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Formation and Development of Caring Ministries Based on Neighboring Evangelism Model

Lloyd I. Munson

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Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF CARING
MINISTRIES BASED ON NEIGHBORING
EVANGELISM MODEL

A Project Report
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Lloyd I. Munson

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APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:



C. Raymond Holmes, Chairman



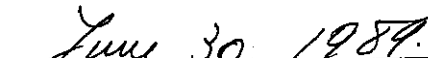
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Neighboring Evangelism and the Caring Church.....	1
Justification of Neighboring Evangelism project.....	2
Summary and Chapter Overview.....	6
 Chapter	
I. NEIGHBORING EVANGELISM: CONCEPT AND CHALLENGE.....	10
A Proposed Neighboring Evangelism Model.....	10
Problems to Be Confronted in Formation of Neighboring Evangelism.....	12
Neighboring as Reference-group Bonding.....	18
Responsibility: The Ethic of Neighboring Evangelism	22
II. A BIBLICAL RATIONALE FOR NEIGHBORING EVANGELISM.....	25
Introduction.....	25
Lay Witness in the Early Church.....	26
"Brokenness" as a Prerequisite for Neighboring Evangelism	33
Spiritual Gifts: Equipping for Neighboring Evangelism	36
The Woman at Jacob's Well: Grace Plus Truth	38
Neighboring Evangelism and the Judgment	40
Summary	43
III. NEIGHBORING EVANGELISM IN THREE DIVERSE CONGREGATIONS.....	44
Formation of "INTOUCH" Ministry in Response to Neighboring Evangelism.....	46
Formation of "I.C.U." Ministries in Response to Neighboring Evangelism.....	49
"Caring Ministries" in the Napa, California, Church.....	66
IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF NEIGHBORING EVANGELISM MODEL IN BERKELEY.....	70
Entry Strategy	70
Implementation Timetable.....	72

Berkeley Survey and Evaluation.....	73
Berkeley Questionnaire	74
Criteria for Evaluation of Interviews.....	76
Interview Data and Interpretation.....	77
Summary	84
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	85
Summary	85
Conclusions	87
Recommendations.....	90

APPENDIXES

1. "INTOUCH" SABBATH SCHOOL WORKBOOK.....	91
2. CALLING AND CARING MINISTRIES.....	99
3. ALTERNATE SABBATH SCHOOL SCHEDULE.....	101
4. "GIFT OF LOVE".....	104
5. NEIGHBORING EVANGELISM OVERHEADS	106
6. HANDOUTS AND OVERHEADS FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS EMPHASIS SABBATH 1.....	109
7. HANDOUTS AND OVERHEADS FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS EMPHASIS SABBATH 2.....	116
8. HANDOUTS AND OVERHEADS FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS EMPHASIS SABBATH 3.....	122
9. HANDOUTS AND OVERHEADS FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS EMPHASIS SABBATH 4.....	128
10. HANDOUTS AND OVERHEADS FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS EMPHASIS SABBATH 5.....	132
11. HANDOUTS AND OVERHEADS FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS EMPHASIS SABBATH 6.....	148
12. MATERIALS USED IN "FORGIVENESS" SUPPORT GROUP	161
BIBLIOGRAPHY	180

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure

1. Interrelational Model of Neighboring Contacts11
2. "Sector View" of the Church and the World13
3. "Witnessing" Within a Fragmented World View17
4. Suggested Schedule for Use of Smedes and
Augsburger book.68

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1. Persons and Agencies by which Non-SDAs First Became
Acquainted with the SDA Church. 4
2. Persons and Agencies That Influenced Non-SDAs most to
Join the Church4
3. How American People Got Most of Their Information
about S D As.7

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A special thanks to Dr. Arnold Kurtz for steering me through the morass of trying to formulate a viable "project" from a concept. Also to Dr. Raymond Holmes for rescuing me from several committee changes.

Most of all, a thanks to Jeanne, my loving wife who not only suffered through the limbo times of this project, but also allowed me to commandeer her work-space and computer for the final draft.

INTRODUCTION

Neighboring Evangelism and the Church

An evaluation of current "Church Growth" programs promoting "caring ministries" within the Seventh-Day Adventist Church indicates a need for encouraging a wider variety of individualized ministries more nearly reflecting the diversity of Spiritual Gifts in the Church. These Gifts, and the caring ministries they release within the congregation, could provide a strong base for unity in the Church. In our common every-day contacts in our own neighborhood, we are to represent God's love to the world in a way that can make effective His grace upon their hearts. It is my observation that witness programs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church seem to ignore the diversity of Spiritual Gifts. Instead, generalized and often centralized lay-witness programs proliferate with seminars that attempt to squeeze the layman into the mold of the program. We tend to "painfully qualify" those we have gathered into the seminars, rather than to gather those who the Holy Spirit has "pre-qualified" through the painful education of life's experiences. We need a framework within which unique ministries may develop spontaneously within the local cultural setting. It is the thesis of this project that when evangelism is moved away from "confrontational" techniques toward a more "relational" environment, it will become more natural, more effective, more personally satisfying to the "evangelist" and make a greater impact upon the evangelized. I believe effective "neighboring evangelism" would attract and keep a wider spectrum of persons and thus broaden the gifts and their resulting ministries within the local

congregation. Rather than trying to create unreal exotic relationships through artificial programming, there would be encouragement to deepen existing "neighbor" relationships with people "outside" the church toward a more natural, spontaneous, and productive witness.

This project evolved within the context of three congregations in Northern California. The intent of the project was to create an awareness of the concept of "Neighboring Evangelism" and assist interested church members in developing indigenous ministries that would reflect both the uniqueness of the Church's spiritual gifts and the uniqueness of the community's needs. The churches representing varying membership size and different sociological settings were:

1. Richmond, CA—City Setting..... 168 members
2. Chico, CA —Rural and Affluent 517 members
3. Napa, CA —Suburban/ Retirement..... 1,136 members

In each congregation the task tended to unfold in three phases: (1) teaching the concept of "neighboring evangelism"; (2) creating a climate in which current ministries could be re-evaluated and new ministries could spontaneously evolve; and (3) helping members identify their gifts and resulting ministry in a way that would effectively compliment the other ministries in the congregation.

Justification of Neighboring Evangelism Project

As a pastor reflecting upon my earlier involvement in various "public crusades," I have observed a common yet distressing pattern. It has become increasingly evident that persons who respond to advertising from a non-SDA background tend to come alone and sit in the meetings alone. There seems to be very little "friendship" contact with the members of the church. When public

evangelism crusades were held in the churches which I pastored, it was possible for me to follow through on this observation. On the other hand, if the people from the community stayed on through to baptism, it was usually because of a friendship or neighbor acquaintance with a member of the congregation. Those who did not have that personal tie rarely made it through to baptism, and some who did make it that far drifted back into the "World" within nine months or less. Those who came as a result of a friend or neighbor in the church or made friends within the first six months quickly were assimilated into the church family, and within a year were actively involved in a role, task, or group. In most cases their activity involved reaching out to their friends.

This observation finds statistical support in the findings of a three-year (1972-1975) study of twenty-eight Seventh-day Adventist Churches (representing 3,000 members) in the Lake Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Gottfried Oosterwal published the results and evaluation of his research in Patterns of S.D.A. Church Growth in America.¹ These church members responded to a survey asking a variety of questions about their membership in the Church. One of the most significant findings was that the highest factor for non-SDA's initial acquaintance with the SDA Church was through "Neighbors, friends, etc." (see table 1). When we add to this "Relatives" and "SDA Publications" (which are usually acquired from SDA acquaintances) the percentage jumps to 80 percent.

Even though the church pastor usually steps in to lead the "seeker" through a series of Bible studies to a "decision," statistics (see table 2) indicate that 57 percent are influenced to join by "Neighbors, friends, or relatives."

¹Gottfried Oosterwal, Patterns of S.D.A. Church Growth in America (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1976), p.43.

TABLE 1

PERSONS AND AGENCIES BY WHICH NON-SDA FIRST
BECAME ACQUAINTED WITH THE SDA CHURCH

Neighbors, friends, etc.	43%
Relatives	24%
SDA publications	13%
Radio and TV programs	4%
SDA Community Services	4%
SDA minister	3%
Public evangelism	2-3%
Other	7-8%

SOURCE: Gottfried Oosterwal, Patterns of S.D.A. Church Growth in America
(Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1976), p. 39.

TABLE 2

PERSONS AND AGENCIES THAT INFLUENCED NON-SDAs
MOST TO JOIN THE SDA CHURCH

Neighbors, friends	4%
SDA minister	21%
Relatives	17%
Public evangelism	13%
SDA schools	9%
SDA publications	7%
Radio, TV	7%
Bible correspondence schools	2-3%
Other	2-3%

SOURCE: Gottfried Oosterwal, Patterns of S.D.A. Church Growth in America
(Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1976), p. 43.

Of special significance to this project is the "influenced to join" question when broken down as to sex. A similar study done in Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists indicated (as did Oosterwal's) that women showed a much greater involvement with their church than did men. The difference demands a serious consideration as it reflects upon "neighboring evangelism." Oosterwal's study found "Neighbors, friends, etc." influenced men to join the church at a much higher percentage (55-70%) than women (20-30%). By contrast, "Relatives" influenced women (60-65%) much more than men (30-35%).

If the Seventh-Day Adventist Church of the future seeks to encourage whole families to enjoy the corporate life of the Body of Christ; if indeed we are intending to attract more men into the church, we must move toward an evangelistic mind-set and methodology that takes "friendship" and "neighborliness" more seriously as an evangelistic influence.

Another finding from Oosterwal's report indicates that

...the 25-40 year old age group was by far the most poorly represented in the SDA church population. In one of the black churches in this sample there was not one male in the age group 30-40, and only 15 in the whole age group of 20-45. This out of a total church population of 180 members who had filled out the questionnaires. But in the white churches the situation was also critical. The number of people, especially males, baptized in the age group of 25-40 was very small. And the number of people leaving the church—or who are simply "missing"—is very high among this particular group. . . . It was found that this age group was more influenced to join the SDA Church by friends, neighbors, colleagues, etc., than by any other agency. (emphasis supplied)²

From this finding along with my own observation, I conclude that the very strength and viability of the future church leadership and the very future of

²Ibid., p. 43.

the SDA schools will be seriously jeopardized if we do not take a candid look at "friendship evangelism." Oosterwal continues:

As friends, colleagues, acquaintances, etc., are the single most significant factor that influences people in this age group to become members of the church, or to remain members, so does this factor also work as a negative influence on church growth. Non-Adventist friends, colleagues and neighbors exert a powerful influence on people in this age group not to join the church, or to drop their membership.³

The Seventh-day Adventist Church must discover a sociologically and theologically sound method of evangelizing this group. We must create ways of socializing this age group into the church and also create a climate within the church that will effectively close the "back door."

Still another piece of research completed in 1970 and reported by E. W. Tarr speaks to the issue of "relational" versus "propositional" evangelism. It shows that even from the "informational" aspect, the "Truth" was perceived as having been received from a personal contact with one's "Neighbors, friends, etc." (see table 3).

Summary

From my own observations in ministry and a careful consideration of the above research, I conclude that "Friend, neighbor, and colleague" relationships represent the most significant factor influencing the non-SDA population in America to consider, join, and remain in the SDA Church. To summarize the above findings as they relate to the concept of "neighboring evangelism":

1. The first contact is through neighbor or friends.
2. The greatest influence to join is neighbors or friends.
3. Men more than women join because of neighbors or friends.

³ibid., p. 45.

TABLE 3
HOW AMERICAN PEOPLE GOT MOST OF THEIR
INFORMATION ABOUT SDAs

Neighbors, friends, etc.	41%
Literature handed out	17%
Newspaper	12%
Relatives	11%
Radio, TV, SDA institutions, literature, etc.	18%

SOURCE: Gottfried Oosterwal, Patterns of S.D.A. Church Growth in America
(Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1976), p. 43.

4. Twenty-five to forty-year-olds are influenced most by their neighbors and friends.
5. Fifty-eight percent of the information about SDA's is from neighbors or friends.

The distinctive SDA lifestyle often isolates and insulates from the "world." Yet "neighbors and friends" seem to be the most effective medium for the evangelization of an important cross section of America. The very purity and distinctiveness of Adventist doctrine and lifestyle may be creating a significant barrier to effective communication of the Gospel. It is the purpose of this project to come to grips with this issue from a sociological, biblical, and organizational perspective. I have sought to propose an understandable model and create workable examples of what could provide a desirable direction for personal evangelism within any Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Chapter 1 begins with a proposed model and description of "neighboring evangelism." A number of issues such as "isolation" mentality are discussed in the context of "World versus Church." The chapter closes with sociological and ethical considerations. Chapter 2 describes a biblical rationale for "neighboring evangelism" in a discussion of "incarnational" ministry. Chapter 3 reports on formative caring ministries which evolved from the teaching of "neighboring evangelism" concepts in three congregations. Chapter 4 reports on and evaluates the final implementation of "neighboring evangelism" based upon concepts and ministries developed in the first three congregations. Chapter 5 considers summary, conclusions, and how pastoral skills were shaped by this project along with concluding recommendations.

One of the clearest statements defining the premise upon which this project was based is found in the book, Ministry of Healing:

It is through the social relations that Christianity comes in contact with the world. Every man or woman who has received the Divine illumination is to shed light on the dark pathway of those who are unacquainted with the better way. Social power, sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, must be improved in bringing souls to the Saviour. Christ is not to be hid away in the heart as a coveted treasure, sacred and sweet, to be enjoyed solely by the possessor. We are to have Christ in us as a well of water, springing up into everlasting life, refreshing all who come in contact with us.⁴

⁴E. G. White, The Ministry of Healing (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Assoc., 1942), p. 496.

CHAPTER ONE

NEIGHBORING EVANGELISM

CONCEPT AND CHALLENGE

A Proposed Neighboring Evangelism Model

For over a decade the Seventh-day Adventist Church has focused evangelism in the direction of what the leaders call the "caring Church." A wide variety of pre-evangelism programs are divided into categories of "pathways" and "bridges." What is often ignored is that the member as a "person" rather than merely part of the "program" is the actual pathway or bridge. It is the intent of this study to propose a concept/model called "neighboring evangelism." It begins with the discovery of one's Spiritual Gifts and emerges as personalized ministry. It is the active presence of the normal Christian in the common relationships of life, exposing and expressing the "Word" of God in his "world." It is the realization of effective personal evangelism through the loving application of neighboring attitudes and behavior.

The illustration in figure 1 shows the interdependence of "programs" and "neighboring" that could help keep these two worlds in balance. Koinonia becomes the common ground of contact between "Church and World."

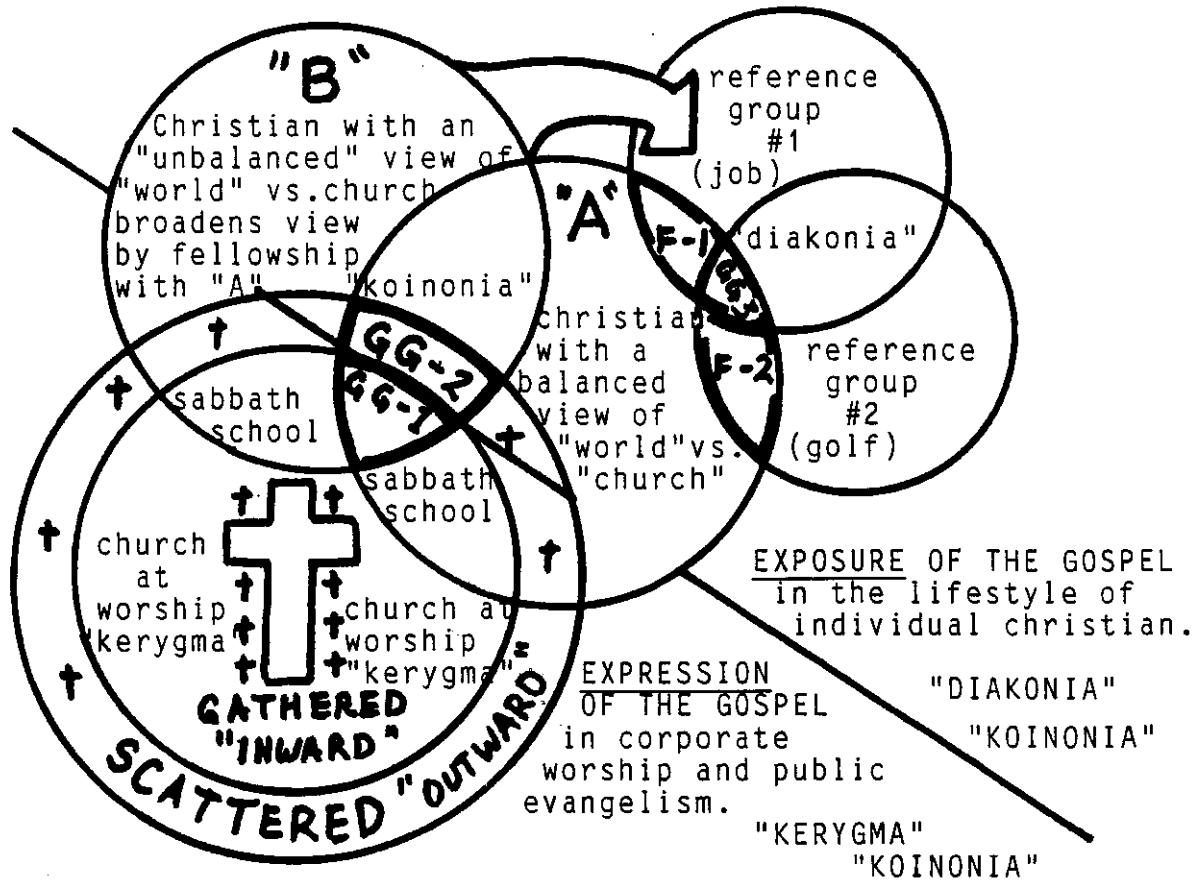


Fig. 1. Interrelational model of neighborhood contacts.

"Spontaneous witness within the context of existing neighborhood relationships" is the goal represented by this model. As the spiritual maturity of a church member is deepened through Sabbath School "inreach" (GG-1), the Gospel extends into Christian homes both through every-day neighboring and "growth groups" (GG-2). These in turn are the natural out-growth of common neighborhood contacts (GG-3). Christian "A"s friends in the neighborhood (F-1 & F-2) are drawn into "growth-group" 2 (GG-2) and finally into Sabbath School (GG-1). The Church's mission to the "World" (F-1 & F-2) finds its fulfillment through Christian "A"s extension of him/herself into the world through natural "neighboring" ties. The inevitable and natural result of caring acts by caring people who belong to caring groups—real people in real touch with their real world results in real growth of a real church. Also, Christian "B" is drawn away from lethargy as he/she comes in contact with "A"s "worldly" friends. Intentional caring maintains the balance of both "exposing" and "expressing" God's love in the world (neighborhood) where He has placed us.

Problems to Be Confronted in Formation of Neighboring Evangelism

To understand the "Neighboring Evangelism" concept we must first come to understand the "world view" commonly held by secular society. Some of the methods of personal evangelism used by evangelical Christians do not take into account the magnitude of discrepancy between the modern popular philosophy of life over against the biblical view. The fragmentation of personalities produced by an increasingly secularized society is all too often found in the Church as well. A clearer understanding of this "secular" world view may help us to discover how we can reach our neighbors more effectively with the Gospel.

Overcoming a Segmented "World View"

Many of our neighbors here in America do not have a holistic understanding of life. Secular humanists and a majority of American Christians alike tend to view their world as "segmented" into a variety of compartments with only occasional overlap. Hans-Reudi Weber in his book Salty Christians has provided a graphic illustration of this "western" phenomenon. (See fig. 2.) Other more "primitive" cultures such as those of Tibet or New Guinea find a religious meaning in all facets of life. But since the industrial revolution peaked in the late nineteenth century, the whole western industrially developed society has fragmented life into distinct compartments and has done so at the risk of losing its collective "soul."

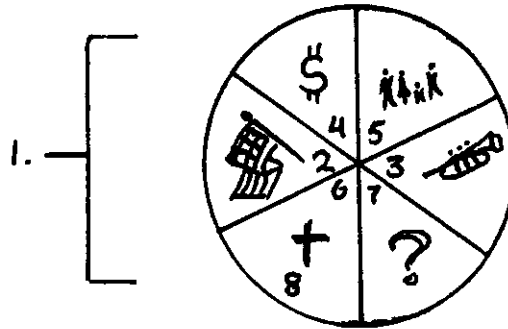


Fig. 2. "Sector view" of the Church and the World.

The "Sector view" of the Church and the World is popular but unscriptural. According to this view, the life of society (1) is divided into sectors— political (2) cultural (3) economic (4) family (5) religious (6) and others (7). Because Christ (8) is regarded as Lord only of the "religious sector" of life, people believe that the Church is concerned only with "religious" questions, and not with the political, social, or economic issues of our time.

SOURCE: Hans-Reudi Weber, Salty Christians (New York: Seabury Press, 1963), p. 12

Francis Schaeffer has pointed out that the real problem with this view is that the "lower story" of carnal values tends to eat up the "upper story" of spiritual values. In other words, the social/secular sector begins to form and inform the spiritual sector affecting the whole value system of the individual.

That the Church is being informed by, more than it is informing the values of the larger society is an indicator that our society no longer appeals to supra-social authority and its sanctioning system to validate its norms.⁵

In the face of increasing social complexity, a church may attempt to preserve a dominant role in the lives of its followers by making a series of retreats from what it rightly perceives to be a hostile culture. The first two retreats tend to be more psychological/emotional while the third tends to involve the physical. As the resultant "gap" is superimposed on the many sets of

⁵Charles Young Glock, Religion and Society in Tension (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965), p. 184.

relationships in an individual's life (i.e., work, family, politics, leisure), the possibilities for conflict are multiplied.

A Christian might easily make responsible decisions in only one set of these relationships, but every person is involved in several sets of relationships at the same time. His loyalties and responsibilities in one may conflict directly with his responsibilities in the other.⁶

As a result, one is often forced into a hypocritical compartmentalization or some form of isolation.

One form of isolation is the development of a radically altered life-style often resulting in strained human relationships. Since such a Christian finds it difficult to reach a synthesis of "World vs. Church," there is often a radical polarization in which the Church captures all of a person's interests. Kelly even suggests this as one factor for why "conservative Churches" are growing.

One measure of demand is the degree of disruption of a person's former thoughts, habits, relationships, and life-style that it requires. Another is the scope of the believer's continuing attitudes, activities, and interests that it commandeers; that is, vocational, familial, recreational, artistic, etc. Most high-demand movements are relatively totalitarian in this respect—they want to dominate every aspect of their member's lives. . . ."⁷

A second form of isolation (often phase two of the first) exhibits itself as a creating or assimilating of oneself into a distinctly "sect-like" religious subculture. This seems to come as a natural consequence of an attempt to re-integrate the whole personality of the "isolated." From candid observation of "new conservative sects," we note that

A really vigorous religious movement is not hindered by an inhospitable cultural climate—it makes its own plausability-structure and (all too soon) acquires acceptance. It does so, not by appealing to most people, but by attracting a rather limited number of persons who will respond to its high

⁶Weber, Salty Christians, p. 15.

⁷Dean M. Kelly, Why Conservative Churches Are Growing (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 101.

demands; binding them into an intense, disciplined, and zealous movement and sweeping over every obstacle to exercise an inspiring influence in most men's lives—even those who originally would have found it implausible or unacceptable.⁸

G. Oosterwal, in his broad study of Adventism, observed some interesting side-effects of "isolation" in the lives of new Adventist believers.

Baptism into the SDA Church causes tremendous changes in people's lives, affecting their whole social and economic and personal and religious status. But after baptism this growth rate stops—often quite suddenly. A kind of plateau-mentality develops, preventing growth in spirituality, in holiness and perfection, in missionary involvement. All too little is known about the factors that create the plateau-mentality. A deeper study is urgently needed, for it stifles not only the spiritual growth of the Church; it prevents the Church from accomplishing its very mission.⁹

A third form of isolation involves an actual physical withdrawal from "pagan" society. By no means is this a new method of escaping one's responsibilities in society, but over the past several decades it has enjoyed a new popularity. Observe the growing number of "protestant monasteries" coast to coast. Ellen White (repected SDA pioneer leader) warned the Adventist Church members of the dangers of thus isolating themselves in "Jerusalem centers." The theological/sociological implications of this phenomenon should cause deep concern as it relates to our discussion of "neighboring evangelism."

Correctness and orthodoxy often shun involvement with an individual. In fact, professing Christians, congregations, and denominations have shunned involvement so long, they have ended up on a plateau of utter irrelevance. They disdain the valleys filled with the wrenching bitterness of blasted hopes. They turn from the hiways choked with the traffic in blighted souls. They run from the hideous cries of those lost in the night. . . . Perhaps it is well. For if they were there, they would shrink from the soiled hands clutching for help. High in a perfumed religious fog, they see only each other. And they hear only faintly the distant clamor below. Their noses closed to the stench of sin and their cloaks tucked carefully about

⁸Ibid., p. 94.

⁹ Oosterwal, Patterns of S.D.A. Church Growth, p. 59.

them. they pick their lily-white way to personal damnation. This is not the Church of Jesus Christ. The Church is found where the Master is found.¹⁰

So then, the danger of a wrong "world view" is that it eventually leads to isolation—and ultimately to withdrawal from society with its pressing needs. First, there comes the withdrawal of the Christian from the confusion of the "marketplace" to the "safety" of the Church. Then there follows a literal, physical withdrawal of residency from the city to the suburb. Yet there is an even more subtle kind of move. A Christian may remain "physically" in the proximity of the city, yet experience a physical isolation from the pulse-beat of society with all its pressing needs.

The Christian social witness is achieved only insofar as Christians are deeply implicated in the real life of society. . . . It is not made by Christian people gathering off by themselves in a parish house to study and discuss social issues. Witness becomes possible only when the Christian is on the actual scene where the conflict is taking place, the decision is being made, the legislation is being enacted.¹¹

...Religion which attempts to isolate and shield private life from the rest of the world, although it may contain the comfort of escape, the illusion of security, and the pride of pietism is essentially a fraud, and in any event, alien to the Gospel with its passion for the whole life of the world as it is.¹²

Though the graphic in figure 3 somewhat overstates the case, the kind of personal evangelism that often results from this fragmented "world view" is interestingly illustrated.

¹⁰Urie A. Bender, The Witness: Message. Method. Motivation (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1965), p. 93.

¹¹William Stringfellow, A Private and Public Faith (Grand Rapids: W.B.Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1962), p. 60

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 30.

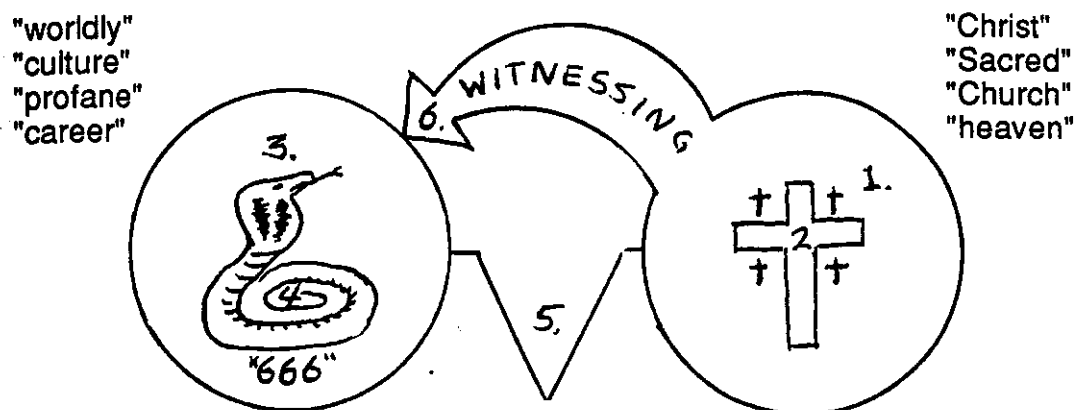


Fig. 3. "Witnessing" Within a Fragmented World View.

The Church (1) lives as if Christ (2) were the center of the Church's life alone; it brands the world (3) as entirely bad, and the realm of the Devil (4). As a result, a wide gulf (5) appears between the Church and the world, between (Sabbath) and work days, between worship and work, between our christian faith and the day-to-day decisions of family life, vocational life, and life as citizens. Because of the gulf, people acquire a distorted notion that evangelism is a sort of indian raid (6) into enemy territory (3) where raiders collect scalps and quickly retreat to safety. Too often they bring back only scalps—the scalps of religious emotions—not the whole man with his body and intellect, his work and leisure time.

SOURCE: Hans-Reudi Weber, Salty Christians (New York: Seabury Press, 1963), p. 15

The traditional approach to personal evangelism has been dangerously close to this same "confrontational" mentality. The negative fall-out can be seen in the attitude toward evangelism that

... fosters the delusion that the "good layman" is the man with a religious hobby, who spends much of his free time in the closed "religious" world of church activities.¹³

The model (fig.3) is a natural product of an erroneous doctrine of man which Adventists believe is unscriptural. According to the Adventist understanding, man is not to be fragmented into "body--soul--spirit." By

¹³Weber, Salty Christians, p. 10.

extension a person's life should not be segmented but must be holistic in its various functions. It follows that the methods used to approach society with the Gospel should also take into account a proper doctrine of man and his relationships within a given society. If our method of personal evangelism attracts or creates the "isolated," we perpetuate a very dangerous weakness. We will appeal largely to unintegrated personalities who upon joining the Church find themselves even more isolated and insulated than before. It then becomes the difficult task of the Church (the job falling usually upon the pastor) to re-integrate these new members back into society in such a way as to make them effective as a witness in the world from which they came. However, during that dark interval of re-integration, these members have largely abandoned their former friends, thus losing a valuable "web of influence" so important to the growth of the Church.

On the other hand, if one is careful to develop methods based upon a sound theology, caring persons who are already involved with and integrated into their own community will be attracted. These individuals would provide a strong base of leadership and a variety of continuing contacts for the expansion of the Church.

Somewhere midway between the extreme secular world-view and the extreme "religious" world-view there is a balanced philosophy of "church and society" which could help us form a proper and effective concept of "neighboring evangelism." We turn briefly to the discipline of sociology to sharpen this concept.

Neighboring as Reference-group Bonding

To better understand the social influences that bear upon the modification of religious behavior within a given neighborhood, we find

considerable help from a relatively new branch of sociology called "psycho-sociology of religion." It is defined as: "The study of social frameworks as they affect religious behavior." Included in its scope is the attempt to find answers to questions such as: "To what extent are our spiritual attitudes influenced by the groups (religious or secular) to which we are attached?" Our discussion of "groups" and "bonding" helps to construct the "neighboring" side of our witness model from its legitimate human context.

Social scientists have shown that our fundamental attitudes are influenced by the groups to which we are attached. This phenomenon has been observed to be so consistent that sociologists rely upon it as an accepted working hypothesis with a high degree of accuracy.

Knowing the attitudes of a person or a group is to a large extent to know the secret of their behaviour and conduct....¹⁴

Our attitudes are to be found in a social framework of reference; our behaviour relates to the groups to which we are psychologically bound....¹⁵

What is being said here is that by knowing only the reference groups to which a person belongs, it is possible (to a surprising degree of accuracy) to determine an attitude and values profile. If, on the other hand, only the attitudes and values of an individual are known, one can discover the probable reference groups to which that individual belongs or aspires. Furthermore:

If one of these reference groups accepts me as a member, by that very fact it imposes its values on me; in a sense I must conform to its norms, whether implied or formal, otherwise I expose myself to the censure, verbal or tacit,

¹⁴Joan Brothers, Readings in the Sociology of Religion (Oxford, New York: Pergamon Press, 1967), p. 170.

¹⁵ibid., p. 173.

of the other members; sanctions are reserved for any serious deviation or lack of discipline. . . .¹⁶

Each "membership group" serves as a limiting agency upon the broader spectrum of reference groups within a given personality.

The relations which exist between a member and his group may be described then as a sort of "social system" . . . reflecting the individual's psychology, his attitudes and his behaviour.¹⁷

Keeping these sociological principles in mind, there is a third concept with important bearing upon our discussion of "neighboring evangelism." With the increasing mobility of urban populace, "future reference groups" indicate the direction a person is "moving." For instance, in a "new money" suburban community exhibiting a distinctive pattern of upward mobility, attitudes more than likely reflect reference groups to which individuals "aspire."

The concept of the reference group is far wider than that of membership groups. The reference group covers any group to which the individual is connected psychologically, whether because he is already a member, or would like to be included in it at some future date. . . It may be an actual membership group like our family, our religious or professional group; but it may also be a group to which we aspire without being a member of it, as, for example, a certain social group, or an association whose prestige to our eyes is immense.¹⁸

Through careful planning and much prayer, and with a clear theological understanding of our mission to a given community, a church fellowship can become an attractive reference group to which many persons in the neighborhood aspire.

In addition to the above discussion, the field of sociology has contributed another valuable concept to help us toward more effective

¹⁶Ibid., p. 174.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 174, 175.

evangelism. From the study of "neighbor" has been distilled three distinct concepts:

NEIGHBORHOOD: The test of neighborhood is that the neighbors know one another, or that they be mutually aware of each other's presence and behave accordingly.¹⁹

NEIGHBORING: Neighboring is a matter of repeated face-to-face contacts and close personal relations within a contiguous city area.²⁰

NEIGHBORLINESS:

Manifest neighborliness—consists in neighborly acts— exchanges of visits, mutual lending and borrowing, and similar activities involving direct contact between neighbors.

Latent neighborliness—consists in favorable attitudes toward neighbors which come to expression in deeds, especially in times of emergency or crisis. Mann suggests that a continuum may be postulated with positive and negative poles. Both manifest and latent neighborliness may be almost totally absent in some people and very much in evidence in others. Between these two extremes many combinations of the two and varying degrees of intensity in both types may be found. ²¹

One of the goals of the "neighboring evangelism" model is to move church members from the "latent neighborliness" position forward toward a more consistent form of "manifest neighborliness." The church becomes effective in evangelism and thus fulfills the Gospel commission as it extends itself into the community through intentional manifestations of "Christian neighborliness." Not only "face-to-face" contacts but also a variety of converging interest and sentiments bind people into friendship groupings. These natural affiliations are primarily God-given "divine appointments" where the natural

¹⁹Nels Anderson, The Urban Community: A World Perspective (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1959, p. 31.

²⁰Svend Riemer, The Modern City: An Introduction to Urban Sociology (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1952), p.126.

²¹Peter H. Mann, "The Concept of Neighborliness," The American Journal of Sociology, 60 (September 1954): 164.

influences of life can change individuals—and by projection—society. By developing a careful sensitivity to the social and spiritual needs of neighbors, and by becoming involved in the legitimate areas of common interest, the love of Christ can flow unobstructed through the most normal, every-day acts of neighboring.

. . . the motive of true Christian love itself defines the manner of communication. The Christian must value the neighbor—not for what he can obtain from him, nor for the release from the sense of obligation to communicate the Gospel which contact with the neighbor may give him, but because he sincerely seeks the total welfare of the neighbor as a fellow human being in God's sight. . . . This means that christian neighboring must transcend the principle of reciprocity which is typical of social intercourse.²²

Responsibility: The Ethic of Neighboring Evangelism

Neighboring moves people toward a mutual sharing of events, attitudes, values, and "world-view." If it is consistent, it impinges a framework on virtually every relationship in life. It issues forth in real words and real actions which can be measured in space-time history. In contrast with the "fragmented" world-view described above, Christian neighboring is coherent and congruent in all sectors of life. Because neighboring describes relationships with a person, it involves responsibility. (Theoretically, if there is only one person in the universe, there is no social responsibility. As soon as there are two or more, then there is social responsibility.) Ethics are the rules governing social responsibility. There are primarily two perspectives whose presuppositions determine two contrasting outcomes.

²²Carl G. Kromminga, The Communication of the Gospel Through Neighboring (Richland, IA: T. Wener, 1964), p. 228.

The first is the "secularized" or humanist view of social responsibility and can be described as "Man in relation to man with both under society."

1. Man is a social animal.
2. He exists in interrelationship with others of his own kind and with all other life forms. This relationship may be defined as one of mutual rights and responsibilities.
3. The welfare of the individual and of the group cannot be considered apart from each other.
4. Man and all living matter possess intrinsic worth.
5. Man and all living matter are characterized by a need to grow and develop toward the realization of a unique potential.²³

Those who hold this view consider humankind's relationship to fellow humans as being dictated by the common higher good of society. One may or may not agree with "society" and so may or may not choose to act responsibly.

In contrast to this humanist view is the "three-dimensional" biblical view of social responsibility. It begins with the human's responsibility to God which then immediately issues in responsibility to one's neighbor. Using a similar construct as above:

1. People are created as social animals in relationship to God first—and then to other people.
2. Humans' relationship with God is meant to direct their relationship with other humans.
3. A human's spiritual growth develops in balanced relationship both to God and other humans through individual and group commitment.

²³Naomi I. Brill, Working with People: The Helping Process (Philadelphia: J.B.Lippincott Co., 1973, pp. 16, 17.

4. A person cannot develop a friendship with God apart from a relationship with other people.
5. People and their world have worth both by creation and redemption.
6. People realize their true potential when they use their unique creativity to bless others within the immediate context of their natural social framework—their neighborhood.

Not only do I bear responsibility to my neighbor as my brother or sister by virtue of "creation" by the same Father, but even more by the possibility of becoming a "blood" brother or sister by virtue of "redemption." Through neighboring evangelism the potential is raised for my neighbor to share in the redemption I have experienced. Creation ethic speaks of his/her temporal value while Redemption ethic addresses his/her eternal worth. The social responsibility of neighboring evangelism keeps one from the extremes of "social gospel" versus "fundamentalism."

CHAPTER TWO

A BIBLICAL RATIONALE FOR NEIGHBORING EVANGELISM

Introduction

In this chapter the biblical foundation for an understanding of neighboring evangelism is considered. The chapter focuses on the historical /biblical record of lay communication of the Gospel in the early Church, considers the mission of Christ as it correlates to the mission of the individual Christian (with emphasis upon the "wounded healer" concept), notes how spiritual gifts determine the context and content of witness as seen in Jesus' classic model of one-on-one evangelism, and examines how neighboring evangelism can be crucial to an understanding of Adventist eschatology.

My purpose is to demonstrate that neighboring evangelism is scripturally sound. Too often Christians, in their sincere search for a method of sharing their Faith, adopt someone else's method of marketing the Gospel without carefully considering any other criteria except that "it works." My objective is to uncover clear biblical examples and methods of personal evangelism. I do not focus on the global mission of the World Church nor the collective mission and/or method of the local congregation. This study assumes that the mission of the individual Christian is "To know God; and to make Him known." (The second half of this statement could be expanded for the sake of this study: "To expose and express God's presence in my life to my neighbor.")

For a dynamic and balanced concept of personal witness to emerge we must work within the framework of three contexts (see fig. 4):

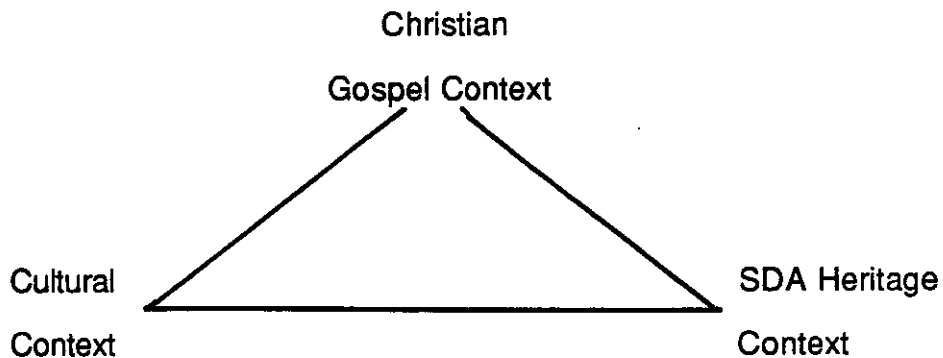


Fig. 4. Balanced contexts for effective personal witness.

There is the tendency for one or the other of these essential elements to take ascendancy, thus weakening the whole structure. These poles are not antagonistic to each other but, in fact, are quite necessary in monitoring each other and providing balance to the entire structure.

Lay Witness in the Early Church

In their earliest training, the apostles heard from the lips of their Master the absolute necessity of witness— of confessing Christ before men: "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will acknowledge him before my Father in heaven" (Matt 10:32 NIV). In Heb 13:15, the early Hebrew Christians were also encouraged: "Through Jesus, therefore, offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess His name." In John's first pastoral letter (4:15), he promises: "If anyone acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in Him and he in God."

In Acts 8:4 there is an even stronger term used—evangelidzomenoi: "Those who had been scattered preached the Word wherever they went." Acts

11:19-21 shows that this privilege was extended to the Greeks as well. Lay evangelism at that point was considered the will of God. Paul makes numerous references to the entire community of believers as individually taking part in verbal witness. He repeatedly expresses joy that he shares with them a partnership in "contending for the Faith" of the Gospel. Paul commends the Thessalonians for the "Lord's message rang out (ezechital) from you . . . in Macedonia" As one commentator has said: "(They) were like a great sounding board, . . . reverberations promptly reached in all directions." ²⁴

In still other texts, Paul admonishes Christians to be "imitators of Christ" and the apostles in their oral communication of the Gospel (I Cor 11:1; 4:16). Peter also charges the persecuted Christians to be always ready to give a reason for their "Faith" (I Pet 3:15). In Col 4:6, Paul instructs the believers: "Let your conversation be always full of Grace, seasoned with salt, . . ."

By way of contrast and for the sake of discussion of Neighboring Evangelism, we now look at the New Testament references to lay witness in the context of "neighborly" contact. Of course, the teaching of Jesus is full of parables, commands, and implications from the many miracles that teach us to "love thy neighbor." In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus pushes the love imperative beyond mere "neighbor" to "enemy." In Luke 6:27-36, He expands on the implications of that concept. He is very specific about what "neighboring" your enemy may include. In all of this, witness (personal evangelism) is seen in intimate relationship of "life-on-life" with another. In Luke 10:25-29, Jesus caps an intensive evangelism seminar for the seventy by telling the classic story of the Good Samaritan. It contains virtually all the elements of neighboring

²⁴R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of Acts (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), p. 234.

evangelism. The "who"—whoever; the "when"—whenever; the "what"—whatever; the "where"—wherever; and the "why"—the ability to fulfill a specific need. If verbally confessing Christ could be termed "expressing the Gospel," then what Jesus is speaking of in these texts could be termed "exposing the Gospel."

As the texts just considered indicate, neighboring evangelism demands positive action. Numerous verses also suggest one may become a better witness to Christ by what one does not do. The Lord Jesus will be more clearly seen by inoffensive conduct. The major portion of Rom 14 brings out this concept. Rom 15:7 and Jesus' prayer in John 17:21 imply that the world has a right to look at how we get along with our "neighbor" within the church and decide on that basis either for or against "Jesus as Lord." Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians (8:9-13), warns certain Christians to be sensitive to the spiritual immaturity of their neighbor so as not to offend them and thus damage their relationship with God.

In 1 Pet 2:20-23, the Christian is called to what may be the highest form of neighboring evangelism; namely, taking a beating for doing right and patiently enduring it. In the words of Peter, ". . . to this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps." The very word "witness" is derived from the Greek word behind the concept, namely, marturion. One does not have to be brutally tortured or actually die physically to experience "martyrdom." In vs. 24, Peter speaks of the dying to sin and of the "wounds" that heal. This text moves us quite naturally into a discussion of Christ's incarnation and His intended "incarnational ministry" for the individual Christian.

The Mission of Christ and His Church

The mission of Christ to our world is bound up in His Nature. The incarnation of God in Christ is shrouded in mystery. Yet the gospel of John begins by informing us that God extended Himself into the human predicament in the most vulnerable way. The "deeds" (grace) and "words" (truth) of God belong to each other as they form the most complete disclosure of Himself to mankind in the person of Jesus.

So the Word of God became a person and took up His abode in our being, full of grace and truth and we looked with our own eyes upon His glory, glory like the glory which an only son receives from a father. (John 1:14)

John is calling for us to apprehend the fullness of the display of God's glory as seen in Jesus:

GRACE (charitas) + TRUTH (Alethea) = GOD'S GLORY

Jesus came as the substantial visible expression—the very essence of the "invisible" God. To express that level of integrity (the blending of Grace and Truth), He did not merely "talk" love—He loved. He did not merely "preach" forgiveness—He forgave. He did not start a university—he invited men to live with Him twenty-four hours a day. He "tabernacled"—"pitched a tent"—"lived among" them. As in the Old Testament "tabernacle," He lived in their midst revealing what they could bear of God's presence and fullness.

The Word became flesh. God did not send a telegram or shower evangelistic Bible study books from heaven or drop a million bumper stickers from the sky saying, "SMILE—GOD LOVES YOU!" He sent a man, His Son, to communicate the message. His strategy has not changed. He still sends men and women—before He sends tracts and techniques—to change the world. You may think His strategy risky—but that is God's problem, not yours. ²⁵

²⁵Rebecca Pippert, Pizza Parlor Evangelism (Downers Grove, Ill: Intervarsity Press, 1976), p. 12.

To identify yet not become identical is the delicately balanced ministry of Jesus that flowed naturally from His very essence.

As already noted, the Christian life is to be an extension of the incarnation. In John 9:5 Jesus says, "I am the Light of the World." In 12:35 He warns: ". . . you will have the light just a little longer." In His prayer in John 17:18, Jesus states to His Father: "As you sent Me into the world, I have sent them (disciples) into the world." In plain language, Jesus is extending the benefits of the incarnation to the world through His disciples—and by extension, through every Christian. Paul underlines this concept in Eph 5:8: ". . . but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of the Light." He goes on to show just how Christians are chosen and equipped extensions of the Gospel. Spirit-filled men and women, full of grace and truth, living a life of theological and cultural integrity are God's continuing method of drawing a rebellious world back to Himself. As that great Chinese Christian Watchman Nee has so aptly stated:

In our day God commits Himself to the Church. His power and His work are in the Church. Just as in the Gospels we find all God's work given to the Son, so today God has entrusted all His works to the Church and will not act apart from it. ²⁶

Jesus, in His life and death and ascension, was a concentration of God's fullness. Christians indwelt by His Spirit are collectively the diffusion of that fullness. In 2 Pet 1:4, we are called to be "partakers of the Divine." The vital distinction to be made is the limiting factor that humans "indwelt" by the Spirit still remain human. The Living God indwells and works through humans to meet human need—but, the Divine Guest is never prisoner nor tyrant. One remains a free moral agent with the continuing option of independence. The indwelling

²⁶Watchman Nee, The Release of the Spirit (Cloverdale, IN: Ministry of Life, 1965), p. 50.

Spirit of God is our infallible guide through grace into all Truth (John 16:13). As we live this life "in Christ," we are being empowered not so much to make us "smart" as to make us "holy" (2 Cor 5:17). Through the agency of the Holy Spirit "man becomes a partaker of the Divine Nature. " At one and the same time, we are in Christ and Christ is in us. "Christ in us will meet the Christ in our brethren." Thus, the blending of Grace and Truth in our individual lives shows forth God's glory.

Christ's model helps us see that effective evangelism involves the visualization and verbalization of truth. Christ's personal communication strategy was incarnational. To incarnate means to become flesh. . . (John 1:14). In this verse we have a model for evangelism. It declares Christ's purpose: to glorify His Father. It sets forth His strategy: to incarnate the truth (to become flesh). And it describes His methodology: to be full of grace and truth. ²⁷

Myron Augsburger (in his foreward to Friendship Evangelism)

articulated this concept of the incarnational nature of evangelism:

Evangelism is God's extension of His grace through believers who engage in sharing the life of Christ with others. . . . Evangelism is based on God's purpose of building a kingdom of persons in fellowship with Himself. ²⁸

With characteristic clarity, J. R. W. Stott proscribes the similarity yet difference of our mission from Christ's:

First He sent His Son. Then He sent His Spirit. Now He sends His Church, that is, us. He sends us out by His Spirit into His world to announce His Son's salvation. He worked through His Son to achieve it; He works through us to make it known. ²⁹

²⁷ Joseph C. Aldrich, Life-Style Evangelism (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1981), p. 31.

²⁸ Arthur G. McPhee, Friendship Evangelism (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), p. 11.

²⁹ John R. W. Stott, Our Guilty Silence (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B.Eerdmans Publishing Co , 1959), p. 15.

Within the framework of the distinctive SDA heritage, there tends to be a reluctance to become too entangled in what has been referred to as "social gospel." The balance, therefore, between "grace" and "truth" (as discussed above) falls heavily towards "truth" (verbal proclamation of the gospel). The tendency is to move away from a "servant" role toward a "teacher" role. If, however, we are to remain true to Christ's incarnational ministry model, we must take seriously the notion of "emptying" oneself— (the kenosis concept of the "servant" model). In the words of Stott:

He emptied Himself of status and took the form of a servant, and his humble mind is to be in us (Phil 2:5-8) . . . it seems that it is in our servant role that we can find the right synthesis of evangelism and social action. For both should be for us, as they undoubtedly were for Christ, authentic expressions of the love that serves. . . . In order to serve, He was sent into the world. He did not touch down like a visitor from outer space, or arrive like an alien bringing His own alien culture with Him. He took to Himself our humanity, our flesh and blood, our culture. He actually became one of us and experienced our frailty, our suffering and our temptations. He even bore our sins and died our death. And now He sends us "into the world," to identify with others as He identified with us . . . to become vulnerable as He did "As our Lord took on our flesh," runs the report from Mexico City 1963, "so He calls His Church to take on the secular world, . . . It comes more natural to us to shout the gospel at people from a distance than to involve ourselves deeply in their lives, to think ourselves into their culture and their problems, and to feel with them in their pains. Yet this implication of our Lord's example is inescapable. As the Lausanne Covenant put it: "We affirm that Christ sends his redeemed people into the world as the Father sent him, and that this calls for a similar deep and costly penetration of the world." ³⁰

This discussion turns to how "emptying through brokenness" releases spiritual gifts so essential to neighboring evangelism.

³⁰ _____, Christian Mission in the Modern World (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press), pp. 24, 25.

"Brokenness" as a Prerequisite for
Neighboring Evangelism

If the overall objective of the Christian life is "to know God—and to make Him known," by what means is this accomplished? One answer might be the angel's message to Joshua the high priest: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech 4:6). Since Pentecost, we live in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. If the fullness of God is to be known to us and in us through the agency of the Holy Spirit, and assuming that availability is a constant, then it must be our human element—our receptivity that determines the extent of the benefit's of God's grace. In other words, as channels of God's love to the world, Christians can receive only what flows freely through them. But channels (especially human ones) become blocked, thus restricting the free movement of the Spirit through the life. For one to be effective in neighboring evangelism, the "spirit restricting" elements must come under the discipline of the Spirit—to be broken away—thus making a way for Him to convert others through us. Heb 2:18 says that even Jesus "suffered when He was tempted, and (through that suffering) is able to help those who are being tempted." In the words of Watchman Nee:

It is because God must have a way through us. Let no one think that we are only interested in individual spiritual experience here. Our concern is God's way and His work. Is God free to work through our lives? Unless we are dealt with and broken through discipline, we shall restrict God. Without the breaking of the outward man, the church cannot be a channel for God. ³¹

Furthermore, in the omniscience of God, the Holy Spirit can be trusted to "break" us in the areas of our life that will equip us for the specific ministry God most urgently needs at a particular place and time in the progress and

³¹Nee, p. 51.

development of the "Body of Christ." An Old Testament example of this principle may be seen in the life and ministry of Joseph. A somewhat spoiled and pampered "favorite" son of a wealthy rancher, he was subjected to at least two deeply wounding experiences. Each time he was hurt deeply, personally, and unfairly, and had every right to become bitter about the negative direction "fate" had taken him. But the broader view of his life shows that God was using those experiences to teach him how to be a compassionate ruler over people who were often treated unfairly and hurt deeply. Both in the household of Potiphar and in his leadership role among the prisoners, he was learning a "servant" leadership style. Again quoting from Watchman Nee:

Our spirit (spiritual ministry) is released according to the degree of our brokenness. The one who has accepted the most discipline is the one who can best serve. The more one is broken, the more sensitive he is. The more loss one has suffered, the more he has to give. Wherever we desire to save ourselves, in that very thing we become spiritually useless. Whenever we preserve and excuse ourselves, at that point we are deprived of spiritual sensitivity and supply. Let no one imagine he can be effective and disregard this basic principle.³²

It is important to the concept of neighboring evangelism that we underline how God frees us to minister most effectively in the arena of the specific suffering through which we have passed. Our wounds are not usually "generic" in nature but rather very specific. By the same token, our most effective areas of ministry in "neighboring evangelism" are often realized through precisely those specific experiences that have effected us most profoundly. In other words, if we have found healing from brokenness in marriage, we might be just the very person to be used of the Holy Spirit to bring healing to another going through a similar experience. One who has found healing from the grief of losing a loved one in death needs little training to come along-side another who

³²ibid., p. 45.

is passing through this "valley of the shadow of death." (This discussion continues in detail under "Intentional Caring Units in the local church.") Both from scripture and from observing numerous examples of this phenomenon in my pastoral experience, I have noticed a pattern of spiritual gifts develop along the natural lines of human experience—especially the deeply wounding experiences of life. Those who have found healing in the specific areas of their deepest wounds often become the ones a pastor can count on to be a "healer" for others both within the church and in the community. The most effective "channel" for neighboring evangelism is nearly always in the very same area where the "evangelist" found substantial healing for him/herself.

Not only does the specific area of "brokenness" often determine one's specific "bridge" to one's neighbor, but the depth of one's effectiveness reflects the depth of the experience of the "wounding—healing" process.

Only those who have learned can serve. You may learn ten years' lessons in one year or take twenty or thirty years to learn one year's lessons. Any delay in learning means a delay in serving. If God has put a desire in your heart to serve Him, you should understand what is involved. The way of service lies in brokenness, in accepting the discipline of the Holy Spirit. The measure of your service is determined by the degree of discipline and brokenness. Be assured that human emotion or cleverness cannot help. How much you really possess is based upon how much God has wrought in your life. . . . The more you are disciplined by the Holy Spirit, the more readily your spirit can touch another. ³³

In summary, the consecrated "neighboring evangelist" is that Christian who allows God absolute freedom to discipline him/her through alternately wounding and healing so as to provide an open channel for His glory to be seen and His love to be shown in the world He died to redeem. This brokenness which issues forth in healing establishes within the life of the individual Christian specific spiritual gifts—uniquely qualifying each member of

³³ibid.

the Body of Christ to function in a specific role bringing about a unified witness to Christ.

Spiritual Gifts: Equipping for
"Neighboring Evangelism"

As we have seen, it was by the mystery of the incarnation that Christ's ministry to humankind was accomplished. The Church is His body through which that same ministry is to continue. The avenue of Spiritual Gifts allows the Holy Spirit an infinite variety of abilities and contexts by which to make Christ known within the Church and through the Church to the secular community. In fact, the very existence of Spiritual Gifts in a Christian constitutes the guarantee and the power needed for finite humans to take hold of the Infinite in a way that God can make Himself known in our world.

A general list of these manifestations of Spiritual Gifts is given in I Cor 12-14; Rom 12:6-8; and Eph 4:8-11. These lists are not exhaustive or final but rather are illustrative and "generic." They are not listed so neatly and orderly that they could be filed easily for computer selection. Rather, they simply demonstrate how the Holy Spirit, in the past, has equipped Christians for ministry in various times, places, and/or cultures. One concept pervades each discussion, and that is that these gifts are only "truly" realized in ministry. Over against natural talents and abilities, Spiritual Gifts are clearly supernatural. They may indeed be grounded in natural abilities given by our creation and environment, but they are now reclaimed—redirected and intensified—by redemption. As Flynn has stated:

Talents have to do with techniques and methods; gifts have to do with spiritual abilities. Talents depend on natural power, gifts on spiritual endowment.³⁴

³⁴Leslie B. Flynn, Nineteen Gifts of the Spirit (Wheaton, IL: Scripture Press Publishing, 1974), p. 22.

Fundamental to an understanding of the relationship of Spiritual Gifts to neighboring evangelism is the centrality of love. This is demonstrated by Paul's placement of his love chapter. 1 Cor 13 is a fitting conclusion for chap. 12 and a foundation for chap. 14. Leon Morris has noted:

The chapter is not, as some have thought, a digression from the argument. Paul has not finished with the "gifts," and he has much to say about them in the following chapter. But here he is concerned to insist that the central thing is not the exercise of the "gift." It is the practice of Christian love.³⁵

The gifts operate in love. "Love is the all-dominating motive in seeking and in using spiritual gifts."³⁶ Without love, gifts are impotent. Gifts are the hands through which love serves.

In his discussion of Spiritual Gifts in church ministry, Lester Bennett observed three minimum expectations:

- 1) The members would hold a doctrine of church which recognizes that the total authority for the community of faith is based on the Grace of God and not on the merit of its people.
- 2) They would admit that whatever "gifts" and properties are found in the body are fully received by the outreach of Divine Grace.
- 3) They will determine that the "gifts" and workings of that body will be used for no selfish ends but only as a demonstration of a disinterested ministry in Jesus Christ by gracious self-giving for others.³⁷

Though all three should be kept in mind in forming a theology of neighboring evangelism, the third ties Spiritual Gifts to our previous discussion of

³⁵Leon Moriss, quoted in Lester Bennett, A Study of Spiritual Gifts With a Program Designed for Its Understanding and Implementation by a Local Congregation, (D. Min. Project, Andrews University, 1979), p. 42.

³⁶R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of I and II Corinthians, p. 543.

³⁷Lester Bennett, A Study of Spiritual Gifts With a Program Designed for its Understanding and Implementation by a Local Congregation, (D. Min. Project, Andrews University , 1979), p. 44.

"incarnational ministry" and "wounded healer ministry." Again we see that to be a "gifted" Christian is to be an "emptied" recipient of grace.

"The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ."³⁸ And once again: "God's church is the court of holy life, filled with varied gifts, and endowed with the Holy Spirit."³⁹ Elsewhere E. G. White uses a striking statement to summarize when and how this happens:

In becoming His disciples, we surrender ourselves to Him with all that we are and have. These Gifts He returns to us purified and ennobled, to be used for His glory in blessing our fellow men.⁴⁰

If we truly wish to understand this level of discipleship, we should look carefully at perhaps the finest example of "neighboring evangelism" that Jesus ever modeled before His disciples.

The Woman at Jacob's Well
Grace Plus Truth

The "woman at the well of Samaria" narrative in the fourth chapter of John's gospel is a fascinating vignette of how Jesus "exposed and expressed" Himself to strangers. An excellent commentary on this incident is found in Desire of Ages and reveals many valuable components of "neighboring evangelism." Here key phrases are underlined that particularly demonstrate the gentle, yet persistent "exposure and expression" of God's love (in Christ) for the woman:

³⁸Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Assoc., 1962), p. 9.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴⁰*Idem*, Christ's Object Lessons (Washington DC: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1941), p. 328.

1. Jesus approached the Samaritan woman at the point of His own human need. His vulnerability disarmed her. Jesus utilized a natural human condition as an entry.
2. Jesus asked a favor rather than providing a service. This tactfulness awakened trust in response.
3. At first she did not comprehend His words (gift of God, Living water, etc.) but she was beginning to apprehend a vaguely "eternal" significance.
4. As her belligerent attitude began to change, she posed a problem: "The well is deep!"
5. She ventured to express a distant messianic hope which Jesus showed her was a present existential reality.
6. She reasoned from her own little "concrete" world of material things. Jesus moved the conversation back to spiritual things.
7. Jesus abruptly changed the direction of their discussion when He perceived that for her to see her Savior, she must first see her sinfulness.
8. Jesus' embarrassing request—"Go, bring your husband!" unveiled her at a most sensitive level of hurt. Jesus saw by her "body language" (removal of the literal veil from her face) that He had her: ATTENTION--INTEREST--DESIRE.
9. Jesus' words did not condemn, yet her conscience was being awakened by the purity of His presence.
10. She tried a theological smoke-screen as an attempt to silence the conviction that she would have to face the judgment in an eternity to come.
11. Jesus patiently let her lead the conversation for a while. She posed a dilemma: "Either on this mountain, or Jerusalem. . ." Jesus' answer was "neither/nor!" Worship, He said, was wholly "other"—in Spirit and in Truth. Jesus was moving her away from "external" to "internal" religion.
12. She began to realize her "soul-thirst" and became sensible to her real need.
13. She felt He was her friend.
14. She inwardly grappled with the notion: "Is He Messiah?"
15. Jesus anticipated and answered her disguised question.
16. Progression: PRESENCE—WORDS—FAITH—DECISION—ACTION.
17. She left His presence a disciple and went back to her village an effective "neighborhood evangelist."

18. The woman was the key to a web of relationships. All acted upon what they heard from her and sought Jesus.

19. The villagers believe because of their own personal encounter with the incarnation of "Grace and Truth." ⁴¹

As you see, this real-life incident is a virtual gold mine of "neighboring evangelism" methodology. For my purpose I emphasize six concepts: (1) Jesus met her in the place where her environment and His coincided; (2) He consistently conversed in language and ideas which she understood; (3) he repeatedly turned her from a discussion of "natural" to "spiritual" things; (4) when she became a disciple, her natural gifts (including her environment) became spiritual as she effectively witnessed to Christ; (5) every human encounter may be seen as a "Divine Appointment" that could be the key to a vast web of relationships; and (6) the basic and simple congruity of—
MESSAGE/MEDIUM/ METHOD.

Neighboring Evangelism and the Judgment

Historically, Seventh-Day Adventist doctrine was carved out in the theological matrix of the "imminent and final judgment of the world." It is fitting to this discussion that we turn to Jesus' description of the final judgment. In His final homily before the Last Supper, Jesus very explicitly clarified His expectations of discipleship:

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on His left.

⁴¹Idem, The Desire of Ages (Mountain View, CA:Pacific Press Publishing Assoc., 1940), pp. 183-195.

Then the King will say to those on His right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

Then the righteous will answer Him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"

The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." Matt 25:31-40 NIV

From this we can see that the final questions determining whether or not we are His disciples and have fulfilled the gospel commission are not what most would consider to be "doctrinal" or even "theological." The final questions revolve around whether or not we have made God's love known in our world through the simplest and most practical "neighborly" actions. William Barclay observes:

This is one of the most vivid parables which Jesus ever spoke, and the lesson of it is crystal clear. The lesson is this—that God will judge us in accordance with our reaction to human need. God's judgment does not depend on the knowledge we have amassed, or the fame that we have acquired, or the fortune that we have gained. . . .

1. It must be help in simple things. . . . There never was a parable which so opened the way to glory to the simplest people.

2. It must be help which is quite uncalculating. . . . They helped because they could not stop themselves from helping.

3. Jesus confronts us with the wonderful truth that all such help which is given, is given to Himself, and all such help which is withheld, is withheld from Himself. ⁴²

⁴²William Barclay, The Gospel of Matthew: Daily Study Bible (Edinburgh, Scotland: The Saint Andrews Press, 1972), pp. 359, 360.

One of the finest commentaries on this Matt 25 text is again found in Desire of Ages. Ellen White's thoughts have a profound bearing upon "neighboring evangelism":

In that day (the judgment) Christ does not present before men the great work He has done for them in giving His life for their redemption. He presents the faithful work they have done for Him. . . . But those whom Christ commends know not that they have been ministering unto Him. ⁴³

It would appear from these comments that, though it is by righteousness of faith alone in the merits of Christ that we receive salvation initially, the criterion of the final judgment is whether or not we entered fully into discipleship with Him by continuing the selfless work He came to accomplish. Ellen White continues:

In all who suffer for my name, Jesus said, you are to recognize Me. As you would minister to Me, so you are to minister to them. This is the evidence that you are My disciples . . . Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God.⁴⁴

Doctrinal purity—"orthodoxy"—does not even seem to enter into the questions asked at this final judgment. It would appear from the above texts and commentary that even those quite ignorant of "systematic theology" (doctrine) enter just as fully into Jesus' own definition of what it really means to be His disciple. As the Spirit leads

We shall find His footprints beside the sickbed, in the hovels of poverty, in the crowded alleys of the great city, and in every place where there are human hearts in need of consolation. In doing as Jesus did when on earth, we shall walk in His steps. ⁴⁵

⁴³White, The Desire of Ages, p. 637.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 638.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 640.

Summary

This chapter illustrates that much of Jesus' teaching was "relational theology." In His training of the disciples, He placed heavy emphasis upon the picture of God that the world would see as Christians interacted with their "neighbors." From the epistles, we note how witness to one's neighbor is more than merely doing the positive "neighboring," it also includes what one is to avoid so as not to offend.

As we study Christ's incarnational ministry of reconciliation to our sinful world, we see a model for "neighboring evangelism." The "suffering servant" theme of Jesus' ministry is emulated in those who choose to be His disciples. As "Grace plus Truth" indwell our lives in our community, the world sees God's love more clearly. Through the Spirit-directed processes of "wounding/healing," we become free-flowing channels of His love. Through the Spiritual Gifts thus released, God may have His way in our world. The specific areas of our "brokenness" become the most effective bridges to our neighbors.

In Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well, we see an example of how each personal contact with a neighbor can be a "Divine appointment" with eternal consequences. Each person we meet is part of a widening web of relationships that may be improved to become fruitful for the Kingdom. Christians are challenged to fulfill the Gospel commission by relating to persons in loving christian ways.

CHAPTER THREE

NEIGHBORING EVANGELISM IN THREE DIVERSE CONGREGATIONS

Introduction: "Spontaneity and Programming"

A workable model of "neighboring evangelism" could provide a missing link for the "Caring Church" emphasis being currently encouraged within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Some may see "neighboring evangelism" as too conceptual in nature as opposed to a more easily "promotable" one of a more "programmatic" nature. It is true that "neighboring evangelism" stresses the uniqueness of each "individual" Christian's witness, but this does not necessarily mean that collective ministries cannot flourish in its atmosphere. In this chapter, we note examples of those ministries which resulted from a congregation's growing understanding of "neighboring witness." Each unique ministry grew from a local congregation's dawning awareness of its special needs and those of the community in which the congregation was located. It has been my opportunity over the duration of this project to observe a variety of ministries develop that both reflected the needs of the community and the special spiritual gifts of three diverse congregations. By sampling a "model" ministry from each of these churches, a broader understanding of "neighboring evangelism" and its affect upon the ministries of the local congregation emerges.

As each of these ministries is described, it becomes especially evident how each sample grew from both perceived needs within the congregation as well as the observed needs within the neighborhood. This is in deliberate contrast to the "generic" uniformity of most existing lay-evangelism programs. As G. Oosterwal has stated:

This uniformity presupposes the same needs and the same resources everywhere. But there is a large diversity among individual believers as well as in local congregations. . . . Practically all of the present church activities and programs are devised centrally, based on generalizations concerning the one Adventist constituency. But quite a few of those generalizations about "the" Adventist constituency do not stand up in the light of (our) studies. . . . It was found that many of the centrally devised plans and programs were not at all based on the vast number of talents and resources and gifts present in each local church, which therefore remained untapped. In fact, it became obvious that many of these uniform church programs were alien and foreign to the knowledge and understanding and interest and gifts of the local constituency.⁴⁶

Each of the "caring ministries" described below was a sincere attempt to tailor-make levels of involvement that would avoid the pitfall described above. There was an attempt to avoid the pitfall of "evangelism by proxy" (i.e., direct mail, T.V., radio, magazines, etc.).⁴⁷ Anything that involved extensive training in technique, methodology, planning, etc., was seen as incongruent to the basic understanding of the "spontaneous" witness involved in "neighboring evangelism." Yet resources and persons were pooled to maximize each developing ministry for more efficiency.

⁴⁶Gottfried Oosterwal, Patterns of S.D.A. Growth in America (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1976), p. 65.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 42, 43.

Formation of "INTOUCH" Ministry in Response
to Neighboring Evangelism

Description of "INTOUCH" Ministry

This ministry began as a creative alternative Sabbath School class taught by Jack Circle—one of the church elders. During my series of sermons on the subject of "Neighboring Evangelism," and after reading D. Cooper's book, Living God's Love, Jack felt he would like to share what he had learned with others in the congregation. He was encouraged to follow through on his idea and developed a very fine syllabus based upon the book. The format of the class included a weekly reading assignment of several chapters from the book along with appropriate scripture study and a few excerpts on the same subject from Ellen White.

Using his skills as a draftsman, Circle designed an attractive workbook containing twelve lessons (see appendix 1, pp. 92-98). As the Sabbath School hour did not afford enough time for meaningful "sharing," "caring," and "praying" with each other, the class chose to meet one evening a week as well. A number of friends from the community, including several students from nearby U.C. Berkeley were invited to this apartment gathering. A bonding of friendships took place in this atmosphere of love, acceptance, and forgiveness. Within several weeks of the evening group's first meeting, three of the students came to meet with the Sabbath School "INTOUCH" group. This bridging was not expected so soon, but it was greeted with enthusiasm.

Broadening the Congregation's Involvement
in the Appian Way Church

It was not long before the congregation's curiosity was aroused as they observed intelligent, well-dressed strangers coming to the church and going directly to the "INTOUCH" class. At the end of the first quarter the main

Sabbath School superintendant asked the "INTOUCH" class to share what was going on with the rest of the Sabbath School. It was generally agreed that the rest of the Church family could benefit spiritually by a similar approach—especially the midweek fellowship idea. After considerable discussion, it was generally felt the other classes should stay with the regular lesson quarterly as far as the lesson topics were concerned, but that the time for "sharing" and "caring" should be incorporated into the class time.

Gathering and Focusing Resources

In addition to the "INTOUCH" syllabus mentioned above, several from the original class researched sermon tape catalogues for sermons that busy city commuters in the class could use that would be on subjects similar to those covered in the class. Another member began putting together a lending library of books focusing upon the concepts of "neighboring evangelism." I launched into a second series of "how to" sermons geared to motivate people to get involved in intentional Christian loving of their neighbors and friends. We also rented several of the "witness" films from Church Growth America in Pasadena, California.

Developing Minimal Structure

As already mentioned, the conceptual structure was maintained by a common textbook and syllabus. From prior experience, I felt there must be at least that much content and direction or the group would soon deteriorate into a rambling buzz session. We also found that individuals in the group could easily "fall through the cracks" if there was no personal accountability. A "buddy" system was put into place consisting of prayer-partners who sometimes called their "buddy" during the week as they felt a special need for friendship, support,

and/or prayer. A prayer booklet was kept and during the "sharing" time each week, prayer requests and answers were recorded. Several creative "neighboring" outreach ideas were discussed and encouragement for follow-through became part of the class discussion.

Evaluation of "INTOUCH"

The effect of the "INTOUCH" class upon the Church was slow and struggling at first. Of course, within the class itself, the infusion of "seekers" and "new believers" was dramatic. The real break-through happened when the Sabbath School superintendant exposed what was happening to the entire church. A ripple effect began that within a month resulted in three new mid-week fellowship groups. When the first two University students were baptized, the Church family's enthusiasm peaked. In six months the church was happy to support one student as a student missionary.

On the negative side and for future reference, it is easy for an "INTOUCH" group to smack of spiritual elitism. I am fully aware that there are people who look upon anything new and different with jaundiced apprehension. In another place and another time (as is noted in the Chico portion of this project), it would not be so easy to encourage the kind of experimentation that took place in this "small-church-city-setting." In fact, in a church where there is already a dangerous level of fragmentation due to "elitist" mentality, one would have to move much more cautiously. In an environment of mutual trust there really is no limit to the variety of "INTOUCH" groups as needs and gifts interact with each other to find resolution in fellowship on this deepening level.

Formation of "I. C. U." Ministries in
Response to Neighboring Evangelism

Description of "I. C. U." Ministry

"Intentional Caring Units" are a creative natural outgrowth of the fundamental concepts in "neighboring evangelism"—namely, the Church's gifts impacting the needs of the neighborhood in a positive, practical way. The idea seemed to evolve over a period of months as the elders of the Chico church sought their true biblical role. It soon became an effective way of allowing the Holy Spirit through each elder's specific spiritual gift to minister to the specific needs both within the church and in the community. It also served to broaden my own effectiveness as pastor in that I felt free to hand over much of my "personal" ministry to competent persons who by both training and experience were really more qualified than I.

These "I. C. U." consisted of "healing units" within the church which were referred to as "Intentional Caring Units." (This seemed appropriate since twelve of my sixteen elders were medical professionals.) It became our conviction that the spiritual process of learning to cope with life's painful experiences—and finding the healing—pre-qualifies a person for a specific healing ministry. It was further felt that our "caring" for others is often casual, occasional, and halfhearted, and that the pastor is often the "frontline" exposure to individuals who need help. "I. C. U." was an attempt by the elders to make caring more consistent (with their spiritual gifts), more deliberate, more sustained, and more intentional.

The effectiveness of this ministry is built-in. Each person at one time or another in his/her life passes through times of grief, separation, sickness, anxiety, financial loss, etc. By finding inner healing in each of these experiences one may be qualified to minister healing in the life of another person passing

through a similar experience. It is important to note that each of the "I.C.U." ministries listed below grows out of specific spiritual gifts coupled with specific needs within the congregation and/or community. We worked on the assumption "Inreach Is Outreach." Fulfilling needs within the congregation spills over into the neighborhood. The areas of ministry were:

Conciliation and conflict management

A forum for reconciliation—formal or informal— including intra-family conflict and settling interpersonal differences.

Crisis support

Listening and supporting during times of grief such as a death in the family, divorce, career crisis, etc.

Financial counseling

Career counseling, family-budget counseling, sponsoring seminars in the principles of Christian finance.

Lifestyle design

Encouragement and counseling of persons toward an improved healthfulness. Planning of health screening and "Lifestyle" seminars.

Youth and young families

Actively foster and maintain friendship ties with youth and young families. Provide a visible role model of Christian attitudes and lifestyle and be available for peer counseling.

Social bridging

Aggressive intentional action to bridge socio-economic distance by purposeful socializing. Provide a model of Christian hospitality—an "open heart and home."

Calling and caring (Appendix 2, p. 100.)

Willingness, availability, and training to reach the inactive church members through disciplined, regular contact, and to enfold them again into the church family.

Evangelism

Available at least one evening each week for a "home Bible fellowship" or "encounter" or "INTOUCH" group. Lead out in a "Breathe Free" 5-Day plan. Follow up on specific requests from the community for magazines or Bible lessons.

Caring for the elderly and/or shut-ins

Part of the caring network for visiting members in their home or convalescent home, bringing the "Church" to them via the personal touch using music, reading, tapes, or organizing the young people of the church into an "adopt-a-grandparent" program.

The above descriptions were printed on a half-sheet insert in the church bulletin. With these were the names of the elders who were working with each particular "I.C.U." This list was distributed to the church members twice during the year.

The Process Leading to "I. C. U." Ministries in Chico

To move a "traditional" SDA Church congregation of 517 members toward a more "relational/personal" approach involves the changing of some deeply entrenched norms. Certain "semi-successful" existing programs often stand in the way of more effective ones. The very idea of change is a threat to some Christians, for with change comes a period of instability. If the church is already experiencing instability in some other area (financial, theological, or interpersonal), it is usually quite reticent to deliberately destabilize in an area where it does feel stable. Chico was just such a church, and it took a lengthy process to form caring ministries that would reflect the "neighboring evangelism" model (see fig. 1).

In Chico, I sought to initiate and manage the kind of change that I felt would lead to spontaneous church growth. As pastor I came to the Chico SDA Church with a "neighboring evangelism" agenda. Even though the church board and board of elders were aware of "my agenda" before I accepted the call to be their pastor, it was clear that I would have to adapt the process used previously to introduce the "neighboring evangelism" concept. Both the church and community differed widely from the Appian Way Church, so I was content to let whatever form might arise be indigenous to the new circumstances.

In August of my second year in Chico, in consultation with the church board, a plan was voted to motivate the members' consciousness toward greater involvement in "neighboring evangelism." The Church Ministries Department of the Northern California Conference of SDA had already been encouraging the local Sabbath Schools to make their adult classes into units involved in "outreach." I saw this as an opportunity for dovetailing "conference" promotional material on personal evangelism with my own material in

"neighboring evangelism," thus building new material upon an acceptable "traditional" approach. Upon sharing this with the board, it was suggested that we present the plan to the Sabbath School council. At its next session the council, after a lengthy discussion of four alternate time schedules (Appendix 3, pp.102, 103) settled on a time and format that would allow twenty minutes each Sabbath for my presentation of "neighboring evangelism" to the entire senior Sabbath School division.

To launch the fall-quarter emphasis on "neighboring evangelism," the Sabbath School superintendent invited the conference Church Ministries director to present his concept of the church's mission. Following the regular lesson study all the divisions came into the sanctuary to view a church growth film, "Gift of Love" (appendix 4, p.105.) The next Sabbath I spent twenty minutes discussing the "neighboring evangelism" concept with emphasis upon "incarnational ministry." (Appendix 5, Exhibits A,B, pp. 107, 108.)

My sermon topic this introductory Sabbath was "The Church as Mission." Following the worship service, the elders met for our regular monthly potluck. We began with a discussion of the direction we were moving together. I emphasized that what was happening in Sabbath School could enhance our existing "Home Bible Fellowship" groups. The second Sabbath I showed the film "For the Love of Pete" and preached on "Jesus at the Well: A Neighboring Evangelist." I used an overhead transparency to help the congregation grasp the "neighboring evangelism" concepts gleaned from the Desire of Ages commentary on Jesus' confrontation with the woman at Jacob's well near Samaria.

For the next six weeks in succession, I continued this seminar approach using the twenty minutes of Sabbath School time in tandem with the preaching service—sometimes adding a movie on witness between the

Sabbath School hour and church worship service. From my description of the presentations, it is obvious I leaned heavily upon "Spiritual Gifts." It has been my experience that enthusiasm for personal evangelism grows when Christians come to a clearer understanding of what God is doing in and through their unique gift. As G. Oosterwal has observed:

Under the guidance of the pastor, local congregations should make an inventory of the special gifts which the Lord in His mercy has bestowed upon His children. It is only when the believer's spiritual gifts have been recognized that lay training programs can be initiated. Seldom do these gifts come fully developed. But the church can recognize certain gifts which then can be stimulated, developed and (better) prepared for the believer's ministry in the world. . . . It is precisely in the diversity of the gifts where the strength lies of the church, and its mission.⁴⁸

Following is a Sabbath-by-Sabbath reconstruction of the sequence and content of "neighboring evangelism" presentations. I attempted to use an inductive method in both the Sabbath School presentations and the sermon to encourage as creative a response as possible and to allow each individual to "discover" his/her unique ministry. Internalization of the "concept" is the ultimate goal.

⁴⁸ibid., p. 72.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS EMPHASIS FOR NEIGHBORING EVANGELISM

First Sabbath

Sabbath School presentation:

Lecture summary: I began with a basic introduction "Theology of Spiritual Gifts". I called special attention to the "E. G. White" handout emphasizing quotes 7, 8, 9, 10, 20, 22, and 30. I then expanded on the "Just as you Are" overhead

1. You are important. Christ works through you.
2. You are called to obedience to Christ.
3. You are unique. Your uniqueness is to be accepted and used for Christ.
4. You are gifted by the Holy Spirit. Your gifts are to be recognized and used for Christ.
5. You are loved. You can afford to fail. You have God's unqualified support.
6. You need your brother. You cannot make it alone. (Overheads.)

Overheads Used: (Appendix 6, Exhibits E, F, pp.114,115.)

1. "JUST AS YOU ARE: as a member of the body of Christ."
2. "Seven Propositions about Spiritual Gifts." Film shown between Sabbath School and church:

"But I'm Just a Layman"

Chuck Bradley is mostly concerned about what his church can do for his family and for himself. Every (Sabbath) he goes to church, sings hymns, listens to the sermon, shakes a few hands, and week after week receives his share of blessings . . . revitalized once again to pursue his own interests. But then Chuck discovers that the church is more than a place to have his own needs met. He realizes that God wants and needs him to use his talents, his time, and his abilities for others. Before the film is over, Chuck commits himself to building and strengthening the church and reaching out to others. (Church Growth discussion Guide page, 2).⁴⁹

Handouts Used: (Appendix 6, Exhibits A-D, pp. 110-113.)

⁴⁹Win Arn, The Chuck Bradley Film/Video Series Discussion Guide (Pasadena, CA: Church Growth America, 1978), p. 2.

Sermon Abstract:

Title: "Body Building"

Scripture text: I Corinthians 12:4-27

Outline:

I. Introduction:

In the Bible the church is called an "army," a "family," a "bride," a "vineyard," a "temple," a "kingdom," a "flock." In the New Testament it is most consistently called the "Body" of Christ.

II. Unity in Diversity:

A. I Cor 12:4,5 - Trinity of Unity expressed in "Gifts, Ministries, and Forms."

B. I Cor 12:7 - Individual manifestations of "Gifts" are for the common good of the "body."

C. 1 Cor 12:8-12 - Diversity creates unity!

D. Illustration: Nature, art, organ

III. Purposeful Unity in Diversity Brings Harmony.

A. 1 Cor 12:13 - the "indwelling" Holy Spirit is the "bonding agency."

B. We are responsible to each other as we respond to the "Head" which is Christ.

C. 1 Cor 12:26 - When one suffers, all suffer. When one rejoices, all rejoice! The purpose of both is to reproduce Christ in community.

IV. Conclusion:

"Through the observable unity of Spirit-gifted members, the Chico Seventh-day Adventist Church will present Christ to the Chico community. By the varied gifts, and through the variety of ministries represented in our vocations, Christ becomes visible to all and the character of Christ is perfectly reproduced in His People!"

SPIRITUAL GIFTS EMPHASIS FOR NEIGHBORING EVANGELISM (Cont.)

Second Sabbath

Sabbath School presentation:

Lecture Summary: I led into the discussion using the overhead, "God's Plan for a Spirit-filled Church" an expansion of Eph 4:7-12. I showed how "gifted" persons are "gifted" by the Spirit as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers etc., for the equipping of the "saints," for the work of "ministry," for the building of the "body" of Christ unto maturity.

Overheads used: (Appendix 7, Exhibits B-E, pp. 118-121.)

1. Eph 4:7-12 - "Christ's Plan for the Spirit-filled Church."
2. E. G. White quotations relative to:
 - a. Proper use of gifts.
 - b. Spiritual gifts—given according to need.
 - c. Unused spiritual gifts make us feeble Christians.
 - d. Be content with gifts.
 - e. We need to hunger for gifts of the Spirit.
 - f. Every Christian is promised a gift.
 - g. How gifts are received.
 - h. Gifts related to second coming.
 - i. God adds gifts.
3. Biblical example of the recognition and reception of spiritual gifts based on Acts 6:3-7 and the experience of Phillip. This overhead also includes similarities and contrasts between natural talents and spiritual gifts.

Description of Handouts:

More E. G. White quotations on "spiritual gifts" with emphasis both on the effect of spiritual gifts upon the individual and also upon the mission of the church (Appendix 7, Exhibit A, p. 117.)

Sermon Abstract:

Title: "Unity in Diversity"

Scripture Text: Ephesians 3:14-16

Outline:

I. Introduction:

"Something there is that doesn't love a wall— that wants it down. . . (portions of Mending Wall by Robert Frost). God wants us to take down the walls between us—stone by stone— and use those very stones to build bridges to others. The Holy Spirit longs to be the mortar that bonds our unique gifts in a purposeful way.

II. Mature Understanding of "Spiritual Gifts" focuses upon "Bonding" of the "Parts."

A. Emphasis must not be on individuality and uniqueness, but on common bonding.

B. Because of our differences we need each other, if we are to accomplish a common purpose.

C. KOINONIA = "A deliberate, deep commitment as in marriage."

D. Bonding of spiritual gifts creates the bridge from our neighbor to Jesus.

III. Fellowship Is Evangelism.

A. Spirit-filled witness is not compulsory but rather inevitable.

B. People in right relation to God and neighbor will evangelize spontaneously through the natural avenue of their spiritual gifts.

C. The best evangelism training is getting to know God better and sharpening the unique gifts He bestows on us.

IV. To Better Make Christ Known—Perfect Fellowship.

V. Conclusion: As persons with diverse gifts are bonded by the Holy Spirit, an irresistible fellowship occurs clarifying what God is like.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS EMPHASIS FOR NEIGHBORING EVANGELISM (Cont.)**Third Sabbath****Sabbath School Presentation:**

Lecture Summary: I began by emphasizing "What's in it for me?" showing the personal benefits of knowing one's specific spiritual gifts. Using overheads, I demonstrated that spiritual gifts:

1. Are a signpost directing you in God's plan for your life.
2. Identify specific areas for training and development.
3. Are valuable in setting life's priorities.
4. Make a special place for you in church and society.
5. Foster self-acceptance, which shields from discouragement.
6. Focuses on how one can best be used of God.

I closed by taking the class members through the bulletin insert halfsheet "Discovering and Developing Spiritual Gifts." Beginning with several E. G. White comments, the worksheet side of the insert also covered:

1. Understanding Spiritual Gifts.
2. Identifying Spiritual Gifts.
3. Practical test to determine Spiritual Gifts.

Overheads Used: (Appendix 8, Exhibits A-D, pp.123-126.)

1. Personal benefits from knowing your Spiritual Gifts.
2. Gifts are valuable in setting life's priorities.
3. SELF-ACCEPTANCE as a barrier against discouragement.
4. Spiritual Gifts help us "TO BE USED OF GOD."

Description of Handouts: (Appendix 8, Exhibit E, p. 127.)

Sermon Abstract:

Title: "Is That Your Gift That Is Showing?"

Scripture text: Ephesians 4:1-4,12,16

Outline:

I. Introduction:

For now we see through a glass darkly, but then shall we know (ourselves) as God now knows us." Have you ever wanted to know yourself as God knows you? Have you longed to "fulfill your full potential"? Are you confident that you have received the "baptism of the Holy Spirit"?

II. Acts 2:38 - The Giver and His Gift

- A. "Repent and be baptized—you WILL receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit".
- B. Your relationship with the Spirit began before you received Christ.
- C. The Holy Spirit reveals Jesus, and Jesus reveals God.
- D. John 16:13,14 - The Holy Spirit points to Jesus.
- E. It is not my place to "join myself to the Body" that is the Holy Spirit's Prerogative.

III. Manifestation of Gifts Is Determined by Purpose

- A. Illustration—the unique design of the hand.
- B. Distinction of "talents" versus "gifts."
- C. Your talents may blind you to your Gifts.

IV. Spiritual Gifts Are Not to Be Exercised Privately for Personal Enrichment (I Cor 12:14-21).

V. Conclusion: Fingers belong to hands, legs belong to bodies. The "Body ministry" at any given moment can be no greater (and should be no less!) than the sum total of its "gifted" members.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS EMPHASIS FOR NEIGHBORING EVANGELISM (Cont.)

Fourth Sabbath

Sabbath School Presentation:

Lecture Summary: I began with the overhead - "USING SPIRITUAL GIFTS—what we need in our church". The Holy Spirit can be trusted to bring to the church just the balance in gifts that make for an effective and efficient "body"—capable of evangelizing the community. We then considered the "PROFILES AND PROBLEMS" overhead drawn largely from Rom 12. The concluding remarks centered on the "SIX FACTORS OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS":

1. Every Christian has a spiritual gift.
2. Joy comes in exercising our gift.
3. Finding personal fulfillment is only possible by developing our spiritual gifts.
4. Each gift is designed to perfect the Body of Christ.
5. God wants each of us to understand our gift.
6. Three distinct categories under spiritual gifts.

Overheads used: (Appendix 9, Exhibits A, B, pp.129,130.)

1. Using Spiritual Gifts—what we need in our church.
2. Profiles of Basic Spiritual Gifts.
3. Six Factors of Spiritual Gifts.

Description of Handouts: (same as overheads)

1. USING SPIRITUAL GIFTS: The seven basic gifts of Rom 12 are clustered evenly around a church structure. In the upper right-hand corner is written:

"If seven men representing each of the spiritual gifts met to organize an ideal church, here is what each one would probably emphasize."

2. SIX FACTORS OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS. (See list above.)
3. MY GIFT OF INFLUENCE AND PRAYER. (Appendix 9, Exhibit C, p. 131.)

Sermon Abstract:

Title: "Diversity in Unity"

Scripture Text: I Corinthians 12:14-21

Outline:

I. Introduction:

Two weeks ago we studied "UNITY in Diversity." Today we will consider "DIVERSITY in Unity." Look around you this morning in this room. Do you see anyone who looks like you or thinks like you? Yet there are some who would have us believe in a "mashed potato" church!—where all sizes and shapes are chopped up into small pieces, boiled in a large vat— then mashed together—losing all possible identity. But Jesus would probably use a metaphor more like "fruit salad" for His church—"Affirming each other's unique individuality in the context of a common mission."

II. John 15:1-10 "I Am the Vine—Ye Are the Branches."

A. In our back yard grow eight varieties of fruit on only two trees. The apple sports five varieties from one common stock. Each is distinctive but shares a common life force.

B. Gifts create individualized identity in Christ. "Detachment as well as attachment."

C. Diversity for the sake of a purposeful functioning of the whole (I Cor 12:14-21).

III. Natural Beauty Is Dependent on Diversity.

A. Illustration: Stars—snowflakes—flowers.

B. Illustration: Orchestra—what a waste and how boring if all played in unison with no harmony, rhythm, or tonal variation.

IV. Conclusion:

Unity cannot come through uniformity of dogma, gifts, or tradition. It can only come as our diversity is bonded by a common mission and the common life force—the blood of Christ.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS EMPHASIS FOR NEIGHBORING EVANGELISM (Cont.)

Fifth Sabbath

Sabbath School Presentation: Adults in sanctuary at 10:35.

Lecture summary: As the deacons handed out the spiritual gifts case studies, I told members that we would begin the process of discovering and confirming their unique gifts and how each person interrelates in the "body." They were asked to read each case study and respond quickly by indicating the first (A), second (B), or third (C) way in which they would most likely react to the given incident. I then placed the "spiritual gifts profile" target on the overhead (appendix 10) and showed them which answers corresponded to which gifts. They were given a "target" like the one on the overhead and were encouraged to place their "A", "B", and "C" in the appropriate circle.

Overheads Used: (Appendix 10, Exhibits G,H, pp.139,140.)

1. FIVE BASIC STEPS—in confirming your gifts in the body.
2. SPIRITUAL GIFTS PROFILE "target."

Description of Handouts: (Appendix 10, Exhibits A-O pp. 133-147.)

1. SPIRITUAL GIFTS PROFILE "target" (same as above)
2. SPIRITUAL GIFTS CASE STUDY
3. CHARACTERISTICS AND MISUNDERSTANDING of spiritual gifts. (This seven-page handout was adapted from material used by John Kroncke and others who adapted theirs, I believe, from Bill Gothard's Spiritual Gifts Seminar).

Worship Service:Opening anthem:

"Renew Thy Church, Her Ministries Restore."

Welcome:

Visitors were welcomed and informed that this is a special day for our church and briefly reviewed the "spiritual gifts" series.

Offering:

Personal Ministries.

Scripture:

Congregational response was read from a half-sheet insert in the church bulletin—"What Shall We Do with One Another?"

Hymn of meditation:

Congregation sang both stanzas of "Come Holy Spirit"—humming the third time through.

Intercessory prayer: (By the head elder)Congregational response:

"Lord lay some soul upon my heart, And love that soul through me; And may I humbly do my part, to love that soul to thee" (sung response).

Participatory Sermon:

Certain members of the congregation were given 3x5 cards with Bible texts chosen from the "characteristics" handout. As we proceeded through this handout, I fleshed it out with illustrations. The persons with the Bible texts stood and read their text at the appropriate times.

Consecration prayer:

Each worshiper was encouraged to look again at the "target" area of their spiritual gifts. We closed with prayer, consecrating our gifts.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS EMPHASIS FOR NEIGHBORING EVANGELISM (Cont.)

Sixth Sabbath

Sabbath School Presentation:

Film: "Discover Your Gifts"

Chuck Bradley has been trying to avoid enrolling in a class at his church on discovering your spiritual gifts. But when his overworked pastor is stricken with a heart attack, Chuck wants to relieve some of the ministry load and agrees to try to use his spiritual gifts. He first tries preaching, but gives up after finding that he's better at putting people to sleep. After several other unsuccessful attempts to discover his gifts, Chuck almost by accident, finds that he has a gift for evangelism when he leads his jogging partner to Christ. In the process Chuck and his wife Diane learn that each member of the Body of Christ is a unique and special creation of God who has been given spiritual gifts for use in ministry. (Appendix 4)

Sabbath Worship Service:

During the sermon I led the congregation through the handouts on the characteristics of Biblical persons exhibiting each of the basic seven gifts found in Rom 12 (Appendix 11, Exhibits A—L, pp. 149-160.)

We then moved into a "consecration/ordination" service not only for the new church officers for the year but for each person in the church as they brought their "spiritual gifts" to the altar. Following this activity the various leaders of the Sabbath School departments had their part in the liturgy. We invited the congregation to form a large circle around the entire perimeter of the sanctuary. We passed a ball of red yarn (symbolizing "unity in Christ") around the circle, tying it at the ends. The service closed with "Blest Be the Tie That Binds."

"Caring Ministries" in the
Napa, California Church

The Sabbath School as a forum for motivating the church toward personal evangelism is a concept as old as the Sabbath School itself. In its earliest statements of purpose, the Sabbath School was to be organized into bands of "personal evangelists." The early Sabbath School records of each of the three churches in which I encouraged "neighboring evangelism" indicated an enthusiastic evangelistic thrust. Large percentages of "non-SDAs" were registered as members of the Sabbath School with many moving toward baptism.

Upon arriving as associate pastor in Napa, I was given the specific assignment of outreach coordinator. Beginning in the fall of 1986, I was invited by the leader of the "New Life" class to present a series of lectures on the concepts of "neighboring evangelism." The topics and their sequence include:

1. Theology of Witness: The "Incarnational witness" model.
2. Sociology of Friendship: "Neighboring evangelism" model.
3. Jesus' personal witness model: "Woman at the well."
4. Understanding and reaching the secular mind.
5. Spiritual gifts are for ministry.
6. How to find your Gift and be used of God in ministry.
7. Out of the salt shaker—into the world—as "healers."

As a result of this series, a member of the "New Life" class came to my office during the week following the last lecture. She had been through a divorce and had found healing through reading "Forgive and Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve" by Smedes.⁵⁰ She wondered if we could start a

⁵⁰Lewis B. Smedes, Forgive and Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve (New York: Harper and Row, 1984).

support group based on the study of forgiveness. We ordered twenty of the books and announced the beginning of a "fellowship group" based on a study on "forgiveness." Seventeen people came, most of whom had recently been through a divorce. The second week someone suggested we add hot soup and salads and bread to our "fellowship." Supper together began at 6:30 p.m. with closing prayer right around 8:30 p.m. We based each evening's discussion upon scripture and the group provided "case studies" which kept it interesting. A close bond began to form and most of the group found specific healing of damaged emotions. The majority of the group were members of the Napa S.D.A. Church. Occasionally they brought a neighbor or friend.

We met each evening for thirteen weeks with the "study" aspect of the evening fellowship structured around the book Caring Enough to Forgive by David Augsburger.⁵¹ This book is in a format that lends itself to group discussions. It contains excellent graphics which I enlarged and made into overheads. The schedule in Figure 4 and Appendix 12 Exhibits A-R shows how we used the books mentioned above.

⁵¹David Augsburger, Caring Enough to Forgive (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1981).

GROUP SESSION: <u>Caring Enough to Forgive</u> , by David Augsburger as textbook.	WEEKLY READING: <u>Forgive and Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve</u> , by Louis Smedes.
1) FORGIVE/by Realizing wrongdoing. Overheads from p. 8, and pp. 1, 2.	Chapter 1--"We Hurt" Chapter 2--"We Hate"
2) FORGIVE/ by Reaffirming Love. Overheads from p. 28 figs. 4,5,6.	Chapter 3--"We Heal Ourselves" Chapter 4--"We Come Together"
3) FORGIVE/ by Releasing The Past. Overheads from p. 46, figs. 7,8,9.	Chapter 6--"Forgiving the Invisible People" Chapter 8--"Forgiving Ourselves"
4) FORGIVE/ by Renewing Repentance. Overheads from p. 64, figs. 10,11.	Chapter 9--"Forgiving Monsters" Chapter 10--"Forgiving God"
5) FORGIVE/ by Rediscovering Community. Overheads from p. 78, figs. 12,13.	Chapter 7--"Forgiving People Who Do Not Care" Chapter 11--"Slowly"
6) ON THE OTHER HAND! (review and open discussion)	Chapter 5--"Some Nice Things Forgiving Is Not!"
7) DON'T FORGIVE/ when Forgiveness puts you "one-up". p. 8b, figs. 1b, 2b.	Chapter 12--"With a Little Understanding." Chapter 13--"In Confusion".
8) DON'T FORGIVE/ when Forgiveness Is "one-way". Overheads, p. 24b, figs. 3b, 4b.	Chapter 18--"Forgiveness Makes Life Fairer." Chapter 19--"Forgiveness Is a Better Risk."
9) DON'T FORGIVE/ when Forgiveness Distorts Feelings. Overheads p. 38b, fig. 5b.	Chap. 16--"Freely or Not at All" Chap. 17--"With a Fundamental Feeling."
10) DON'T FORGIVE/ when Forgiveness Denies Anger. Overheads p. 52b figs. 6b, 7b, 8b.	Chap. 14--"With Anger Left Over" Chap. 15--"A Little at a Time"
11) DON'T FORGIVE/ when Forgiveness ends open relationship. Overhead pp. 66b, 73b, 74b.	Chapter 20--"Forgiving is Stronger" Chapter 21--"Forgiving Fits People"
12) WOUNDED HEALER: "The Ragman--The Christ!"	Epilogue--(Cosmic Forgiveness)

Fig. 4. Suggested Schedule for Use of Smedes and Augsburger.

Other than the numerous expressions of gratitude for the class, an interesting and effective spin-off of this "healing the hurts" fellowship is a new Sabbath School class. One of the members found that he had a gift for teaching and is currently developing a syllabus for a Sabbath School class along the line of our fellowship group. He is using my resource collection and his skills with the computer to put together a workbook as he teaches this special Sabbath School class. We are encouraging inactive members and new Christians to be disciplined by joining this close fellowship class. From 9:00 to 9:30 a.m. they meet before Sabbath School officially commences in order to pray specifically for members with pressing spiritual needs. The members of the class have shared experiences of how their new attitude of "prior forgiveness" is helping them in the many relationships of life where their lives touch the world "out there."

CHAPTER FOUR

IMPLEMENTATION OF NEIGHBORING EVANGELISM MODEL IN BERKELEY

Entry Strategy

The second board meeting of my new pastorate in Berkeley, California, seemed a good time to share some of my dreams and ideas relative to "neighboring evangelism." I was encouraged to form an evangelism committee as soon as possible. The first Sabbath following Labor Day 1988, I announced in church that we would form an evangelism committee. I outlined some of the ideas and plans that had already been expressed at the board meeting. We met Sabbath afternoon a week later with twelve enthusiastic members ranging in age from young adult/collegiate through middle age. A majority of the church board, including my first and second elders, were present and contributed to our brainstorming session. Everyone seemed anxious to share quite a variety of methods the church had tried over the last three years. On a flip-chart, we wrote several dozen good ideas and discussed what had or had not worked.

Toward the end of our session, the discussion seemed to boil down to a consensus that nurturing and training the congregation to become an effective evangelistic team would be the best place to start. This feeling carried over into our second meeting a week later where several committees were formed to facilitate getting on track and moving ahead. The four committees—NURTURE,

WORSHIP, HEALTH EVANGELISM, SOCIAL/RECREATION—each consisting of three members, one of which was designated as leader.

With nominating committee meetings coming up, it was decided that we could assist in the choosing of officers to cover various ministries by finding out who had what gifts. I was encouraged to conduct a Sabbath morning Spiritual Gifts seminar series during the worship service. I felt this would help sort out the individual gifts that would in turn help determine specific ministries. By thus grouping similar gifts into their corresponding ministries, the nominating committee would be placing members into positions where they would function happiest and best.

The third two-hour session dealt mostly with an open sharing of various philosophies of evangelism. At this meeting, I presented an overview study of what I termed "incarnational ministry." I felt that it could find expression through existing programs of the church. It was gratifying to see how quickly the members picked up on the concepts. Both elders had come to similar conclusions about personal evangelism from their own study. We were encouraged to move ahead beginning with revitalizing prayer meeting by turning it into an example of and model for the "Intentional Caring Unit" which I had briefly mentioned. I used the same format and discussion books as had been used in Napa (see the "Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve" series described above in chapter 4).

In January 1989, I began preaching a three-month series of sermons in the Gospel of John. These sermons focused upon the concept of "incarnational ministry" using the ministry of Jesus as the Supreme model. Concurrently, our nurture committee leader sponsored a 9 a.m. Sabbath-morning caring unit. This group met to learn ways of discipling each other through learning ways to reach out to each other so we can reach beyond

ourselves into the community. The next section—Implementation Timetable—tells more clearly how the various programs overlapped as they progressed through the seven months of implementation.

Implementation Timetable

October—November: "Spiritual Gifts Emphasis."

During these first months I preached essentially the same sermons and used the same overheads and handouts as in the Chico series outlined in chapter 4.

October—December: "Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve."

This series is the same as the nurture I.C.U. developed in Napa. Though I used the same discussion books as before, the smaller size of and more intimate nature of this group did not lend itself to the more formal and class-like use of the overheads.

January—March: "Incarnational Ministry in John's Gospel."

This series of eight sermons explores the richness of John's gospel in his first chapter upon "Word became Flesh and dwelt among us." This series is designed to motivate us to become a continuation—an extension of Christ's mission.

March 25—April 29: Film/sermon series on Lay Ministry.

This six-week series utilizes the Lay Ministry films from Church Growth America as a tool to motivate the congregation to get involved in "neighboring evangelism." These films are the same as those described earlier in connection with the Chico series on Spiritual Gifts.

April 29: Spiritual Family Retreat at Albion.

This last Sabbath consisted of a well-attended weekend retreat on the Mendocino Coast. Sabbath morning began with "praise singing" and progressed to the showing of the final two films in the Church Growth series. Following the first film, "Who Cares about Love?" I led a discussion of the concepts and practical applications of what we learned from the film. Following the showing of the second film, "Who Cares about Love?" (11) we spent a half hour in meditation and prayer closing with an opportunity to re-commit ourselves in servant ministry in our neighborhood.

Berkeley Survey and Evaluation

The Process

Due to the highly conceptual nature of the project, I was encouraged to do a qualitative evaluation of a cross section of the members involved. The experience has been rewarding and enlightening, and some of the conclusions have been surprising. My purpose for evaluation was threefold: (1) to find out if the members understood the concepts foundational to "neighboring evangelism"; (2) to learn if they were aware of any change in their attitude, role, or behavior relative to "neighboring evangelism; and (3) to get a general "pastoral" sense of their level of commitment or frustration being felt in relation to "neighboring evangelism."

In consulting three sociology books and two university professors in the field of sociology, I found the personal-interview method the recommended procedure. For data to be efficiently organized, a carefully thought-through questionnaire should form the basis of each interview. Some of the questions that one must pay attention to are: What is intended to happen here? What kind of change are we looking for (attitude, behavior, role, feeling, etc.)? What is being learned? Is something else at work here? I learned that data come from ". . .verbally expressed sentiments and beliefs." It is often up to the interviewer to ". . .describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning. . . ." In addition, "qualitative evaluation involves feelings, checks out hunches while interviewing." The questionnaire, approved by my committee and used in all personal interviews, was used with twelve members. The interviews lasted from one hour ten minutes to two hours.

Berkeley QuestionnaireNEIGHBORING EVANGELISM EVALUATION
IN THE BERKELEY CHURCHInterview questions:

1. In what specific way do you see "neighboring evangelism" different from traditional personal evangelism?

—Who are we trying to reach?

—Is this group different from whom we usually attract?

—By what method(s) are we trying to reach them?

—What difficulties do you experience in this method?

—Describe the "neighboring evangelism" concept.

2. Last fall I presented a series on "Spiritual Gifts." As a result:

—Do you feel you have a better understanding of this biblical doctrine?

—Have you been able to discover your spiritual gifts?

—Do you feel more confident about how your spiritual gift(s) will help you minister to your neighbor?

—Can you describe a specific situation when you felt your gift was helping fulfill someone's need?

3. Last fall our Wednesday evening Bible Fellowship group studied and shared the subject "Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve." Did this mini-series help you understand the concept of "wounded healer" ministry?

—Describe how a "healed hurt" has helped you minister healing to a friend or neighbor.

4. The current nurture ministry's "Intentional Caring Unit" is a natural continuation of the above fellowship group. Are you currently a member of this group?

—Do you feel you understand the purpose for the group?

—How is this group helping you to minister to a friend or neighbor? —

Have you thought of specific people you feel will respond to your healing touch?

—Have you planned a way to reach them?

5. Please make any suggestions that would help us help you reach out through "neighboring evangelism."

6. We have just concluded a six-week series in Sabbath School and Church service which focuses on "Lay Ministry." Has this series helped you to understand and enjoy your role as a "Lay Minister"? If so—in what way?

7. As compared to a year ago, describe any change you feel you have made toward personal evangelism.

8. What new ideas or plans (if any) have you adopted for your future in "neighboring evangelism"?

9. Has any aspect of the three programs described above helped you to discover and to try some "personalized" style of evangelistic outreach? Describe.

10. Do you feel the concepts learned in "Healing the Hurts" and "I.C.U." have helped you better understand yourself and the specific needs of your neighbors?

11. Do you feel that adopting the "neighboring evangelism" model will help bring about an increased personal evangelism involvement in our particular church?

12. Do you feel the "neighboring evangelism" model will be disruptive and/or detrimental to existing church programs?

13. Please share any suggestions or directions that you feel would make "neighboring evangelism" more effective.

Criteria for Evaluation of Interviews

A qualitative "interview" approach becomes more objective when common criteria are applied to interview answers. The following are those criteria:

CONCEPT	MANIFESTATION
What I want them to know	How they reveal the knowledge
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be able to define neighboring evangelism in their own words. 2. Be clear about their spiritual gifts and how these impact neighboring evangelism. 3. Understand the term "wounded healer" as applied in "neighboring evangelism." 4. Understand the Intentional Caring Unit concept. 5. Be motivated by the "Lay Ministry" films toward a clearer understanding and involvement in "neighboring evangelism." 6. Feel that neighboring evangelism can be a concept and program enhancing Berkeley SDA Church's outreach into our community. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By sharing an actual situation demonstrating that they understand the concept. 2. By describing an actual event that shows their gift at work in a neighboring context. 3. By sharing a situation where a healed hurt helped to heal a neighbor providing a natural evangelism bridge. 4. By participating in one form of this ministry. 5. By describing a recent incident in their relationship similar to those portrayed in the films. 6. By being willing to become part of "I.C.U." and other manifestations of neighboring--to sponsor such a group.

The data collected in the interviews with twelve members of the Berkeley S.D.A. Church have been collated and the answers to the questions

are reported and commented on individually below. In some instances they are grouped together as "positive versus negative."

Interview Data and Interpretation

Question 1: In what specific way do you see neighboring evangelism different from traditional personal evangelism?

Responses to question 1:

"Reaching people who are closer to home but other than a close relative—everybody in your circle."

"Not trying to get the world to accede to a set of facts or dogma. Neighboring evangelism appeals to those who are near you and is more experiential. It means interfacing with another in genuine, uncontrived respect—rapport—life-on-life. It may mean even taking the risk that their belief system may rub off on us a little—it's a two-way street. I see it as rooted in relationships and restoration rather than dogma. Human relationships can help restore Divine/human relationships."

"Neighboring evangelism should not be called a method because that implies people are somehow being used. It is a commitment to always remain in a healing relationship—to be there whether or not they are ever baptized. Neighboring evangelism attempts to reach people in a way that allows them to grasp spiritual concepts at whatever level they can comprehend—or apprehend. It is not your usual Revelation Seminar approach but rather a revealing of Christ's love through friendship/fellowship."

"It is reaching people one-on-one through more non-church type activities—a mutual sharing of the common activities of life. It involves planning of quality time together with non-church people—investing in the lives of people at school/work/home."

"It means interacting people-to-people within a certain living area—neighborhood."

"It means sharing your life with people closest to you—always open to their needs. It means responsible caring for my neighbor's real physical, emotional, spiritual needs—at the same time trying not to be walked all over as the neighborhood sucker."

"Neighboring evangelism means accepting people where they are without criticism or disappointment. It must come from the heart to be effective—love must be freely given away. It is people relating to people instead of

programs. It is people scheduling time with others—responding to needs. 'Love your neighbor as yourself—as soon as you learn to love yourself.

"Neighboring evangelism is living Jesus' love by being neighborly in visiting those closest to you."

"It is living Christ near the church and here in this retirement center where I live. It does not mean ringing doorbells but rather in joining in with more senior activity groups."

"It means being a good neighbor for Jesus—across the fence—down the street—taking bread and flowers."

"It means reaching the people you spend time with through 'daring' caring. A great deal of time must be spent in close friendship before 'belief' begins to root and bear fruit. It means witness on an 'exemplary' rather than a 'didactic' level. First come 'deeds' and then 'words'."

"It means sharing with the guy closest to me—my roommate, family member, or workmate. People in close proximity can see right through me. I must remain transparent as I work to keep the neighborhood flowers growing."

Question 1 evaluation: All twelve answers show a clear understanding of the concept of neighboring evangelism as defined in this project. There did not seem to be any indication in the answers to this particular question as to whether or not they saw how the more "personal" aspect dovetailed with the "program" of the church.

Question 2: Did the fall Spiritual Gifts seminar help you understand and "find" your gift?

Responses to question 2:

"Yes, it helped me to feel I 'fit in' to the church in another area other than the one I've been stuck with for the past seven years!"

"It reconfirmed what I already learned from Bill Liversidge. I'm enthusiastic about the specific ministry outlet possibilities in the Berkeley environment. I've learned to have more acceptance and tolerance of others with differences."

"The seminar helped me get a better grasp of my specific gifts of mercy and helping. I'm listening to and growing closer to a classmate who shared an intimate problem with me."

"I've known my gifts were teaching and hospitality but I've become more sensitive to the personal needs of others. I tried several gift areas that didn't pan out, but I'm not discouraged."

"It was good to confirm my gifts of helps, mercy, and hospitality and to see the danger areas. People certainly take advantage of you if you let them."

"I was really shocked at the discovery of my gifts cluster of administration, ministry, and compassion. It gave me the confidence to try what I've been only thinking. I have fun watching people discover their true selves as I do."

"I have one single gift and I'm happy the church recognizes it as I serve them."

"It was clear last fall—I don't remember the concept that well except that God has blessed me with good health and a sense of hospitality; and as a doctor, of course, I have the gift of healing. Lately I've taken care of several dying relatives—over the last ten years, in fact."

"My special gift is hospitality and, oh yes, giving. Jesus fills me up and I overflow to the neighbors. They treat me so well."

"Few of us can fully use our gifts on our own. I feel that I need support from an organized program. My teaching gift seems to be bearing fruit in my attendant."

Question 2 evaluation: Notice that only ten responses pertain to this question since two respondents were out of town during the seminar. One of them said he had been through another Spiritual Gifts seminar and was quite clear on the doctrine. The second described the "fruits of the Spirit" at great length. I was particularly pleased that by and large there seemed to be an understanding of the doctrine and how it applies in ministry. I do feel there needs to be an ongoing emphasis on the practical nature—just how spiritual gifts come to fulfill the corporate mission of the Church.

Question 3: Did the mid-week I.C.U. fellowship last fall help you to understand the "wounded healer" concept so that you have ministered healing to a friend?

Responses to question 3:

"Though I didn't join until January, I do understand the concept. I share my personal experience and growth with a parent I meet at work. I have seen healing happen."

"There was a new person at work today who was very depressed—struggling with a dissolving relationship. I shared a similar experience of mine and how I coped. It seemed to settle her down."

"I lost my sight fourteen years ago and through that experience have found healing. I can relate to other kinds of loss—physical, spiritual, emotional—in a first-hand way and have helped sighted people many times."

"The 'Healing the Hurts' group study helped me to focus my feelings of the last three years since my husband died. I've learned that until our relationship with Christ becomes the absolute central focus of our lives, we will continue to hurt."

"Our church members don't seem to be ready for this. They can't seem to be open and vulnerable. I feel I can be open and compassionate because of my own pain. Sharing that pain is my ministry. I can help them by carrying their load a while."

"I especially enjoyed the emphasis on genuine forgiveness. Without it I would be upset around here most of the time—due to in-law relationships."

"Since I have had to think through the causes of suffering, in general, I feel that I'm able to make valid suggestions to others in similar situations."

"It is a comfort knowing even as you are being wounded that really He is (being wounded) and has been there for me."

Question 3 evaluation: First of all, eight of the twelve interviewees were involved. Of those who were involved, five really picked up on the concept and only four gave an example of how they had ministered in that mode.

Question 4: Do you understand the concept and purpose for "Intentional Caring Units" in the church and are you participating?

Responses to question 4:

"Yes, I understand the I.C.U. and want to get one started in my home. It should begin small and genuine on a sincere and tangible level."

"I do fully understand the purpose of I.C.U.'s and as a leader of one I am participating in the responsibilities it carries. I feel it should help my ministry by filling me up spiritually and emotionally so that I can have more to share with others. I have observed specific spiritual healing in the lives of several in my

group and with those I have shared with outside the church. I will be scheduling even more time for visiting or just casual contact."

"I currently sponsor a 'care unit' in my home. This group helps my ministry by creating more connections. I am learning how to focus our 'sharing' within the framework of scripture. This takes the 'edge' off always recycling 'pain' stories. Our group is currently looking for a way to involve the new neighbors in the upstairs apartment as well as the family across the street. A shared meal is one plan."

"I am involved in an I.C.U. group on Thursday night. The special focus of my ministry may be to homosexuals or 'pharisees' who say, 'My fruit is good enough—I don't need a lamb'. Singing in other church choirs exposes me to church people still carrying heavy burdens. In a real sense choirs can be seen as 'caring units'."

Question 4 evaluation: Of the twelve interviewed, only four were involved. Of these four, the second and third are really the only two who showed they had caught on to the concept. The leader of this ministry and I have spent some time together wondering why this idea has not caught on the way it could. We feel it is a valid, in fact, a crucial ministry—especially within a city church ministering to people in crisis. We feel that perhaps we presented them with too many new concepts too fast. It also appears that city people do not go out much at night and that a day-time I.C.U. could benefit primarily the elderly. Some participants are frightened by an intimate "sharing" nature which is an essential ingredient of the program. After careful consideration, we believe another approach next fall will be more rewarding. (There were virtually no suggestions made in answer to question 5.)

Question 6: Has the recent six-week series on "Lay Ministry" helped you understand your role as a "lay minister"?

Responses to questions 6 through 9:

"I've learned that in order to minister you must intentionally become a friend so that you really know the person. You build along a common interest or find another church member that has or can build that common interest."

"It was reaffirming to hear from someone else those same principles of servant-ministry—the meeting of people's felt needs."

"I didn't like the films. I felt the approach of the films was outdated."

"The series helped me to see that my ministry outside the church is important—making myself available and truly caring in whatever I am doing—being always open to people's need, making a way whereby I can be there for them."

"The series gave me many new ideas and a motivation to try some."

"The series helped me see that I am really part of a team and that I should feel free to depend on other members to help me continue the effort I have already made."

"I have become confirmed in my suspicion and made bolder in trying what I have believed would work."

"I'm clearer on my role as a lay minister although I'm not sure I would get involved in any deep relationship with a neighbor. I'm just too shy."

"The films helped me remember the concept better than the sermons or handouts."

"I feel more motivated to get involved."

"I liked the way a church came up with a list of categories, based on unique membership gifts, of people they would focus on to befriend."

Question 6 through 9 evaluation: All those interviewed participated in this film and sermon series. With the exception of the one individual who had seen them before and did not like the approach, there seemed to be a general feeling that the films especially had motivated them to get involved in practical friendship relations with their neighbors. They mentioned becoming reaffirmed, confirmed, bolder, team-oriented in ministry. They felt motivated to find practical ways of getting more involved in a focused ministry.

Question 10: Do you feel the concepts learned in "Healing the Hurts" and "I.C.U." have helped you better understand yourself and the specific needs of your neighbor?

Responses to question 10:

"This forgiveness I.C.U. helped me understand the true meaning of acceptance, unconditional giving, just as Jesus would give of Himself to others."

"The 'healing' I.C.U. helped me to feel how others hurt by relating more deeply and 'healingly' to the loss of my own spouse."

"The 'healing' I.C.U. helped me to cope with bad relationships I've had with my own family. I can't seem to get involved with my neighbors here in the city. They stick to their own business."

"The 'healing' I.C.U. reinforced attitudes and concepts I have already understood."

"I was helped to understand better and practice 'how to love' and how to forgive'."

Question 10 evaluation: Again there were only five of those interviewed who had participated in this program. Of these, four were helped to learn true forgiveness. Only one translated it into an attitude of forgiveness that became a healing agent in community relationships.

Question 11: Do you feel the "neighboring evangelism" model will help bring about an increased personal evangelism involvement in our particular church?

Responses to question 11:

"Yes, but how do you get it started?"

"Yes, but it will take a lot longer to really get the concept to sink in."

"Yes, but with resistance from some of the older members."

"Yes, it is absolutely imperative. We must concentrate in our own community."

"For sure. It's the only way we will ever finish the work."

"I don't know. There are mostly staunch Catholics in my neighborhood."

"The mobility of the Berkeley population makes any permanent relationship difficult. Most of the people around the church are students at U.C.B. who don't put down roots and are hard to get acquainted with."

"It should be used in balance with other methods."

Summary

The entry strategy for implementing neighboring evangelism in Berkeley seemed to foster a lot of enthusiasm. More than a dozen members became immediately involved in the various committees and gathered others into several ministry options. The enthusiasm lasted through nominating committee time and into the new year. Around the middle of January, some of the enthusiasm and at least two "group" ministries seemed to die out. This could be due to the "major" project of remodeling the sanctuary. We were also beginning a stewardship drive to stabilize the finances.

In March and April the "Personal Ministry" programs seemed to pick up more enthusiasm. As evident from the interviews, a healthy cross-section of the leadership of the church responded to the emphasis of moving ahead with the forming of neighborhood "I.C.U." groups. In addition, several members have spoken with me personally about putting together a plan for reaching the University of Berkeley students through a variety of "friendship" methods. The ideas they have put forward demonstrate that these members understand "neighboring evangelism" and the level of commitment involved. In addition to this personal commitment of their time and energy, they also seem to have a good grasp of how the entire church as a team can enhance their own attempts by providing an atmosphere of love, acceptance, and forgiveness in which relationships can blossom. They see how "journey inward" and "journey outward" must be balanced.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This project has presented the need to encourage a personal evangelism which grows naturally from a person's spiritual gifts. We have noted how a more relational approach to evangelism could be more effective in both winning and keeping church members. A proposed model was considered whereby the diversity of ministries within the local church might contribute to a unity of mission. This model was derived from a sociologically sound concept of "neighboring" and is also consistent with the New Testament pattern of evangelism. This "neighboring evangelism" is also consistent with Seventh-day Adventist heritage. In this light, the Sabbath School can be the effective evangelistic tool it was originally intended to be.

This report presents several examples of diverse ministries and notes how ministries arise as unique spiritual gifts find channels of expression in the fulfillment of specific needs within neighborhoods. The need for strong yet creative leadership in teaching and motivating members toward effective ministry is evident. One of the greatest motivators toward these ministries comes through the sense of "calling" that church members experience as they "discover" their unique spiritual gifts.

Each caring ministry discussed in this report arose within the context of a different congregation reflecting a unique set of community needs along

with a corresponding cluster of unique spiritual gifts. At the same time, each of the ministries shared certain characteristics:

1. Each ministry arose from a growing awareness of the "neighboring evangelism" concept.
2. Each began in the context of spiritual renewal in one person that spread to others.
3. Each ministry began as a "nurturing" ministry within the congregation and then expanded into evangelism.
4. Fellowship, scripture study, and prayer were the crucial ingredients of successful growth groups.
5. Love, acceptance, and forgiveness characterized both the context and content for growth.
6. Each ministry provided a natural bridge to the church.
7. Each ministry helped members to be aware of how God was creating "Divine appointments" with their neighbors.
8. Each paid close attention to the ebb and flow between the "church gathered" versus "church scattered" concept.
9. Each demonstrated how "effective nurture is effective evangelism" and visa versa.
10. Each ministry, though it began in an "other worldly" setting, attempted to take the members back into the "world" of community neighbors and friends.

The Berkeley phase of the project is where the "model" and "ministries" were brought together in a deliberate attempt to motivate an urban congregation toward a higher level of involvement in lay ministry. The programs designed to motivate members into "neighboring evangelism" ministries now need to give time and energy toward the more practical aspects of disciplined ministries—both private and corporate. The total ministries of our congregation

should be no more nor less than the sum total of the spiritual gifts represented within our congregation.

Conclusions

The conclusions are considered in three areas. The first discusses the problems faced during the formation, implementation, and evaluation of the project. The second describes the lessons learned and how the project served to sharpen my skills in specific areas of pastoral ministry. The third draws recommendations on how to continue building a strong "neighboring evangelism" team in the Berkeley Seventh-day Adventist Church. There are general observations and suggestions for implementing "neighboring evangelism" concepts and programs in other caring churches in North America.

Problems in Formation, Implementation, and Evaluation.

During the formative stages of this project the major difficulty was waiting for the preaching and teaching of "neighboring evangelism" concepts to spark a specific ministry reflecting those concepts. When such a ministry would finally emerge and begin to flourish and bear fruit, I would be moved to another church. On the positive side, these moves provided a broader spectrum/sampling and showed that neighboring ministries need to reflect the unique environment in which they emerge.

A second problem arose when an indigenous ministry emerged from someone other than a recognized church leader on the board. This made the acceptance and growth of the "program" more difficult. The programs designed to educate the congregation along the "neighboring evangelism" concept needed significant time during both the Sabbath School and Worship service. I learned that it is best to build innovations into existing traditional programs. In

the largest church of Napa, I found that change takes place best by influencing a small, receptive group first and then let the ideas filter out to the larger congregation.

I learned what a significant variation in sociology there is in terms of church "styles." I found the more "educated" professionals in one congregation resented the teaching approach which used overheads and handouts. On the other hand, the members in the more intellectual environment of a university town enjoyed and responded to this approach. There was also a significant difference between suburban/rural versus university/urban in terms of stability in neighboring relationships. The more transient character of the latter congregation mitigates against long-term intimate neighbor relations called for in "neighboring evangelism." In other words, rural/suburban Seventh-day Adventists seem more involved in natural intimate social relations with their "neighbor" than are urban/university members. If "neighboring evangelism" can work in Berkeley, it should be effective anywhere.

The fourth problem was how to do an objective evaluation. So much time had elapsed from "formation" through "implementation," that I chose a qualitative evaluation of a cross section of the Berkeley members only.

How Pastoral Skills Were Sharpened

Under new leadership in the mid-seventies, the Northern California Conference of S.D.A. began to foster what was termed the "caring church" approach to evangelism. I was already into current literature on "relational evangelism." My skills in practical research began to develop as I began to apply theology to ministry. I found by experimentation with different existing programs along with some newer creative approaches that there were more

"natural" ways to reach people with the gospel than those officially promoted by the Church.

This discovery forced me to develop a second skill. I became more conscious of my role as an agent of change. Being exposed to a variety of "congregational styles," I was forced to identify non-productive processing of change and adapt strategies that encouraged more "ownership."

A third area of development was in the use of a variety of media to educate and motivate a congregation. This meant creating an organized plan well in advance so appropriate media would be ready. It meant coordinating a preaching series with a film series along with handouts for small groups, etc. It was good discipline to learn what attitudes and values I needed to change and then to design a way to bring about that change in a group of people.

More important than the skill development was the enrichment that comes at a deep, emotional level as one learns with his people what it means to be a "wounded healer" committed to "servant ministry." From each congregation I learned the same level of "vulnerability" that I was seeking to teach them, and of the personal risk of transparent authenticity.

Future Plans for Berkeley

At the May 1989 Sabbath School council meeting in Berkeley, it was voted that a ten-minute time slot at the beginning of each class period should be devoted to learning and expressing "love in action." An adaptation of the "INTOUCH" series will be used as a guideline for this time together. In addition, the social committee is planning more "socials to save" as a creative bridge of friendship in our neighborhood. The leader of our nurture committee is setting up two more I.C.U.'s designed specifically to encourage those with specific "gifts" to explore ways of ministering to specific needs both within the church

and in the community. A file of "gifts for ministry" is currently being compiled so we can more easily "network" people who experience specific hurts with those who have found healing from a similar pain. The worship committee is expanding the "share and prayer" segment of the worship hour on Sabbath morning to strengthen this relational aspect of the corporate worship portion of the "neighboring evangelism" model.

Recommendations

I started this project to search for creative and effective avenues for congregational spiritual renewal. It has been rewarding to participate in this renewal and observe as the Holy Spirit opened channels of His Grace that ministered healing through His people. I now close this project report with observations and recommendations:

1. Methods of evangelism used in the local Seventh-day Adventist church should be consistent with both biblical and traditional Adventist methodology.
2. We must be sensitive to the level of openness to change in each local congregation. Whenever possible we should build innovation upon existing structures.
3. I believe the "neighboring evangelism" model can be adapted to any congregation in North America. This same model should be tested in other cultures to see if more indigenous "personal evangelism" would emerge.
4. I would encourage other congregations to bring all their many "programs" into the "neighboring evangelism" model providing coordination for corporate and private witness.

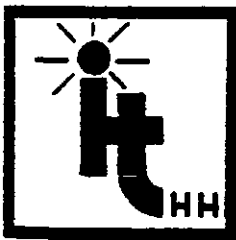
APPENDIX 1

"INTOUCH" SABBATH SCHOOL WORKBOOK

learning
to live
God's love

By:

Jack C. Circle



intouch

WITH HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

CHRISTIAN GROWTH GROUP

SERIES NO. ONE

**the imperative
of
loving well**



intouch

WITH HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

intouch

|| THE IMPERATIVE
OF
LOVING WELL

WITH HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

SUBJECT MATERIAL: Living God's Love by Douglas Cooper (Chapter one)

Douglas Cooper describes his visit to a California State Prison for drug addicts. In this prison he met Jim - a tall handsome medical doctor and surgeon of about 40 years of age who became addicted to drugs when he felt he needed something to keep him going in order to meet his heavy patient load.

Jim had an important message for the ministers who were visiting the prison that day. He described how desperate he was to find someone whom he could trust to help him out of his terrible situation. Feeling that his pastor would be the one person in whom he could confide, he told him the story. Instead of finding help, he received only rebuke heaped upon his already deep sense of guilt. This response drove him deeper into his problem. Eventually his habit caused him separation from his work, his family and society. **SOMEONE HAD FAILED TO LOVE AS GOD LOVES.**

He presented a second example of someone who needed a living example of God's love; a 14 year old boy who had been abandoned by his father after his mother died. He points out the fruitlessness of trying to explain the love of a Heavenly Father to a boy who had never known the love of an earthly father. He stressed the need that Christ has for his followers to have genuine concern and to be personally involved with persons who are in need of a living example of God's love.

God is interested in the health and happiness of people. Not one person in this world is unimportant to him. He loves each person because he is a unique part of His great family. Love for others is the basis of His entire kingdom. Jesus came into the world to show His followers the importance of letting the world see God's love through them by the way they respond to those who have great needs. The world is full of people who are experiencing deep anxiety, fear, guilt, hatred, distrust, dissatisfaction and rebellion. Sin is eating the heart out of earth's inhabitants.

HOW ARE WE RESPONDING TO THESE TREMENDOUSLY REWARDING OPPORTUNITIES?

PHYSICALLY - MENTALLY - SPIRITUALLY

POINTS TO THINK ABOUT

THIS IS WHAT GOD HAS TO SAY ABOUT LOVE FOR OTHERS:

- * 1 John 4:8 "He that _____ not knoweth not _____."
- * Gal. 5:14 "Thou shalt _____ thy _____ as thyself."
- * Matt. 5:44 "Love your _____, bless them that _____ you."
- * Prov. 17:17 "A friend loveth at _____ times."
- * Luke 6:32 "If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye, for _____ also love those that love them."
- * Rom. 12:10 "Be _____ to one another with _____ love."
- * Rom. 13:10 "Love is the _____ of the law."
- * 1 Cor. 16:14 "Let _____ your things be done with love."
- * John 13:35 "By this shall all men know ye are my disciples, if ye have _____."
- * John 15:13 "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man _____ for his freinds."
- * Eph. 5:25 "Husbands, love your wives."
- * 1 John 4:11 "If God so loved us, we ought to love _____"
- * 1 John 4:12 "If we love one another, God _____"
- * 1 John 4:20 "If a man say: 'I love God', and hateth his brother, He is a _____."

FOR YOUR HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

POINTS TO THINK ABOUT

- * "When the heavenly principle of eternal love fills the heart, it will flow out to others, ... because love, as the principle of action, modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and elevates and ennoble the affections." 4T 223
 - * "When self is submerged in Christ, true love springs forth spontaneously. It is not an emotion or an impulse, but a decision of the sanctified will. It consists not in feeling, but in the transformation of the whole heart, soul, and character, which is dead to self and alive unto God." 6 BC 1100
 - * "Our Lord and Saviour asks us to give ourselves to Him. Surrendering 'self' to God is all He requires, giving ourselves to Him to be employed as HE sees fit. Until we come to this point of surrender, we shall not work happily, usefully, or successfully anywhere." BC 1101
 - * "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."
Matthew 7:12
 - * "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."
Matthew 7:2
 - * Christ is our example. He went about doing good. He lived to bless others. Love beautified and enobled His actions."
 - * "When the heavenly principle of eternal love fills the heart, it will flow out to others, ... This love is not contracted so as merely to include 'me and mine', but is as broad as the world and high as the heaven, ..."
 - * "If we love God with all our heart, we must love His children also. This love is the Spirit of God. ..."
- "No matter how many good qualities we may have, however honorable and refined we may consider ourselves, if the soul is not baptized with the heavenly grace of love to God and one another, we are deficient in true goodness and unfit for heaven." 4T 223, 224

FOR YOUR HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

GROUP LEADERS DISCUSSION
POINTS TO THINK ABOUT

LOVING WELL -3a-

INTOUCH

1. WHEN LOVE IS THE MOTIVE BEHIND OUR ACTIONS ----
 - a. How does love MODIFY our characters?
 - b. How does love GOVERN our impulses?
 - c. How does love CONTROL our passions?
 - d. How does love SUBDUE hate?
 - e. How does love ELEVATE and ENNOBLE our affections?

2. "WHEN SELF IS SUBMERGED IN CHRIST, TRUE LOVE SPRINGS FORTH SPONTANEOUSLY".
 - a. What does it mean to be SUBMERGED in Christ?
 - b. How can the heart, soul and character be "DEAD TO SELF AND ALIVE UNTO GOD"?

3. "OUR LORD ASKS US TO GIVE OURSELVES TO HIM".
 - a. How do we give ourselves to Christ?
 - b. What is "SELF"?
 - c. Why can't we reach out to others and do it happily, usefully, or successfully until we come to this point of surrendering "self" to Christ?

FOR YOUR HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

intouch



THE IMPERATIVE
OF
LOVING WELL

OUR QUESTION TO YOU

- 1. Why does God put so much emphasis upon love?
- 2. Why is loving "others" important to OUR happiness?

name _____

address _____

phone _____

YOUR ANSWER TO No. 1

YOUR ANSWER TO No. 2

YOUR QUESTIONS

concerning this subject