be well defined to avoid falling into the secular way of life that is lived in a city, such as entertainment, debts, distractions, etc.

Several workers in the church organization who are close friends have told me how difficult, if not impossible, it is to maintain in practice the principles of a quiet, spiritual life, due to the strong secular environment they are close to. Amid the bustle, crime, insecurity, injustices, temptations of all kinds, etc. they, and especially their families, have been affected in physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and family issues. Special efforts should be made by the organization to provide a more favorable living environment for its workers.

“For the present, some will be obliged to labor in Chicago, but these should be preparing working centers in rural districts from which to work the city. The Lord would have His people looking about them and securing humble, inexpensive places as centers for their work. And from time to time larger places will come to their notice, which they will be able to secure at a surprisingly low price.” (Ibid., 96)

It would be interesting to see the results of a church conference that dares to implement this divine advice, and keep their workers in more favorable areas to do the work in cities. In fact, I think it would impact society. Perhaps, we would give more importance to this aspect if another denomination were doing it.

Lot's family ministry experience gives us many lessons.

## LOCATION

“Lot could have preserved his family from many evils had he not made his home in this wicked, polluted city. All that Lot and his family did in Sodom could have been done by them even if they had lived in a place some distance away from the city.” (Ibid., 96)

There are many ministries that can be performed in the city and can be summarized in the work of centers of influence such as restaurants, bookstores, bakeries, community service centers, shelters, cooking classes, schools<sup>1</sup>, health food stores, natural therapies, health care, Bible courses, canvassing, and small groups.

## COUNTRY

“I urge our people to make it their lifework to seek for spirituality. Christ is at the door. This is why I say to our people, ‘Do not consider it a privation when you are called to leave the cities and move out into the country places. Here there await rich blessings for those who will grasp them. By beholding the scenes of nature, the works of the Creator, by studying God’s handiwork, imperceptibly you will be changed into the same image.’” (Ibid., 97)

“Parents flock with their families to the cities because they fancy it easier to obtain a livelihood there than in the country. The children, having nothing to do when not in school, obtain a street education. From evil associates they acquire habits of vice and dissipation.” (Ibid., 97)

“The Lord desires His people to move into the country, where they can settle on the land, and raise their own fruit and vegetables, and where their children can be brought in direct contact with the works of God in nature. Take your families away from the cities, is my message.” (Ibid., 99)

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1 The advice for the location of schools generally is in the countryside or rural areas, but in the book *Last Days Events*, p. 119, it mentions the need for church schools in the city for the children of those who are unable to leave the cities.

To live in the country once God has confirmed it to be His will should demand of us certain precautions in order not to give place to the enemy. As we look for land, we must ensure inasmuch as possible that we find fertile soil with a source of water and easy access, good neighborhood, fruit trees, etc. However, we should wait on the Lord with prayer because He may have a piece of land with none of the above that is just perfect for us because it is the will of God. It is important, also, to consider the education of children, supporting source, and a well-defined mission and ministry to develop.

In some cases, it is convenient for a family that is accustomed to living in the city to gradually get used to the country instead of going there immediately. This can be accomplished with periodic short trips for some time to the country, but also, joining a ministry in a country setting can be very helpful. Remember that the best recipe for getting used to a new place is to have the presence of Christ and His guidance.

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”  
(Philippians 4:13)

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” (Philippians 4:6)

# CHAPTER 5

## Organization: Management and Business

“Let all things be done decently and in order.” (1 Corinthians 14:40)

**A**s with everything in life, there is more than one way to do something. A family run ministry is no exception. It can be structured either as an **informal** or **formal** organization.

An **informal** structure could be a family run ministry that is family owned and operated, in which the family owns the property, the assets of the ministry, and pays some kind of wage to those who help the ministry, and/or may have volunteers who offer to work without pay.

But a family run ministry may also be structured **formally** with some kind of legal incorporation. For example:

### Non-profit

- A.** A family-run ministry with a government-approved non-profit or charitable foundation status. In this **formal** structure, the organization is required by law to have a board of directors in which the family cannot be the majority. Also, all assets of the organization must be owned by the organization, not the family.
- B.** A family-run ministry which, as above, is a non-profit organization or charitable foundation. It may start out with a small board of directors as described above, but if the ministry grows and adds numerous services or educational

training, eventually it may be in the ministry's best interest to expand the board with additional individuals. Those individuals should be comprised of both those who serve in the ministry as well as those who may not work at the ministry but have valuable experience that would be useful to the ministry. A good example of this would be Uchee Pines Health Institute in Seale, Alabama. While the ministry started as a family-run ministry for its first couple of years, it grew in staff and services so that they felt the need to have a formal business manager, an administrator, and director of education. The family, at this point, willingly expanded their board from about five to twenty members, and went from being a family run ministry to a self-supporting institution.

Each ministry must be well organized. God is a God of order, and if we are to perform a work for Him, it should be done with order. John 3:8 tells us that we do not know where the wind blows from and where it goes, but let's remember that the Holy Spirit does know. Some take this text as justification to work in any which way, but the truth is that many times this method brings shame to the cause of God. It is true that many times we do not understand what Providence is wanting to do in us or through us, and in these cases we must be in prayer, in tune with God on what has been clear about His will. We must be patient and active in His service. In due time, God will show us what we need to know if we are waiting on Him. The Holy Spirit does not work adrift without knowing where to go. He knows all things and expects us to be ready to receive the rich revelations that God has for us so we can work well with conviction and intelligence. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:12–13).

There may be situations, mostly at the beginning of a ministry, when either because zeal, inexperience, or other reasons, we are where things are not in the order or organized as they should be. However, this is not the way we should continue. Someone may say, But God has blessed us so far as we have been working. Most likely yes, because we have a patient God of love and mercy, but that does not mean that He does not want us to be organized in the best way possible. Remember also that there are situations more favorable

than others in which it may be easier or faster to achieve a good organization, and we must, therefore, be careful not to hastily judge some other ministry. Culture can also be a factor involved in how quickly we achieve that order and organization which God desires. Thank God He left us universal advice and guidelines in His Holy Word and the Spirit of Prophecy that reach beyond traditions, cultures, and inclinations. For example, Ecclesiastes 2:21 tells us, “For there is a man whose labor is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity.” This advice is applicable to any culture.

God is not limited to a single way of working or a single form of organization for families who want to start a ministry. Especially as we near the end, there will be more diversity in the ways in which God will organize family ministries. However, let’s look at one way in which an organization can perform at the present time where society wants to see transparency, project organization, and management in the best way possible. For example, a donor will be more confident giving his resources to a nonprofit organization for a health program than to an individual who has developed the same health program.

The enemy of all good may induce a person or family who has the best intentions of serving God to use resources donated for a particular purpose for the personal enrichment of the person, or for family emergencies. However, when the person or family has formed a nonprofit organization or foundation, this helps protect them from falling into such a situation since both active and fixed assets would be under the organization’s name. Likewise, if there be any eventuality or accident of some kind in the ministry, disputes would in the first instance be against the organization and not against the individual or family. Besides this, there are other advantages when the ministry is organized as a nonprofit or a foundation.

If the family already has a business, it can still open a nonprofit organization in addition for the operation of a specific ministry. Some people tend to criticize others who have successful businesses and are dedicated to the work of God. Remember that there is nothing wrong with having a prosperous business that is approved by God. The problem is the love we can concentrate on material things. What’s more, one of Satan’s strategies is to divert, as far as possible, financial resources from the children of God, because he knows all the good that can be done for the advancement of the work of God. It would be well that more dedicated Christians serving God have

thriving businesses. The organization ASI (Adventist-laymens Services and Industries) is a good illustration of Christian laymen, professionals, and industries dedicating their businesses or professions and services to the advancement of God's work.

At the beginning a ministry need not involve a large number of members on the board of the organization or foundation. The minimum normally required to establish an organization is three members: president, secretary, and treasurer. Additionally, you can also have two other members for a total of five members. If the ministry is expanding, it may be appropriate to add two more members later and so on. Remember that a board with too many members can be counterproductive.

In the election of board members we must be careful. We want to have members who have experience in the areas that predominate in the ministry and are in tune with the philosophy of the ministry. For example, if the ministry is geared to health, search for people in this field who have a missionary spirit and share the same philosophy. It is always good to have individuals on the board who have experience in administrative and spiritual aspects as well. There are people who can further assist with their time, expertise and resources and who are a great blessing.

These board members need not be involved in all aspects and details of the daily activities of the ministry, but they can provide valuable ideas for the development of different areas of the ministry.

If several families wish to establish a particular ministry, one should be chosen as the Director, who can also be part of the board. Others may have positions in the ministry without necessarily belonging to the board.

You may also want to invite leaders from the organized church who are able and sympathetic to the work to be performed to join the board of the organization.

Interestingly, Ellen White participated in the formation of the board of Madison, a self-supporting institution. Let's read the record:

“When the work for the new school was organized, Ellen White accepted an invitation to serve on the board of directors—the only time she ever served in such a capacity. She watched the developments at Madison with deep interest.”  
(*Woman of Vision*, 454)

There are other types of organizations that vary according to the laws of the government or by the nature of the ministry to be developed. God is not limited to a single way of working. There are families who establish an association or foundation built only with family members. Others simply operate the ministry without any kind of formalized organization. Remember that God calls us, and He has plenty of ways to organize and develop a ministry. But keep in mind that we must observe the laws of the government and not fall into a situation where we bring reproach upon the cause of God by neglect and lack of foresight. Eventually, the laws of governments will oppose the divine principles, and we need to pray to God for prudence and wisdom in how to carry out the ministry to which we are called.

A well-established principle from heaven which facilitates the progress of the work and the manifestation of God's power is *simplicity*. As soon as we move away from simplicity, the power is gone. God leads His people to depend on Him by submission. Magnificent! Praise be to God!

If you wish to conduct a family ministry in an informal way, it should be done in a clear and organized manner. The vision, mission, and agreements must be clearly stated in writing. Someone talking about family situations in a commercial setting said if you cannot dismiss a family member from work, do not hire him or her. This may well be applied to the ministry also, because sometimes the ministry may be joined by family or friends who can eventually harm the Lord's work.

When a new member joins the team, or even a client or student comes to obtain services from the ministry, they would benefit from knowing how the ministry is organized and what the vision, mission, and objectives of the ministry are. Once the vision is established it will facilitate the setting of the mission. We understand as a part of the vision the place where we want to go and the mission points in between to get there. Vision is the ideal to be achieved in the whole journey, and mission is the activities that will be done on a daily basis.

While we should have a clearly established and definite course, we must also be open to changes that Providence wishes to develop along the way. However, let's be careful that by doing so, we do not give a poor representation of a divine ministry by changing here and there, starting a broad spectrum of things, and accomplishing only

some of them. In our experience, we started many things and they were all good, but then we had to remove excess items so we could focus on what we were really called to do. Even though we obtained some experience in several good things, we also wore ourselves out. We were distracted and ended up delaying God's plan for us and for the ministry. Also, we neglected our own family in certain areas because we were overloaded with work. Much of this work consisted of many good things for which there is positive divine counsel but that God had not called us to do. There are many good things to do, many places to be, but the importing thing is what God wants us to do, and where *He* wants us to be.

In the organization of a ministry, there are concepts known in the marketplace that can be integrated and they may be good, but above all, we need to pray without ceasing, fast, and daily study the Bible and inspired counsels. We should not be following the dictates of our heart because that is misleading more than anything else (Jeremiah 17:9). Prayer, study of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, and submission to God must be present in order for the Holy Spirit to lead.

The advice on time is very pleasing. There are people with experience whom God can use to help us avoid unnecessary mistakes, "but in the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14, NKJV). "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise" (Proverbs 12:15)."If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

## **ADMINISTRATION**

"There is no branch of legitimate business for which the Bible does not afford an essential preparation. Its principles of diligence, honesty, thrift, temperance, and purity are the secret of true success." (*Education*, 135)

The psalmist's words, "The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver" (Psalm 119:72), indicates truth from more than a religious point of view. They state an absolute truth that is recognized in the business world. Even in this age of passion for money getting, when competition is harsh and methods

are unscrupulous, it is still widely acknowledged that for a young man starting in life, integrity, diligence, temperance, purity, and thrift constitute a better capital than any amount of mere money. Yet even among those who appreciate the value of these qualities and acknowledge the Bible as their source, there are but a few who recognize the principles upon which they depend.

“That which lies at the foundation of business integrity and of true success is the recognition of God’s ownership. The Creator of all things, He is the original proprietor. We are His stewards. All that we have is a trust from Him, to be used according to His direction.” (*Education*, 137)

To every man is given his work (Mark 13:34), the work for which his capabilities adapt him, the work which will result in greatest good to himself and to his fellow men, and in greatest honor to God.

“Thus our business or calling is a part of God’s great plan, and, so long as it is conducted in accordance with His will, He Himself is responsible for the results. Laborers together with God (1 Corinthians 3:9), our part is faithful compliance with His directions. Thus there is no place for anxious care. Diligence, fidelity, caretaking, thrift, and discretion are called for. Every faculty is to be exercised to its highest capacity. But the dependence will be, not on the successful outcome of our efforts, but on the promise of God. The word that fed Israel in the desert, and sustained Elijah through the time of famine, has the same power today. Be not therefore anxious (R.V.), saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? ... Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Matthew 6:31–33)” (*Ibid.*, 138)

## TITHES AND OFFERINGS

“He who gives men power to get wealth has with the gift bound up an obligation. Of all that we acquire He claims a specified portion. The tithe is the Lord’s. ‘All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of

the tree,... the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, ... shall be holy unto the Lord' (Leviticus 27:30, 32). The pledge made by Jacob at Bethel shows the extent of the obligation. "Of all that Thou shalt give me," he said, "I will surely give the tenth unto Thee." (Genesis 28:22)" (Ibid., 138)

"‘Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse’ (Malachi 3:10), is God’s command. No appeal is made to gratitude or to generosity. This is a matter of simple honesty. The tithe is the Lord’s; and He bids us return to Him that which is His own." (Ibid., 138)

As members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we should provide support with our tithes and offerings so the work will go further worldwide.

"It is required in stewards, ‘that a man be found faithful’ (1 Corinthians 4:2). If honesty is an essential principle of business life, must we not recognize our obligation to God—the obligation that underlies every other?" (Ibid., 139)

Offerings have no limits, as tithing has. Tithing is returning what belongs to God, but the offering is a volunteer act of gratitude to God. This means we can provide not only the minimum, but we can enlarge our freewill offering to ten, twenty, thirty, or fifty percent of our earnings. There is no limit on the offering.

The first fruits are also biblical and not only is such an offering an act of gratitude to God, but also of consecration or dedication of the revenue sources that God gives us. Our first fruits are when we have our first harvest, our first sale in a new business, or the first sale of the year, etc., we render to God an offering of gratitude in recognition of Him as the Provider and Sovereign of the universe. As we give this offering, we may also rededicate our lives and business to Him as well.

## **ACCOUNTING**

Proper accounting stands as a part of good administration. Accounting is not only an indicator to see how finances are doing,

which brings valuable benefits, but is also part of the order that God expects us to exercise. Our accounting should be diligently maintained and ready for review by a donor, a board member, or a qualified and authorized person or organization. If kept up to date, accounting is manageable. Sometimes, by overwork and/or lack of staff, accounting is neglected only to be an additional and accumulated burden that can harm us in one or more ways. If we cannot maintain accounts, we should seek help and, if necessary, pay for it in order that the accounting will be done. However, in many cases, accounting lingers when we could have been taken care of it by ourselves, simply because we do not give it the importance we should.

One of the great blessings of keeping accounts up to date is knowing how much tithe we must return to the Lord and the offerings we can give. Failure in this point and in managing business industry as a real business could be two major factors why many ministries can barely be sustained and rarely have sufficient resources. Other factors may be to strengthen our faith, keep us humble, and build our character. However, God has wonderful promises and blesses widely when we manifest our faithfulness in tithes and offerings as individuals and as a family ministry.

Abraham, not only as a great leader of the faith, but also as the leader of a family ministry gave tithes of all. "And he gave him tithes of all" (Genesis 14:20). He must have kept his accounts well to be able to do this. Many ministries could receive many more blessings if they had good and timely accounting.

Also, knowing how much we are generating and how many expenses we have can help us immensely in the true support of the ministry. We can make changes, cuts, and specific efforts according to the data which the accounts give us.

Let's remember that God expects us to treat the finance and industries with importance. The numbers and accounts must be exact and the better we do the bookkeeping, the better we can diagnose the company. But we also need to be careful not to want to keep accounts beyond our reach and ability to the point that we cannot move forward; for example, details of one department as compared with another, etc. In certain circumstances we must settle for a basic accounting, especially when starting the ministry, and as we grow then provide more adequate accounts as demanded.

## **MANAGING OTHER RESOURCES**

**Use resources.** Providing good accounting and faithfully returning tithes and offerings does not necessarily mean that we have a good administration, but that is definitely part of it. We should analyze and use every resource that is placed within our reach. While studying a subject, we should not be satisfied until all factors are carefully analyzed.

We can often be struggling to generate revenue while neglecting outflows or expenses that may be small but eventually may represent an unnecessary bleeding of funds. Some people are naturally good managers, others need to develop this aspect. It is important to identify where we are in order to be aware and ensure proper development.

**Loans and debts.** Although loans can be considered as resources or assets in the business world, it is important to consider what the Bible says about them.

“For the Lord thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee.” (Deuteronomy 15:6)

“The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure … to bless all the work of thine hand … and thou shalt not borrow. And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail … if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them.” (Deuteronomy 28:12–13)

“The borrower is servant to the lender.” (Proverbs 22:7)

Clearly, the Bible advises us that we should stay away from debts. Many people are tied up at precisely this point and cannot do much in the Lord’s work. The book *Counsels on Stewardship* further advises, “God does not want His work to be continually embarrassed with debt” (p. 266). “Keep within bounds. Shun the incurring of debt as you would shun leprosy” (Ibid., 272). This requires strict discipline and also an efficient control for keeping expenses in relation with income.

“Many, very many, have not so educated themselves that they can keep their expenditures within the limit of their income. They do not learn to adapt themselves to circumstances, and they borrow and borrow again and again, and become overwhelmed in debt, and consequently they become discouraged and disheartened.” (Ibid., 249)

Whether we are working as a ministry or not, we ought to prioritize getting out of debt. “Render therefore to all their dues” (Romans 13:7), especially if we are paying high interest. There are various tips that can help us get out of debt, I just want to mention a few of them:

1. Make a budget so you know what you can spend.
2. Eliminate most, if not all, credit cards.
3. Start paying off the small amounts and get them out of the way.
4. Try to re-finance high interest debts for lower interest rates.
5. Prioritize paying those with higher interest to get them out of the way.
6. Sell something you don't essentially need and pay off debt.

If you need to generate income and don't know how, take God's advice to Moses: “What is that in thine hand?” (Exodus 4:2). Also inspired by God, the wise Solomon said “Whatsoever thy hand findesth to do, do it with thy might” (Ecclesiastes 9:10). Don't hesitate to do something God has approved that you can easily do. Don't wait for something spectacular to happen in order to generate large amounts money.

God will give us the output if we trust Him, love Him, and obey His commands. “Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations” (Deuteronomy 7:9).

Remember also that we have a God bigger than any financial situation that we may have. “For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods” (Psalm 95:3).

**Time** as a valuable resource can be underestimated by some in ministries or people who work for the ministry. There are brethren

or family members well consecrated to the Lord who don't know what time means commercially and should be taught by word and precept. For example: the development of a product, cleaning a room, preparing a meal, preparing the land for sowing, planting seed, transferring data from receipts to account books which takes longer than it should implies greater cost to the ministry and is a waste. The development of a book that takes a day longer than it should incurs an additional cost for printing and for the product.

Unfortunately, in the Christian world, often we disassociate surrender and consecration to God from efficiency in commercial matters. For some it is easy to think that since they are in a ministry, they can do things in eternal time frame and walk as in the clouds.

It is important that the person who comes to work in a ministry is clearly informed of the place that time has in performing duties. Specify the starting time and ending time of the duties. That time must be used explicitly for the work of ministry and not as personal time. Even the signing of an agreement of the time issues involved can help avoid misunderstandings later. If we do not have the foresight to speak clearly of what is expected in a job, we should not have high expectations regarding performance. In many cases, anticipating and defining the time frame in which certain work should be done will help everyone involved.

**Self-ownership** in ministry is often an issue. We define self-ownership when someone takes what does not belong to them to use for personal purposes without authorization. This happens not only with time, but frequently with material objects. Often someone sees something that is not in use or doesn't appear to have an owner. Since he can use it, he takes it without asking permission and then serious consequences may result. Some people think that things belong to whoever needs them, but this philosophy has no basis. We should respect the time, resources, and materials that a ministry has.

In some cases, objects may be deteriorating from lack of use. In this case, we can talk to the proper person and request permission to use it. But in any case, we must respect the belongings of others and of the ministry. Remember that when we use work time or objects for personal business without permission this is indeed stealing. Good use of resources by the administration as well as effective communication can help greatly reduce such cases.

**Human resources** can actually be the best assets of a ministry or a business. If not managed properly, the individual can be deprived of effective growth and the ministry also may suffer in supporting a person who is not productive. Usually in a business if someone is not productive, he or she will not last long as an employee. In the ministry there should be a balance. While on one hand we want to develop and promote the spiritual, on the other hand, administrative issues cannot be neglected. Good management principles have a divine origin. A truly spiritual person who is not productive can hinder the development of the ministry or limit the work that can be done for the good of the community.

Similarly if a person is very productive but is not spiritual, he can harm and limit what God can do through the ministry. For some reason many people find it difficult to maintain this balance and be aware of the importance of both aspects. Some people have developed one of these aspects more than the other but are willing to develop the other side if you help them properly. Here management plays a very important role in that development, because if there is willingness on both sides, patience, prudence, and respect along with fervent prayer, honor and glory can be brought to God by an individual and a ministry developing both aspects properly.

Now, regardless of whether the person who is in the ministry has this balance or not, we should care for these resources. In our experience, sometimes due to overwork, we have not provided the necessary care needed by people who are in ministry. To fellowship with them, spend time with them, and know them better are aspects that can enrich the work God wants to develop in people and ministry. On the other hand, we must be careful that in fellowshipping we do not fall to the extreme whereby no achievements to ministry's objectives are obtained and things are done superficially. As in all we must have a balance.

While we are on the subject of human resources we must mention the importance of preserving the physical, mental, and spiritual health. We can often fall into a pattern of working with unnecessary wear. While we must work and toil away in the Lord's work, we must be careful not to put others and our families in a position where their health is compromised in any aspect. The enemy is very cunning and can take advantage of our zeal and inexperience to retire us sooner than God intends. Good nutrition, exercise, and rest along

with the other laws of health should be encouraged in our ministries. Good health should be maintained to give better service to God and our neighbor.

Mental and emotional health and their development should be encouraged for all those involved in ministry regardless of age. Taking the time to find out people's needs can be of great value for all. Often people are integrated into a ministry and stopped in their intellectual development. We should foster an environment for this development as far as circumstances permit. There is much to learn and develop for the honor and glory of God.

If we neglect our spiritual health, a red light should alert us and refocus our priorities. If we have no time to pray properly and be in communion with God, we are probably too busy, and we must make changes that help us. Our minds need to contemplate the great sacrifice that was made for us. We need to have a relationship with Jesus, alive and vibrant at every step.

A character in the likeness of God is ultimately what God wants to develop in each of His children, and the work with its challenges in ministry are a means to achieve this character. We should always remember this.

### **SUSTAINABILITY (SUPPORT MEANS)**

“He who has bidden His followers go into all parts of the world will sustain every laborer who in obedience to His command seeks to proclaim His message. (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 357)

As a family counts on a business that provides for their support, we must be careful not to quickly dismiss this aspect on the grounds that we want to start a ministry. Sometimes this can be rushed and/or be contrary to God's plan. We must pray, fast, study the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, seek advice from trustworthy and experienced people, and wait on God. God will show and confirm to all who trust and wait on Him.

Many ministries that could generate income from the family business do not do it or do it poorly. They limit themselves by only waiting on donations or move forward very slowly. The means of support is one aspect that should be prayerfully considered before

starting a family ministry. God asked Moses, “What is that in your hand?” (Exodus 4:2, NIV). God has given certain gifts and experiences to each one, and often these are the same means God wants us to use for the support of the ministry. Although the business or industry may be different than the previous one, these gifts and experiences, with God’s blessing, may be enough to help generate income for the work.

When we are talking about generating revenue for the ministry, it is important not to lose the way and fall into the temptation of generating income just for personal use to the point that we lose the divine purpose. Moreover, remember what the apostle Paul said in 1 Timothy 5:18, “For the scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward,” meaning God will provide for each of our needs through the ministry when we are dedicated to it full time. But we must be careful not to end up developing a company or industry that consumes all our time and energy to the point that we have no time to develop the ministry and, even worse, to neglect our relationship with God. Often when there is some kind of prosperity, the heart is strongly tempted to change course. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9). Because of this, God in His mercy does not allow some people or ministries to prosper financially, for if they did, they would fall away from the divine path risking their souls to eternal loss.

God blesses and He is glad when the means of support for a family ministry tend to benefit and elevate humanity, not destroy it. Obviously, God does not approve any business that promotes or induces people to acquire vices, addictions, etc. Medical missionary work provides practical tools for the support of a ministry. A vegetarian restaurant, wholesome bakery, healthy living program, massage program, publications, canvassing, and organic agriculture programs are all examples of self-supporting endeavors.

Particularly when starting a ministry, often a brainstorm of ideas arrives that could be implemented as a means of support, and they may all be good and within the inspired counsel, but all these ideas are not necessarily the will of God. In our experience, we adopted many suggestions that came from the Spirit of Prophecy. Some suggestions came from godly people, and other ideas came from ourselves. In attempting to develop all or most of them, we experienced

a difficult pilgrimage that wore us down as well as our family. We finally concluded that we had to discard many things, concentrating only on some, and accept the fact that it actually was not God's plan that we had such a variety of products or industries. We learned that it is more effective to focus only on things that were more akin to the call that God had placed on us.

Not only on this subject of sustainability but in all areas in a ministry, we should seek as much as possible to develop an organizational plan in which all areas, activities, objectives, job descriptions, etc., can be laid out on paper in order to help the continuity of the development for those who are embracing it. This can be very helpful, but on the other hand, we don't want to get so technical with this plan as to prevent us from doing the very job God assigns us to do.

I cannot stress enough that while we must be aware of our absolute dependence on God for our support, we should develop a business mentality and also be a redeeming influence in our business environment. "Sharing Christ in the Marketplace" is the motto of ASI. There will come a time when no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:17). Before that time comes, we should have the experience of total dependence on God, and until that time, we must make efforts to generate revenue and be representatives of Christ's influence in the business environment.

Among the traps of Satan against God's people we find that one of his objectives is to keep financial resources as far as possible from them. Keep the money in our ranks, says the arch-deceiver, The more resources they get, the more they can injure our kingdom. On the other hand, in his cunning, Satan also wants to divert our lives with money. Let them be more careful about the money than the support of the kingdom of Christ are his instructions to his subjects. (See *The Great Controversy*, Chapter 27, "Traps of Satan," 1884 edition).

"Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." (Mark 14:38)

"Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." (Luke 12:37)

## ORGANIZATION

Let's read some interesting inspired quotes that give counsel for the sustaining of the work:

“If the land is cultivated, it will, with the blessing of God, supply our necessities.... With proper, intelligent cultivation the earth will yield its treasures for the benefit of man. The mountains and hills are changing; the earth is waxing old like a garment; but the blessing of God, which spreads a table for His people in the wilderness, will never cease.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 6, 178)

“Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.” (*Acts 20:34*)

“In many places self-supporting missionaries can work successfully. It was as a self-supporting missionary that the apostle Paul labored in spreading the knowledge of Christ throughout the world.... Many today, if imbued with the same spirit of self-sacrifice, could do a good work in a similar way.... Some can sustain themselves as canvassers; others, like the apostle, can labor at some handicraft or in other lines of effort.” (*The Ministry of Healing*, 154)

The family ministry can be composed of one or more families and can be a great blessing in establishing the sustainability of the ministry if done according to counsel.

“If several families who could understand the situation would move to these countries and engage in some business in places where a few keeping the Sabbath, and do missionary work for Christ's sake, I know that by personal labor and holding a steady influence they could do much good.” (*An Appeal for Self-supporting Laborers to Enter Unworked Fields*, 35)

“What a great amount of good might be done if some of our brethren and sisters from America would come to these colonies, as fruit growers, farmers, or merchants, and in the

fear and love of God, would seek to win souls to the truth.”  
(*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 212)

“Let farmers, financiers, builders, and those who are skilled in various other crafts, go to neglected fields, to improve the land, to establish industries, to prepare humble homes for themselves, and to give their neighbors a knowledge of the truth for this time.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, 36)

## **DONATIONS**

In sustaining a family ministry, donations also have their place. These can be useful even when the ministry is generating revenue. One of the objectives when generating revenue with some industry is to be able to provide for the daily operations. Donations can help with growth projects or other infrastructure. However, there are ministries that by nature depend only on donations, and there is little or nothing they can do to generate income with some industry.

In either case, we must consider some aspects that, due to ethics and morals, are to be exercised. Donations, regardless of quantity, must be handled with responsibility. The donor is within his rights to ask for an accurate account of how resources were used. For this we must make sure to have good accounting and to use the resources in the way in which they were specifically designated. If, for some unexpected reason, there must be a change in the use of the donation specifically designated for something, this should be done only with the consent of the donor and only with very good justification. Donations should be used with specific planning and promptness. A report on how resources were used is required in some cases, however, the donor would appreciate having a report even if he has not requested it.

Acknowledgements and thankfulness for donations either in writing, a telephone call, or in person should be made as soon as possible.

Many donors seek a tax deductible receipt for their tax returns. For this we must have government permission to issue the receipt. In the United States, non-profit organizations are now known as 501(c)(3) organizations. Procedures for acquiring this status vary by country.

There are also individuals and organizations dedicated to advising and training in this field, including fund-raising for various projects and ministries.

In many countries, there are people and organizations who do not know what to do with so much money. The cause of God can use this situation seizing the opportunity with prayer, good planning, and advice.

## ADMINISTRATION IN THE LAST DAYS

As we approach the end, we should consider management having in mind not only the difficult times that lie ahead—in the sense that we cannot buy or sell unless we have the mark of the beast—but also in the sense that things we see now will be destroyed. We need much wisdom from above for simplicity in what we do, faith, and willingness not to cling to material things while still working with fervor as long as there is time. We have a wonderful and almighty God; we can have no better partner. To the extent that we die to self, God will give us discernment to do things in the best way according to His divine providence. He may intervene even against our wishes, and therefore, we must be patient and trust in His divine love.

The book of Proverbs and the rest of the Bible are full of valuable administrative advice that we would do well to read. There is also a useful management Bible guide manual that could be helpful, *Stewardship Bible Handbook* by R. Eduardo Gomez.



# CHAPTER 6

## Public Relations: Community, Church, and Ministries

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” (John 13:34–35).

**W**e were created to have relationships. God is a God of relationships and He created us in His image and likeness. Our relationship with Him should be our highest priority. Often we neglect this relationship that is the foundation for all other relationships. The relationship with the family follows in priority. Out of this relationship, God’s purposes are fulfilled in the ministry to which He has called us. We must not forget that the family must be our first and most sacred ministry. However, it is important to examine our relationships with other people in the ministry, community, church, and other ministries.

### Members of the Family Ministry:

Whether the family ministry is limited only to family members or other people join it, we must be very careful in the relationships within the context of the ministry. Respect, efficient communication, and intercessory prayer for each member are part of our responsibility as leaders.

It is one thing to interact with people in the community, the church, etc., but quite another to interact with those who are living with us in a ministry. This represents a much more immediate and local community than the general population. As we saw in

the segment on management, human resources are something we should work with and care for with prudence and wisdom.

There are times, however, when it seems to be impossible to interact effectively due to the personality and character of a person. This person may want to unite their efforts with us to hasten the coming of the Lord, and may want to learn many things in order to serve Him better. However, we must remember that we all have different educational backgrounds and experiences acquired in different environments and cultures that have shaped the character of each. Some have heavy, complicated baggage due to abuses and tragedies suffered in childhood or youth. Some are emotionally affected by bonds have not been resolved. In many cases, they do not even know the nature of their attitudes and disbelief.

The human mind is sensitive and complicated and we must be extremely careful in dealing with it. Much wisdom and prayer are necessary in order for the Holy Spirit to give the victory to all of us. This I say to all, because sometimes we ourselves have some dysfunction or character trait that God desires to polish and refine. We think the problem is the other persons, when in fact it is a blessing that this difficult person is there because he or she may be the instrument that God uses to refine our own characters.

Again and again we have seen this very situation with students or workers who have developed in a difficult environment. They may reject another person only to discover later that the difficult relationship was the greatest blessing they ever had. Unfortunately, in some cases, those involved choose the easy way out by leaving without letting God achieve His polishing or character development. This simply delays the work of God. In His mercy, wherever we go, God will use other people or circumstances so the process resumes again. When we avoid this polishing process, the work is hurt and one more worker in God's service goes without the ability God intended.

However, this does not mean that God ceases to work even with those who choose to depart from the opportunity that Providence has chosen for this process. God is patient and merciful to all. We must trust in God's promises and pray constantly for people who join the ministry in any capacity. Once they are there let's trust in the following quote: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose (Romans 8:28).

Someone wrote, Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to a deeper understanding of ourselves.

***Home Environment:*** It is important that people who come to work in the ministry have a home. While simple, it must also cover basic needs and be functional. Sometimes by neglecting this point, people do not last long though they practice sacrifice and humility. Some may say, This work should be selfless and sacrificing. Even our Lord did not have a pillow on which to lay His head. Remember, however, that not everyone has the same experience or is able yet to live up to the experience of our Lord. Were all going through a process, and a person who is willing to endure some sacrifices is not necessarily at a more superior level than others spiritually.

***Clear and effective communication:*** This helps tremendously to avoid problems with others. Put the cards on the table, with love, when someone joins the ministry. In certain circumstances, it may be best to sign agreements that help workers remember the conditions of their membership in the ministry.

***Coexistence and recreation:*** As a family these have a significant place in the relations that makes up a ministry. Make it happen in such a way that it will not hinder the maintenance of respect, appointed responsibilities, and the ministry mission.

***Spiritual growth activities:*** These should be in accordance with age and spiritual level and should be promoted to strengthen the spirituality of the group. It was by personal contact and association that Jesus trained His disciples (*The Desire of Ages*, 152).

## **Community.**

One of God's purposes in ministry is to get in touch with society and be channels of blessing and light to it. Jesus began the work of reformation by coming into close sympathy with humanity (*Ibid.*, 150).

To isolate ourselves from society whether we are in the city or in a remote location gives no opportunity for God to use us. Obviously, this relationship with the community should be planned strategically within a redemptive context. That is, the contact we have with the community is not to participate in everything they do and see their activities to the point of being influenced by them. Rather, we should influence them, for example, through health programs which

promote healthy lifestyles, rehabilitation, restaurants, bakeries, educational programs, community services, canvassing, evangelism, and activities for children and younger people. When we are consistent with heaven's principles, the community learns to trust the family ministry. This impacts the community as few things do. Whatever we do for the good of the community, let's do it in the most professional and representative way possible.

Since 1995, the circle of influence of our family ministry has included being able to offer, by the grace of God, the following services:

Radio programs since 1997 twice a week at the government radio station that reaches more than sixty thousand people locally and sometimes with links to the metropolitan area of Monterrey with a potential audience of over 5 million people. Our talks on the radio vary from health to education to values and family relationships.

Since we came to the area we have started a health food store in town. Currently the community identifies it as Pro-health Zone. It offers comprehensive services such as a bakery, a vegetarian restaurant, food grains and food supplements for sale, a publications section, and natural therapies such as massage, hydrotherapy, poultices, and spa service, as well as an area for fitness and health. Family counseling is also offered. Each Monday health lectures are provided for the community and the attendance is increasing significantly.

On campus, which is outside of town, we have a healthy living program, in which people come who wish to change their lifestyle, lose and control their body weight, detox, and get anti-stress therapies. These programs are also attended by people from other cities and countries.

Before concluding their studies, students who come to take the course for health missionaries should operate a practice of health information and treatment and another one of public evangelism. In these practices, a health school is established somewhere in the community nearby where they teach which should include cooking classes, massage, nutrition, healthy lifestyle, hydrotherapy, and disease prevention.

In the area of education, the community has been impacted by a private, bilingual elementary and secondary school, where children, youth, and parents have been exposed to a different type of education, where values and the fear of God stand out along with

extracurricular classes such as agriculture, music, and healthy food preparation among others.

Additionally, thanks to the influence that God allowed us to have in the community, we have now penetrated to the public education system through the health program of the North Mexican Union, "I Want to Live Healthy." Over twenty-three public schools have participated in this program in which students, parents, and teachers have the opportunity to integrate healthy habits into their lifestyle. For more information on these events please visit our Facebook page: [www.Facebook.com/centromisionerodesalud](http://www.Facebook.com/centromisionerodesalud). Or watch YouTube videos ([www.youtube.com/centromisionerosalud](http://www.youtube.com/centromisionerosalud)).

The produce from our garden has also been a means of influence at the tables and businesses of the local community. Our wholesome bread is not only recognized but demanded by the community in marked contrast with the commercial breads available in the markets.

The evangelism and the contact our students and staff have had with the community through home Bible studies or in public events continue to plant seeds of truth. Although many have sprouted and borne fruit, more will in due time.

U.S. missionary groups have come to help us, and together we have offered to the community: medical brigades, health-expos, English classes, etc. Institutions such as the University of Montemorelos and others have come to help, and together we have been involved in the delivery of provisions and clothing.

Thank God also that since 2004, the 3ABN channel was installed in town and often we hear of people who are getting even more seeds of truth and getting to know our God.

Recently the local county mayor asked us for a proposal for the health department of the municipality in his new administration which we did, and we were very happy to feel the confidence of the community as expressed in this request. Glory be to God who is the one who makes all things work together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purposes. Praise the Almighty God.

The good business relationships in the community are a testimony while also creating jobs and income. The good reputation in trade inspires confidence and also opens many doors. Following these relationships we have seen several prominent merchants go to

the waters of baptism and join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Glory to God!

Centers of influence properly developed in the cities or rural towns, with humility and obedience to divine principles, perseverance, and sacrifice can be divine forces for the advancement of heavenly government that, without a doubt, will receive the amazing grace and blessing of God.

Bible studies such as Share Him and New Beginnings are tools that can be used effectively for individuals, small groups, or large public events. Also abundant living health lectures are great to present our health message.

### **The Organized church**

“Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts.”  
(Joel 2:16)

“And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

A relationship with the church should be part of a family ministry or self-supporting ministry. While this can be challenging, with humility, prudence, patience, and much prayer it can be achieved and be a great blessing. God has a work to do in Jerusalem (the church) and to the ends of the earth (the world).

As part of the local church, you could let the pastor and leaders know that as a family you want to start a family ministry. Let them know your intentions and activities so they know what the ministry is all about and how they can help with their prayers, advice, or participation. Sharing testimonies about how God is at work will praise Him and keeps members and leaders aware of how the family ministry is being developed.

Whether you are starting a family ministry in the city or out of it and you begin attending a new church, you should introduce yourself to the leaders of that church and get to know the pastor, elders, and members. Let them know your fervent intention to work for the Lord and support the church. As is natural in any relationship, trust

is developed over time, and you must be patient, persistent, humble, and helpful. We should relate with the brothers and sisters in such a way that they can see in us a true love for them and for perishing souls. It can help build confidence in a new place if you bring a letter of recommendation from the church where you come from. God will open the way to earn the trust of members and leaders in a new place as long as we allow ourselves to be used by God.

Remember that the church is made up of a group of believers of which we are part. We are the church and therefore the church is not perfect. We are not perfect. The only perfect one is Christ. Those who are in positions of responsibility in a congregation or office are not perfect. Often, mistakes are made on both sides and Satan triumphs by creating distrust, dissension, and separation, obstructing and delaying the work God wants to perform.

We have a privilege to be laborers together with God and have divine counsel to do so:

“It is time that church members understood that everywhere there is a work to be done in the Lord’s vineyard. No one is to wait for a regular process before they make any efforts. They should take up the work right where they are. There should be many at work in what are called irregular lines. If one hundred laborers would step out of the regular lines, and take up self-sacrificing work, such as Brother Shireman has done, souls would be won to the Lord. And the workers would understand by experience what it means to be laborers together with God.” (*Spalding and Magan Collection*, 195)

“Many fields ripe for the harvest have not yet been entered because of our lack of self-sacrificing helpers. These fields must be entered, and many laborers should go to them with the expectation of bearing their own expenses.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 7, 254)

“If the lay members of the church will arouse to do the work that they can do, going on a warfare at their own charges, each seeing how much he can accomplish in winning souls to Jesus, we shall see many leaving the ranks of Satan to stand under the banner of Christ. If our people will act upon

the light that is given in these few words of instruction, we shall surely see of the salvation of God." (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 8, 246)

In our experience, at first there was a lot of prejudice and resistance from pastors and administrators from the local conference and even more from the union conference itself. But with time, prayer, patience, and perseverance, God has developed a better working environment for us. We receive great support from the North Mexican Union even though changes of administrators happen now and then. Some have supported us more than others but, in general, have always been supportive and willing to work together with us as a self-supporting family ministry. Besides the administrators, we deal additionally with people in charge of the departmental ministries of health, education, youth, and evangelism.

Recently we were given the opportunity to share with all the pastors from the local conference the promotion of our course for lay missionaries and were well received. Thankfully, unlike when we started, a minority of pastors now have prejudice toward our ministry. We also work with other conferences and unions in different programs of the medical missionary work. Thank God, it has been an enriching and inspiring experience for us.

"The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work, and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers." (*Christian Service*, 68)

"My brethren, ministers and laymen, I have been shown you must work in a different manner from what you have been in the habit of working. Pride, envy, self-importance, and unsanctified independence have marred your labors." (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, 16)

"God is calling not only upon ministers, but also upon physicians, nurses, colporteurs, Bible workers, and other consecrated laymen of varied talent who have a knowledge of the Word of God and who know the power of His grace, to consider the needs of the unwarned cities. Time is rapidly

passing, and there is much to be done. Every agency must be set in operation, that present opportunities may be wisely improved. (*Evangelism*, 533)

“The world is filled with strife for the supremacy. The spirit of pulling away from fellow-laborers, the spirit of disorganization, is in the very air we breathe. By some, all efforts to establish order are regarded as dangerous,—as a restriction of personal liberty, and hence to be feared as popery. These deceived souls regard it a virtue to boast of their freedom to think and act independently. They declare that they will not take any man’s say-so; that they are amenable to no man. I have been instructed that it is Satan’s special effort to lead men to feel that God is pleased to have them choose their own course, independent of the counsel of their brethren.” (*Gospel Workers*, 486)

“Some have advanced the thought that, as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man’s being independent. The stars of heaven are all under law, each influencing the other to do the will of God, yielding their common obedience to the law that controls their action. And, in order that the Lord’s work may advance healthfully and solidly, His people must draw together. . . .

“It is not a good sign when men refuse to unite with their brethren and prefer to act alone.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, 258)

“Some workers pull with all the power that God has given them, but they have not yet learned that they should not pull alone. Instead of isolating themselves, let them draw in harmony with their fellow laborers. Unless they do this, their activity will work at the wrong time and in the wrong way. They will often work counter to that which God would have done, and thus their work is worse than wasted.” (*Ibid.*)

“On the other hand, the leaders among God’s people are to guard against the danger of condemning the methods of individual workers who are led by the Lord to do a special work that but few are fitted to do. Let brethren in responsibility be slow to criticize movements that are not in perfect harmony with their methods of labor. Let them never suppose that every plan should reflect their own personality. Let them not fear to trust another’s methods; for by withholding their confidence from a brother laborer who, with humility and consecrated zeal, is doing a special work in God’s appointed way, they are retarding the advancement of the Lord’s cause.” (Ibid., 259)

“God can and will use those who have not had a thorough education in the schools of men. A doubt of His power to do this is manifest unbelief; it is limiting the omnipotent power of the One with whom nothing is impossible. Oh, for less of this uncalled-for, distrustful caution! It leaves so many forces of the church unused; it closes up the way so that the Holy Spirit cannot use men; it keeps in idleness those who are willing and anxious to labor in Christ’s lines; it discourages from entering the work many who would become efficient laborers together with God if they were given a fair chance.” (Ibid.)

“It is a mistake to withdraw from those who do not agree with our ideas. This will not inspire our brethren with confidence in our judgment. It is our duty to counsel with our brethren, and to heed their advice. We are to seek their counsel, and when they give it, we are not to cast it away, as if they were our enemies. Unless we humble our hearts before God, we shall not know His will.” (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 500)

### **Other ministries**

It has been a great blessing for us to interact and work with other ministries around the world. Being isolated from other ministries may limit the development and scope that we could have.

Organizations such as ASI<sup>2</sup> and the OCI<sup>3</sup> facilitate this relationship with ministries that share a similar philosophy. Listening and sharing the challenges and blessings that we and other ministries have can greatly enrich and inspire us. Participating in a network of ministries also helps us to expose the various needs that we may have and discover what will fulfill those needs. This is very true when it comes to personnel who are much needed in ministries. Also, in these organizations we find valuable training that is given in all areas relevant to our life and ministry such as health, home, education, management, and final events.

“God calls for laborers; but He wants those who are willing to submit their wills to His, and who will teach the truth as it is in Jesus. One worker who has been trained and educated for the work, who is controlled by the Spirit of Christ, will accomplish far more than ten laborers who go out deficient in knowledge and weak in the faith. One who works in harmony with the counsel of God, and in unity with the brethren, will be more efficient to do good than ten will be who do not realize the necessity of depending upon God and of acting in harmony with the general plan of the work.” (*Evangelism*, 474)

Staff exchanges, prayer, and other resources usually result in great blessing for all. Thanks to todays technology, communication with other ministries is available regardless of where they may be.

Communication with our former students’ ministries is not only a duty but a great blessing and inspiration. Despite trials and Satan’s attacks, we can see how the power, love, and faithfulness of God manifested in their lives and ministries surpasses all understanding. “For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods” (Psalm 95:3).

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2 ASI - [www.asiministries.org](http://www.asiministries.org)

3 OCI - [www.outpostcenters.org](http://www.outpostcenters.org)



# CHAPTER 7

## Spirituality: Discipleship and Balance

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.... If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” (John 15:4 - 7).

**G**od calls us to a ministry for multiple purposes, one of which is ourselves and the character development He wants to accomplish in each of us. Growing in grace and spiritual strength should be our priority. Often some already in a ministry relax spiritually and the great need to grow and be transformed by grace is ignored. We can be working in a ministry and yet be spiritually stagnant. Not a few are lulled into this lifestyle. They forget that they themselves are the main object for which God has called them.

The true meaning of worship gets lost. William Temple wrote:

“True worship personalizes evangelism and missionary work and involvement as a natural result of a life centered on God. Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the awakening of the conscience by His holiness, the nourishment of mind with His truth, the purifying of imagination by His beauty, the opening of the heart to His love, the yielding of our will to His purposes and all this joins in worship, the greatest self-denial and emotional devotion of

which our nature is capable." (William Temple, 1881–1944 taken from *The Integrity Crisis*, by Warren W. Wiersbe, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991, 119)

Often the measure we use to determine success in a ministry is in very human terms, numbers, size, talent, and infrastructure. But God sees the matter very differently.

"If numbers were an evidence of success, Satan might claim the pre-eminence; for, in this world, his followers are largely in the majority. It is the degree of moral power pervading the college, that is a test of its prosperity. It is the virtue, intelligence, and piety of the people composing our churches, not their numbers, that should be a source of joy and thankfulness." (*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 94)

In other words, spirituality is not everything, but without it, everything would be in vain. In our previous chapter, we talked about relationships which are very important. However, our spirituality has to do with our relationship with God, the Creator of the universe and our Redeemer. It is the most fascinating subject that there is. Our relationship with Christ is the foundation of our success as a family ministry. Without this divine substance, everything else is chaff.

We should care for our spiritual growth. Studying the Word of God, praying, and fasting are some of the means God has given us for the benefit of our spiritual growth. Remember that:

"Redemption is that process by which the soul is trained for heaven. This training means a knowledge of Christ. It means emancipation from ideas, habits, and practices that have been gained in the school of the prince of darkness. The soul must be delivered from all that is opposed to loyalty to God." (*The Desire of Ages*, 330)

Work must be organized so that no one is overworked and affected spiritually while working for God. We need to abide in Christ and His words in us. For this we need to die to self and prayerfully study His Word daily.

“And even greater is the power of the Bible in the development of the spiritual nature. Man, created for fellowship with God, can only in such fellowship find his real life and development. Created to find in God his highest joy, he can find in nothing else that which can quiet the cravings of the heart, can satisfy the hunger and thirst of the soul. He who with sincere and teachable spirit studies God’s word, seeking to comprehend its truths, will be brought in touch with its Author; and, except by his own choice, there is no limit to the possibilities of his development.” (*Education*, 124)

“We are to believe the Word of God whether we have any manifestation of feeling or not.” (*From the Heart*, 18)

Prayer and the study of His Word must be a priority in our lives. It is important to know that:

“God does not always answer our prayers the first time we call upon Him; for should He do this, we might take it for granted that we had a right to all the blessings and favors He bestowed upon us. Instead of searching our hearts to see if any evil was entertained by us, any sin indulged, we would become careless, and fail to realize our dependence upon Him, and our need of His help. Elijah humbled himself until he was in a condition where it would not take the glory to himself. This is the condition upon which the Lord hears prayer; for then we shall give the praise to Him.... Like Elijah, again and again I press my petition to the throne of grace; and when the Lord sees that I realize my inefficiency and weakness, the blessing comes.” (*Ibid.*)

“We have a God who hears our prayers. When by faith in His Word we cry, He honors our faith. He wants us to have all our interests interwoven with His interests, and then He can safely bless us; for we shall not then take glory to self when the blessing is ours, but shall render all the praise to God.” (*Ibid.*)

Remember, “Prayer is not intended to work any change in God, it brings us into harmony with God” (*From the Heart*, 17).

After many years in the ministry, I understood why many of our prayers were not answered as we expected. We just were not ready to receive the answers. In like manner, in the midst of trials, we may not understand what God is doing for us, but it is actually the Lord preparing us.

The Lord disciplines His workers, that they may be prepared to fill the places appointed them. He desires to fit them to do more acceptable service.... Perhaps He places before them duties that they would not choose. If they are willing to be guided by Him, He will give them grace and strength to perform these duties in a spirit of submission and helpfulness. Thus they are being qualified to fill places where their disciplined abilities will make them of great service. (*Gospel Workers*, 269)

We are living in very difficult times, where our only safety is found in absolute submission and obedience to the Word of God.

“God calls upon His people to prepare themselves for scenes of severe conflict. Take up your duties in a meek and lowly spirit. Ever face your enemies in the strength of Jesus. Discharge with faithfulness every duty. Realize that you must now obtain by daily conversion and humility an unquestioning trust in the One who has all power and who will not leave you to be destroyed. You may know Christ by personal experience.... In the trials of these last days Christ will be made unto His people wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.... They are to develop an experience that will be a convincing power in the world....

“What wonderful lessons we shall learn as the result of depending constantly on the sufficiency of Christ. He who is learning these lessons need not depend on another’s experience.” (*In Heavenly Places*, 297)

Elijah and John the Baptist are prototypes of those who will be living in the last days before the coming of the Lord. Many lessons of submission, obedience, and faith can be learned from them. We should carefully study the experiences of these men.

About John the Baptist we are told:

“He distrusted his own power to withstand temptation, and shrank from constant contact with sin, lest he should lose the sense of its exceeding sinfulness.” (*The Desire of Ages*, 101)

“By meditation and prayer, he sought to gird up his soul for the lifework before him. Although in the wilderness, he was not exempt from temptation. So far as possible, he closed every avenue by which Satan could enter, yet he was still assailed by the tempter. But his spiritual perceptions were clear; he had developed strength and decision of character, and through the aid of the Holy Spirit he was able to detect Satan’s approaches, and to resist his power.” (*Ibid.*, 102)

Revival and the latter rain will never become a reality in a person who has not learned to die to self. The Old and New Testaments are filled with lessons about dying to self so we may live. Each step of the sanctuary ritual illustrates sacrifice. Jesus and the apostles repeatedly alluded to it in many ways. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service (Romans 12:1). Yet the average Christian does not want to gain that experience of self-denial. To abide in Christ, we must die to self. In order that His Word will abide in us, we must die to self.

Generally speaking, for human beings, death is always something we repudiate and by nature don’t want to experience. But God tells us that this is the key to life: And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it (Luke 9:23–24).

Dying to self has several synonymous words such as: self-denial, submissiveness, to humble oneself. This fact is also illustrated in several ways in the Bible. One of my favorites is with the grain that must die in order to sprout, grow, and bear fruit. Jesus said:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.” (John 12:24–25)

The apostles, especially Paul, well understood this gospel principle. “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:11; See also 8:13; 1 Corinthians 15:31; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Galatians 2:20).

“In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which seeketh not her own has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto.” (*The Desire of Ages*, 19)

“By love’s self-sacrifice, the inhabitants of earth and heaven are bound to their Creator in bonds of indissoluble union.” (Ibid., 26)

“His whole life was an example of self-denial.” (Ibid., 149)

The Spirit of Prophecy abounds in thoughts alluding to this very important issue which is so little regarded in the Christian world today. We can only have a revival with a real and daily conversion. This conversion can only be experienced with the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can only come to us in direct proportion to our willingness to die to self.

We must turn away from a thousand topics that invite attention. There are matters that consume time and arouse inquiry, but end in nothing. The highest interests demand the close attention and energy that are so often given to comparatively insignificant things. (*Mind, Character, and Personality*, Vol. 2, 795)

“I saw that the remnant were not prepared for what is coming upon the earth. Stupidity, like lethargy, seemed to hang upon the minds of most of those who profess to believe that we are having the last message.... A great work must be done for the remnant.... Said the angel, Legions of evil angels are around you, ... Ye suffer your minds to be diverted too readily from the work of preparation.... Sabbathkeepers will have to die to self.” (*Early Writings*, 119–120)

“The Laodicean message applies to the people of God who profess to believe present truth. The greater part are luke-warm professors, having a name but no zeal ... yet they are unwilling to die to self.” (*Testimony Treasures*, Vol. 1, 476)

“We need to pray more and to talk less. We need to learn of Christ and to become like Him in meekness and lowliness of heart.

“We need to understand how necessary it is that we die to self. Self-crucifixion will place souls on vantage ground. I entreat those [of you] who profess to be Christians to die to self that you may be stirred with a new life by the Holy Spirits power. Satan is working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. Daily we need the converting power of God, or we cannot walk in the footprints of Christ. As the mind is enlightened in regard to what is purity and sanctification, and the heart responds to the strivings of the Holy Spirit, a daily conversion will be the result.

“In the day of final award two classes will stand before the Judge of all the earth.... We can never enter the City of God until we have learned to die to self, and there dwells within the soul the spirit of Christ.” (*The Upward Look*, 269)

Remember that God wants to do great things through His children, but only in those who are not willing to take credit or glory. The glory belongs only to God, King and Ruler of the universe. “There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, putting self aside,

makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God" (*Maranatha*, 103).

God wants to give us the Holy Spirit without measure; we crave it. Then what is the matter? We do not want to prepare the way, dying to self to make this a reality. We pray and fast., but if we are not willing to die to self, little or nothing significant will happen. We do need to pray, fast, etc., but dying to self with the help of the Holy Spirit is essential. "The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children. For the daily baptism of the Spirit every worker should offer his petition to God" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 41).

Interestingly, receiving the Holy Spirit, the latter rain, without measure can be achieved only with the help of the Holy Spirit. That is, the Holy Spirit is the One who does all the work from the beginning with the early rain. But in either case, it is to the extent that we are willing to die to self that it happens. We need to learn to die to self. Great events are before us, and it is very important that we prepare for them.

"Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children." (*Maranatha*, 33)

The trials that Providence allows us to have are means God uses to help us move forward in this regard.

"It is obstacles that make men strong. It is not helps, but difficulties, conflicts, rebuffs, that make men of moral sinew. Too much ease and avoiding responsibility have made weaklings and dwarfs of those who ought to be responsible men of moral power and strong spiritual muscle." (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 3, 495)

Even in the humblest work, if we do it considering ourselves "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11), God will get the glory, and there will be no limit to what can happen.

“The humblest workers, in co-operation with Christ, may touch chords whose vibrations shall ring to the ends of the earth and make melody throughout eternal ages.” (*The Ministry of Healing*, 159)

“Success depends not so much on talent as on energy and willingness. It is not the possession of splendid talents that enables us to render acceptable service, but the conscientious performance of daily duties, the contented spirit, the unaffected, sincere interest in the welfare of others. In the humblest lot true excellence may be found. The commonest tasks, wrought with loving faithfulness, are beautiful in God’s sight.” (*Prophets and Kings*, 219)

“The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness.” (*Steps to Christ*, 43)

Submission to the will of God or dying to self is not a blindness to revoke development and growth. Recall that the seed that dies is to live and grow and bear much fruit for the glory of God.

“The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. ‘Come now, and let us reason together’ is the Creator’s invitation to the beings He has made. (*Isaiah 1:18*). . . . A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us.” (*Ibid.*, 43)

Dying to self is not learned by reading about it or listening to someone talk about it. How then can we learn to die to self? There

is only one way and that is the contemplation of the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross.” (*The Desire of Ages*, 83)

“He whose eyes are fixed on Jesus will leave all. He will die to selfishness. He will believe in all the Word of God, which is so gloriously and wonderfully exalted in Christ.” (*Maranatha*, 99)

The parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1–12) defines for us that there is indeed a work of preparation for each individual who is looking for the coming of the Lord. Wise or foolish? “Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish” (Matthew 25:1–2).

Everything lies in the oil that the lamp had or did not have. This oil is referred to as the oil of grace, the Holy Spirit. How to store this precious oil is the work we should be busy with.

“I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of refreshing and the latter rain to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God. Those who ... fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth ... will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then see that they needed to be hewed and squared for

the building. But there will be ... no Mediator to plead their cause before the Father." (*Maranatha*, 41)

I was pointed to the remnant on the earth. The angel said to them, "Will ye shun the seven last plagues? ... If so, ye must die that ye may live. Get ready, get ready, get ready. Ye must have a greater preparation than ye now have.... Sacrifice all to God. Lay all upon His altar—self, property, and all, a living sacrifice. It will take all to enter glory." (*Ibid.*, 98)

"We are not to rest in the idea that because we are church-members we are saved, while we give no evidence that we are conformed to the image of Christ, while we cling to our old habits, and weave our fabric with the threads of worldly ideas and customs.... The ten virgins are watching in the evening of this earths history. All claim to be Christians. All have a call, a name, a lamp, and all claim to be doing God's service. All apparently watch for His appearing. But five are wanting. Five will be found surprised, dismayed, outside the banquet hall.

"We are represented either by the wise or by the foolish virgins. There are many who will not remain at the feet of Jesus, and learn of Him. They have not a knowledge of His ways; they are not prepared for His coming. They have made a pretense of waiting for their Lord. They have not watched and prayed with that faith which works by love and purifies the soul. They have lived a life of carelessness. They have heard and assented to the truth, but they have never brought it into their practical life. *The oil of grace is not feeding their lamps, and they are not prepared to enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb.*

"Be not like the foolish virgins, who take for granted that the promises of God are theirs, while they do not follow the injunctions of Christ. Christ teaches us that profession is nothing. If any man will come after me, He says, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

“When we stand the test of God in the refining, purifying process; when the furnace fire consumes the dross, and the true gold of a purified character appears, we may still say, with Paul, ‘Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after.... This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.’” (Ibid., 54, emphasis added.)

How can we grow in this vital grace? “In forgetfulness of self, they will grow in grace” (Ibid., 104). Dying to self is how we can grow in grace and wisdom in order to be ready for the husband’s coming.

“There is a remedy for the sin-sick soul. That remedy is in Jesus. Precious Saviour! His grace is sufficient for the weakest; and the strongest must also have His grace or perish.

“I saw how this grace could be obtained. Go to your closet, and there alone plead with God: ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.’ Be in earnest, be sincere.... Jacoblike, wrestle in prayer. Agonize.... You must make an effort....” (Ibid., 69, emphasis added.)

“All dishonesty, all sinful practices should be put far away. The oil of grace should be in our vessels with our lamps.... Sad indeed will be the condition of the soul who has had a form of godliness but has denied the power thereof; who has called Christ, Lord, Lord, and yet who has not His image and superscription.” (Ibid., 54).

“We need a thorough reformation in all our churches. The converting power of God must come into the church.... *Put not off the day of preparation. Slumber not in a state of unpreparedness, having no oil in your vessels with your lamps.*.... Let not the question remain in perilous uncertainty. Ask yourselves earnestly, Am I among the saved, or the unsaved? Shall I stand, or shall I not stand? He only that hath clean

hands and a pure heart shall stand in that day. (Ibid., 50, emphasis added)

“Let no one deceive his own soul in this matter. If you harbor pride, self-esteem, a love for the supremacy, vainglory, unholy ambition, murmuring, discontent, bitterness, evil-speaking, lying, deception, slandering, you have not Christ abiding in your heart.... You must have a Christian character that will stand....

“There must be thorough conversions among those who claim to believe the truth, or they will fall in the day of trial. God’s people must reach a high standard. They must be a holy nation, a peculiar people, a chosen generation—zealous of good works.” (Ibid.)

Dying to self, as we saw above, is not to be done in blind submission stopping the growth and development of the gifts that God has graciously granted to us. Nor are we to be inactive, isolating ourselves from others. Active missionary work is a means to grow in grace and maintain that precious oil of grace burning in our hearts and minds. Service is a divine principle and one of the greatest blessings to mankind. It is part of the wholeness of man, heritage of the Lord Jehovah, and tool for the restoration of man into His likeness. “The transforming power of Christ’s grace molds the one who gives himself to God’s service” (Ibid., 100). “The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 50).

“The oil of grace gives to men the courage, and supplies to them the motives, for doing every day the work that God appoints to them. The five foolish virgins had lamps (this means a knowledge of Scripture truth), but they had not the grace of Christ. Day by day they went through a round of ceremonies and external duties, but their service was lifeless, devoid of the righteousness of Christ. The Sun of Righteousness did not shine in their hearts and minds, and they had not the love of the truth which conforms to the life and character, the image and superscription, of Christ. The oil of grace was

not mingled with their endeavors. Their religion was a dry husk without the true kernel. They held fast to forms of doctrines, but they were deceived in their Christian life, full of self-righteousness, and failing to learn lessons in the school of Christ, which, if practiced, would have made them wise unto salvation.” (*Christian Service*, 263)

In our experience in the ministry, we have seen in ourselves and in the vast majority of people who have passed through here, how self can limit the work God wants to do through us. It's amazing how easily we can fall into the deception of thinking that we have great knowledge according to ourselves. But in reality, according to God and the truth, we have a tiny knowledge and wish to get some or all of the credit. We often try to cover this up with a facade of humility manufactured by ourselves based on knowledge acquired. Young and old, men and women, we all need to die to self. We need to behold more of Jesus and less of ourselves. As John the Baptist said, “He [Christ] must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30). We would accomplish more in the work of God if we would begin by dying to self and reaching the status of the apostle Paul when he said, “I die daily” (1 Corinthians 15:31).

“But when we give ourselves wholly to God and in our work follow His directions, He makes Himself responsible for its accomplishment. He would not have us conjecture as to the success of our honest endeavors. Not once should we even think of failure. We are to co-operate with One who knows no failure.” (*Christ's Object Lessons*, 363)

“It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you. We need to have far less confidence in what man can do and far more confidence in what God can do for every believing soul. He longs to have you reach after Him by faith. He longs to have you expect great things from Him. He longs to give you understanding in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. He can sharpen the intellect. He can give tact and skill. Put your talents into the work, ask God for wisdom, and it will be given you.” (*Christ's Object Lessons*, 146)

“In giving ourselves to God, we must necessarily give up all that would separate us from Him. Hence the Saviour says, “Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:33). Whatever shall draw away the heart from God must be given up. Mammon is the idol of many. The love of money, the desire for wealth, is the golden chain that binds them to Satan. Reputation and worldly honor are worshiped by another class. The life of selfish ease and freedom from responsibility is the idol of others. But these slavish bands must be broken. We cannot be half the Lord’s and half the world’s. We are not God’s children unless we are such entirely.

*“There are those who profess to serve God, while they rely upon their own efforts to obey His law, to form a right character, and secure salvation. Their hearts are not moved by any deep sense of the love of Christ, but they seek to perform the duties of the Christian life as that which God requires of them in order to gain heaven. Such religion is worth nothing. When Christ dwells in the heart, the soul will be so filled with His love, with the joy of communion with Him, that it will cleave to Him; and in the contemplation of Him, self will be forgotten. Love to Christ will be the spring of action.* Those who feel the constraining love of God, do not ask how little may be given to meet the requirements of God; they do not ask for the lowest standard, but aim at perfect conformity to the will of their Redeemer. With earnest desire they yield all and manifest an interest proportionate to the value of the object which they seek. A profession of Christ without this deep love is mere talk, dry formality, and heavy drudgery.”  
(*Steps to Christ*, 44, emphasis added)

“The work of God is to be carried on to completion by the co-operation of divine and human agencies. Those who are self-sufficient may be apparently active in the work of God; but if they are prayerless, their activity is of no avail. Could they look into the censer of the angel that stands at the golden altar before the rainbow-circled throne, they would see that the merit of Jesus must be mingled with our prayers

and efforts, or they are as worthless as was the offering of Cain. Could we see all the activity of human instrumentality, as it appears before God, we would see that only the work accomplished by much prayer, which is sanctified by the merit of Christ, will stand the test of the judgment. When the grand review shall take place, then shall ye return and discern between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." (*Review and Herald*, July 4, 1893)

Very often in the Bible and in the Spirit of Prophecy we find that before an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, there is a prior prerequisite which is usually related to dying to self. Experiencing death to self also helps us to see clearly what we otherwise would not see. The discernment is granted when self is not there. In a ministry, we constantly need eye salve to see that which normally we cannot humanly see. Notice all these steps in the next inspired thought:

"Transformation of character is to be the testimony to the world of the indwelling love of Christ. The Lord expects His people to show that the redeeming power of grace can work upon the faulty character and cause it to develop in symmetry and abundant fruitfulness.

"But in order for us to fulfill God's purpose, ***there is a preparatory work to be done. The Lord bids us empty our hearts of the selfishness which is the root of alienation. He longs to pour upon us His Holy Spirit in rich measure, and He bids us clear the way by self-renunciation.*** When self is surrendered to God, ***our eyes will be opened*** to see the stumbling stones which our un-Christlikeness has placed in the way of others." (*Maranatha*, 114, emphasis added)

"May the God of all grace so enlighten your understanding that you may discern eternal things, that by the light of truth your own errors, which are many, may be discovered to you just as they are, that you may make the necessary effort to put them away, and in the place of this evil, bitter fruit may bring forth fruit which is precious unto eternal life.

“Humble your poor, proud, self-righteous heart before God; get low, very low, all broken in your sinfulness at His feet. Devote yourself to the work of preparation.” (Ibid., 13)

***If we will die to self***, if we will enlarge our idea of what Christ can be to us and what we can be to Him, if we will *unite* with one another in the bonds of Christian fellowship, God will work through us with mighty power. Then we shall be sanctified through the truth. We shall indeed be chosen by God and *controlled by His Spirit*. Every day of life will be precious to us, because we shall see in it an opportunity to use our entrusted gifts for the blessing of others. We must forget self in loving service for others.” (Ibid., 120, emphasis added)

“You must experience a death to self, and must live unto God. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Self is not to be consulted. Pride, self-love, selfishness, avarice, covetousness, love of the world, hatred, suspicion, jealousy, evil surmisings, must all be subdued and sacrificed forever.” (Ibid., 58)

This is the dual function of a true Christian, dying and living, “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:11). “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Although a very broad and familiar topic in the Christian world, few truly understand the baptism of the Holy Spirit and experience it. The fact that it is called baptism, according to the biblical context involves a death or burial of something, nothing more and nothing less than of self. Without a death to self, there is no baptism of the Holy Spirit. The average Christian has settled with water baptism, of repentance, that of John the Baptist, which is very important and we must observe it. Those who have already been baptized fondly remember it as a covenant with the Lord, and it is greatly significant.

Others may remember it due to the pastor or person who officiated over the ceremony because it was so special, all of which is fine. But in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, it is Christ Himself who officiates. “But he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost” (John 1:33). How wonderful; being baptized by the Lord Jesus Christ!

This baptism is the one that truly transforms us. In water, there is no power to transform someone, but the Holy Spirit is another matter. The Holy Spirit gives us conversion and sanctification. Some experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit when they were baptized in water as in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, others later as in the case of the disciples in Ephesus (Acts 19:2–5). The problem now is that a large majority are left with only the baptism of water, without conversion. Worse than that is when leaders and members alike think that the mission is well accomplished with little or no interest in the further baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the real arena, at times it seems as if we have divorced ourselves from this essential part of the gospel and settle for a large amount of people dipped into water only. Remember that for God to shake the world He doesn't require thousands and millions of people. He has done it in the past with just a handful of people empowered with the fire of the Holy Spirit.

“The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit. .... The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God.” (*The Desire of Ages*, 172–173)

When we are alive, we resist the attracting power of God, but when we die to self, we yield and wonderful things happen.

“If we do not resist this drawing, we shall be led to the foot of the cross in repentance for the sins that have crucified the Saviour. Then the Spirit of God through faith produces a new life in the soul. The thoughts and desires are brought

into obedience to the will of Christ. The heart, the mind, are created anew in the image of Him who works in us to subdue all things to Himself. Then the law of God is written in the mind and heart, and we can say with Christ, ‘I delight to do Thy will, O my God.’” (Psalm 40:8) (Ibid., 175)

Christ not only died for us on the cross, but His life here on earth was a manifestation of that great agape love, which is also to die or sacrifice for another person and be a blessing to that person. Notice this principle of agape love in the Father and the Son. “For God so loved [agape] the world, that *he gave* his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16, emphasis added.) “Greater love [agape] hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love [agape] the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. . . . Hereby perceive we the love [agape] of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. . . . For God is love [agape]” (1 John 3:14, 16; 4:8, emphasis added.)

It is interesting how immediately after Jesus spoke about the presence of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit (John 14:26), He referred to peace. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

“In the heart of Christ, where reigned perfect harmony with God, there was perfect peace. He was never elated by applause, nor dejected by censure or disappointment. Amid the greatest opposition and the most cruel treatment, He was still of good courage. But many who profess to be His followers have an anxious, troubled heart, because they are afraid to trust themselves with God. They do not make a complete surrender to Him; for they shrink from the consequences that such a surrender may involve. *Unless they do make this surrender, they cannot find peace.*

“It is the love of self that brings unrest. . . . The value of our work is in proportion to the impartation of the Holy Spirit.” (*The Desire of Ages*, 330, emphasis added)

“In perfect acquiescence there is perfect rest.” (Ibid., 331)

“While self is unsubdued, we can find no rest.” (Ibid., 336)

We can conclude, therefore, that with the help of the Holy Spirit we can die to self, have holy peace, and advance with the work assigned to us. Humans have associated peace with those who have gone to rest. In fact, when someone dies he is referred to with the words “rest in peace.” The Bible teaches that the dead know nothing (Ecclesiastes 9:5). They are not consciously enjoying peace because they don’t feel anything, but those who die to self, to sin, being in life, can enjoy a peace that surpasses all understanding, because it is a peace that only God can give.

“His whole life was a sacrifice of Himself for the saving of the world. Whether fasting in the wilderness of temptation or eating with the publicans at Matthew’s feast, He was giving His life for the redemption of the lost.” (*The Desire of Ages*, 278)

Christ gave us the example by being baptized in water though He had no sin. He was also baptized on that occasion with the Holy Spirit. Not content with that, each day He was baptized with the Holy Spirit, and that was how He was able to finally participate in another baptism, that of suffering and blood (Matthew 20:22–23).

“The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Not for Himself, but for others, He lived and thought and prayed. From hours spent with God He came forth morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit.” (*Prayer*, 176)

The inspired pen referred us and our children to follow the example of Jesus: “Teach your children that it is their privilege to receive every day the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Let Christ find you His helping hand to carry out His purposes” (*Counsels to Parents, Teacher, and Students*, 131). What a wonderful privilege to be baptized by Jesus every day! Alleluiah!

When we allow the Holy Spirit to dwell in our lives, we are allowing God to dwell in us. Recall that throughout the Bible God says over and over that He wants to dwell with us. “And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people” (Isaiah 65:19).

“Not only are we objects of His sparing mercy, His pardoning love; we are more than this. The Lord rejoices over His people. He delights in them. He is their surety. He will beautify all who are serving Him with a whole heart with the spirit of holiness. He clothes them with righteousness. He loves those who do His will, who express His image.” (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 414)

“We have no time to lose. The end is near. The passage from place to place to spread the truth will soon be hedged with dangers on the right hand and on the left. Everything will be placed to obstruct the way of the Lord’s messengers, so that they will not be able to do that which it is possible for them to do now. We must look our work fairly in the face and advance as fast as possible in aggressive warfare. From the light given me of God I know that the powers of darkness are working with intense energy from beneath, and with stealthy tread Satan is advancing to take those who are now asleep, as a wolf taking his prey.” (*Maranatha*, 29)

“Whatever our position, we are dependent upon God, who holds all destinies in His hands. He has appointed us our work, and has endowed us with faculties and means for that work. So long as we surrender the will to God, and trust in His strength and wisdom, we shall be guided in safe paths, to fulfill our appointed part in His great plan. But the one who depends upon his own wisdom and power is separating himself from God. Instead of working in unison with Christ, he is fulfilling the purpose of the enemy of God and man.” (*The Desire of Ages*, 209)

“Soon our eyes were drawn to the east, for a small black cloud had appeared, about half as large as a man’s hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. We all

in solemn silence gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud. The bottom appeared like fire; a rainbow was over the cloud, while around it were ten thousand angels, singing a most lovely song; and upon it sat the Son of man.

“When it first appeared in the distance, this cloud looked very small. The angel said that it was the sign of the Son of man. As it drew nearer the earth, we could behold the excellent glory and majesty of Jesus as He rode forth to conquer. His hair was white and curly and lay on His shoulders; and upon his head were many crowns. His feet had the appearance of fire; in His right hand was a sharp sickle; in His left, a silver trumpet. His eyes were as a flame of fire, which searched His children through and through. Then all faces gathered paleness, and those that God had rejected gathered blackness. Then we all cried out, “Who shall be able to stand? Is my robe spotless?” Then the angels ceased to sing, and there was some time of awful silence, when Jesus spoke: “Those who have clean hands and pure hearts shall be able to stand; My grace is sufficient for you.” At this our faces lighted up, and joy filled every heart. And the angels struck a note higher and sang again, while the cloud drew still nearer the earth.

“The earth trembled before Him, the heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains. (*Maranatha*, 289)

“Christ will come in His own glory, in the glory of His Father, and in the glory of the holy angels. Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels, the beautiful, triumphant sons of God, possessing surpassing loveliness and glory, will escort Him on His way. In the

place of a crown of thorns, He will wear a crown of glory—a crown within a crown. In the place of that old purple robe, He will be clothed in a garment of whitest white, so as no fuller on earth can white (Mark 9:3) it. And on His vesture and on His thigh a name will be written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.” (Revelation 19:16) (Ibid., 291)

“All heaven will be emptied of the angels, while the waiting saints will be looking for Him and gazing into heaven, as were the men of Galilee when He ascended from the Mount of Olivet. Then only those who are holy, those who have followed fully the meek Pattern, will with rapturous joy exclaim as they behold Him, ‘Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us.’ And they will be changed ‘in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump’—that trump which wakes the sleeping saints, and calls them forth from their dusty beds, clothed with glorious immortality, and shouting, ‘Victory! Victory over death and the grave!’” (Ibid., 290) Amen!

Dear friend, truly God desires to see many family ministries devoted full time to His work. Time is short and he is knocking on the door today, what is your answer? What keep you from starting now a center of influence at a family level to impact the world by God’s grace? Remember it is an act of faith, but that faith must be based on the advice and promises of God’s Word. “Enlarge the place of thy tent, and the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; Do not spare; lengthen your cords, and strengthen thy stakes.” (Isaiah 54:2)

God bless you!

***Recommendation of published works***  
(In addition to the Bible)

**Spiritual Growth**

*Steps to Christ*, E. G. White  
*The Desire of Ages*, E. G. White  
*Faith and Works*, E. G. White

**Home**

*The Christian Home*, E. G. White  
*Child Guidance*, E. G. White  
*Man of Steel and Velvet*, Aubrey Andelin  
*Fascinating Womanhood*, Helen Andelin

**Health**

*The Ministry of Healing*, E. G. White  
*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, E. G. White  
*What is Medical Missionary Work?*, W. D. Frazee  
*The Medical Missionary Manual*, Vance Ferrell, compilation  
of E. G. White  
*Counsels on Health*, E. G. White  
*Medical Ministry*, E. G. White  
*Encyclopedia of Natural Remedies*, Harvestime Books

**Education**

*Education*, E. G. White  
*The Great Controversy*, E. G. White  
*Studies in Christian Education*, E. A. Sutherland

**Administration**

*Bible Stewardship Handbook*, R. Eduardo Gomez (Spanish only)  
*Counsels on Stewardship*, E. G. White

**Agriculture**

*How to Grow More Vegetables*, John Jeavons

**Evangelism**

*Christian Service*, E. G. White

# FAMILY OUTREACH & EVANGELISM

"I highly recommend this book. It is a valuable tool that can revolutionize the lives of all who read it and practice its advice."

Armando Miranda, *General Vice-President  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist*

"For people thinking to start a family project or a small institution Jaime Espinal's book is invaluable. The principles that promote success are clearly outlined as are the potential pitfalls. I strongly urge, to anyone venturing out to serve God, that they read and apply the timeless wisdom found therein."

Frank Fournier, *President  
ASI Adventist – Laymen's Services & Industries*

"It was part of God's original plan that families play an integral role in safeguarding the interests of society and the church. Unfortunately the family is under great attack, both from the surrounding society as well as from the failure of men and women to appreciate their God-given responsibilities. Jaime Espinal's book Family Outreach & Evangelism highlights practical ways that the family can still fulfill this God-given purpose. He outlines the dangers that face the family today, while pointing to ways in which this divine institution can reflect God's ideal. Family Outreach & Evangelism will be a help to individuals and families that are looking to follow God's plan for their lives, whether that is in their local community, in an ongoing ministry, or in serving in another country."

Steven Grabiner, *President  
OCI Outpost Centers International*



**Jaime Espinal** Since 1989, Jaime has dedicated his life to work as health missionary in several countries. In 1995, along with his wife Marjorie, he pioneered a family-run ministry called Centro Misionero de Salud (CMS—Missionary Health Center), a medical missionary training school in Mexico. His work with CMS has greatly impacted the Latin community with a number of diverse benefits through the local Centers of Influence. Graduates of the school implement the services at these regional centers.

Besides the work at CMS, Jaime travels extensively, holding seminars and evangelistic seminars, sharing his powerful conversion history. Jaime is originally from Colombia, South America, and he has four children: Jonathan, Anamaria, Elizabeth, and Abigail. He loves them dearly, along with his wife Marjorie. To learn more about CMS please visit [www.cmsmex.com](http://www.cmsmex.com) or write to [jaime@cmsmex.com](mailto:jaime@cmsmex.com).

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